

The  **Nehemiah** Project  
Rebuilding Lives



# 2021 Impact Report

[www.tnp.org.uk](http://www.tnp.org.uk)

# Who we are

The Nehemiah Project provides a home and support for men with a history of addiction. Our residential programme is abstinence-based where men can address the root causes of their addiction within a supportive environment.



With over 25 years' experience, our holistic, peer-group approach to recovery creates a safe place where men can go through the challenging and painful, but also rewarding process of reviewing their lives. We help our Residents create a foundation on which to build a future.

Nehemiah has five houses in south London. Our first stage houses are in Streatham and Croydon with second stage move-on accommodation in Croydon, Clapham and Wandsworth. At Nehemiah we believe that anyone can change their life, and this underpins all our work. We have plans to offer what we do to a growing number of men.

“Change is possible.  
I’m on the right path.”

Nehemiah Resident

“He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.”

Isaiah 61:1

# The Facts and Stats

- **15%** of men in prison are serving sentences for **drug offences**.<sup>1</sup>
- NHS England estimates that it spends approximately **20%** of all prison healthcare spending on **substance misuse** services—**some £81m** in 2016–17.<sup>2</sup>
- The **average annual overall cost** of a prison place in England and Wales is now **£44,640**.<sup>3</sup>
- **70%** of people in prison with a self-identified alcohol problem said they had been **drinking when they committed the offence** for which they were in prison. **38%** of people surveyed in prison believed that their **drinking was a big problem**.<sup>4</sup>
- Even before the full impact of Covid **47%** of men surveyed by inspectors in prison reported having **mental health problems**.<sup>5</sup>
- Many people in prison report that they had no meaningful activity to keep themselves occupied during the Covid-19 pandemic. Rehabilitative work has **almost completely stopped**, and there is limited access to the library, workshops and exercise.<sup>6</sup>
- Only **half (50%)** of people released from prison between March 2019–20 had settled accommodation on release. **More than one in six (17%) were homeless or sleeping rough**.<sup>7</sup>
- A study has estimated the annual total **economic and social cost of reoffending to be £18.1bn**.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Justice (2020) Offender management statistics quarterly, Prison population 2020, London: Ministry of Justice.

<sup>2</sup> House of Commons written question 8136, 12 September 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Justice (2020) Costs per prison place and cost per prisoner by individual prison establishment 2019 to 2020 tables, London: Ministry of Justice; Table 42, Ministry of Justice (2011) National Offender Management Service Annual report 2009/10: Management Information Addendum, London: Ministry of Justice; and HM Treasury (2020) GDP deflators at market prices.

<sup>4</sup> Alcohol and Crime Commission (2014) The alcohol and crime commission report, London: Addaction.

<sup>5</sup> HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2020) Annual report 2019–20, London: HM Stationery Office.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Justice (2020) Community Performance Quarterly, update to March 2020, London: Ministry of Justice.

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Justice (2019) The economic and social costs of reoffending, London: Ministry of Justice.

# Andre's Story



"I grew up in a single parent family in East London. My mum was an addict with mental health problems. My journey with drugs was from the age of seven, when I would take the used ends of cannabis roll ups out of the ashtray and smoke them. I was always hanging around with older kids who took drugs, so smoking cannabis became a habit.

I stopped going to school from the age of eleven as there was a lot going on. My home life was very disrupted and we got evicted and had to live in a hotel. When I did go to school, I truanted and would shop lift or break into vans. On and off I would move in with my Nan and I worked with her as an office cleaner from the age of 11-18. In my early teens, I discovered acid and ecstasy and went to my first rave at the age of 13. From ecstasy I started taking cocaine and then crack cocaine. By the age of 19, I was smoking crack every day.

I would work as a labourer and sell drugs to serve my drug habit. I had a long-term partner for 15 years and we have a daughter. Despite me choosing drugs over my family and leaving when my daughter was about nine years old, I have a good relationship with her today.

I came to Nehemiah in February 2021 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. I had already had the chance to come to Nehemiah a year earlier, however had come out of prison and lapsed straight away so was recalled to prison. The Clink Charity and The Forward Trust at Brixton prison referred me to Nehemiah. I believed in Nehemiah and had faith that they would help me recover my life from addiction. After completing the 12-week programme, I moved into the second stage move on house, but lapsed shortly after, so came back to the first stage house again to participate in the programme and receive more intense keywork support. I'm now back in second stage accommodation and getting on well, attending the second stage group programme and attending a cocaine anonymous group one evening a week. I'm learning to deal with my depression and anxiety in other ways than masking it with drugs and receiving counselling and keeping a firm eye on my recovery.

Nehemiah has made a big impact on my life and I'm now planning on furthering my chef training which I started at The Clink Brixton and looking forward to a positive future."

# Our Impact

In 2021, the charity worked with 48 men. Of these:

**28** engaged with 'A New Future' 12 week programme, completing modules.

**11** successfully graduated from the programme, the majority moving into our stage-two housing and independent living.

**36** people including Residents benefited from Family Support.  
12 Residents reconnected with their children.

## 2021 – a difficult year: However we look ahead with confidence

We saw the longer-term effects of Covid-19 having an impact on the Charity. The increased restrictions in prison during the first lockdown of March 2020 stopped all activities such as prison education, work, training, rehabilitative treatment programmes and family visits. Two-thirds of prisoners were in conditions that amounted to solitary confinement.\*

### This has led to:

- Potential residents deciding that, despite the benefits they can see for their recovery, almost any form of restriction is too much.
- Limited opportunities to interview prospective Residents, due to Prisons being locked down for much of the time.
- Accepting men with much greater complex mental health needs than before.
- Many residents not ready to focus on their recovery, having not been through foundational drug treatment work whilst in prison.
- As a result almost no consistent contact with volunteer and other support services who so often helped prepare men for release in Prison.

These issues have been compounded by other factors and as a result, we have seen a greater number leaving or being asked to leave Nehemiah than in any previous year. While we asked a higher than usual number of men to leave for breaching their licence conditions, we firmly believe that our impact figures in 2021 cannot be directly compared with previous years and that our support model remains as valid as ever. We have heard anecdotally that similar services are experiencing the same problems as we are currently facing, and we are working together to explore ways of addressing this.

Despite all our challenges during the year, we were able to fully refurbish our main first stage house and office at Streatham, celebrating the occasion with an opening ceremony and Residents Graduation, officiated by Terry Waite CBE in September 2021. Our new volunteering programme commenced with volunteers and Residents working together to clean up our gardens and decorate rooms in one of our move on houses. At the end of the year, Residents and staff celebrated Christmas together with a fantastic Christmas lunch, prepared by Residents.

\*Source information

# How to join The Nehemiah Project

## Criteria

- A man over 18
- Problems with substance misuse / addiction
- Eligible to claim Housing Benefit
- Willing to remain abstinent

You can phone Paul Da Costa on 07719 960 703 or email Paul on [referrals@tnp.org.uk](mailto:referrals@tnp.org.uk)

To join Nehemiah a man must complete an application form. This can be done as a self-referral, or by an agency worker. We will send you a risk assessment form to fill out to support all interview candidates.

We treat all applications in the strictest confidence, and evaluate all forms using the same criteria. Anyone can phone our Referrals Coordinator to discuss a referral.

Please visit our website for more information at:  
[www.tnp.org.uk/referrals](http://www.tnp.org.uk/referrals)



To donate, find out more or to sign up to our newsletters:

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