

The  **Nehemiah** Project  
Rebuilding Lives



# 2023 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.

“Nehemiah is a vitally important place for people like me who need to recover their lives from addiction, it works.”

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

- An estimated **one in three** people in prison are suffering from a **serious drug addiction**.<sup>1</sup>

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- **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.<sup>2</sup>

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- **One in six men (16%)**, are serving a sentence in prison for drugs offences.<sup>3</sup>

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- A report on accommodation and support for adults leaving prison found that in **the year to February 2020** **65%** of those without settled accommodation had **reoffended compared** with 44% of those with settled housing.<sup>4</sup>

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- The average **annual overall cost** of a prison place in England and Wales is now **£48,162**.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Home Office (2020) Review of drugs: phase one report, London: Home Office.

<sup>2</sup> Alcohol and Crime Commission (2014) The alcohol and crime commission report, London.

<sup>3</sup> HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2020) Annual report 2019–20, London: HM Stationery Office.

<sup>4</sup> Table 1.4i, Ministry of Justice (2022) Offender management statistics quarterly, Prison population 2022, London: Ministry of Justice.

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Justice (2021) Costs per prison place and cost per prisoner by individual prison establishment 2020 to 2021 tables, London: Ministry of Justice; Table 1, Ministry of Justice Management Information Addendum, London: Ministry of Justice; and HM Treasury (2022) GDP deflators at market prices, and money GDP November 2022 (Autumn Statement), London: HM Treasury.

# Patrick's Story



“ I was born in west London, the youngest of four children to parents who were both alcoholics. At the age of five, I was taken into care along with my siblings. I remember the trauma of being ripped from my mother's arms.

My own experience of smoking and drinking started at the age of 11 and by the age of 13 I was smoking weed and drinking every day. At the age of 16 I started taking other drugs, LSD, ecstasy, cocaine and smoking crack cocaine. I started stealing and ended up in youth offender's prisons. This escalated to heroin in my 20's and I spent years in and out of prison, mainly for stealing and burglaries.

Every time I got released, I would continue using drugs. Spending time in jail was like being back in the children's home, it didn't faze me.

I then received two large prison sentences. I was so underweight when I went into prison that they had to give me special drinks to help me add weight. During my last sentence in prison, I decided enough was enough and spent two years on a drug free wing. I then joined Nehemiah at the beginning of August 2023. I started to open up during group sessions and through support from my keyworker, the family support practitioner and counsellor, Nehemiah has helped me to unlock the emotional prison I had made for myself, which kept me using, to hide from my feelings and myself. Coming to Nehemiah is the best thing I've ever done. I've learnt to love my younger self.

I have completed the 12-week recovery programme at Nehemiah, graduated and moved in to one of the second stage move-on houses. During the recovery programme, I started running, completed my first half Marathon, and raised support for Nehemiah. I continue to run every week. The relationship with my siblings is so much better and I now attend church and have been baptised. I continue to attend weekly AA and CA fellowship meetings. I am attending college doing a core skills course, which is really helpful. I am also doing a peer-mentoring course with the Forward Trust and will be doing one with Nehemiah to support new Residents.

If it wasn't for Nehemiah, I would not be able to recover my life, as I would have not dealt with the trauma inside of me. Nehemiah is a vitally important place for people like me who need to recover their lives from addiction, it works. ”

# Will's Story



“ I come from a working class background. When I was around 10 years old, my parents separated and I was then brought up by my mother. When I was 14 years old, she got cancer, and I cared for her whilst she was ill. Tragically, when I was 15 years old my mother committed suicide. In the year that followed, I couldn't cope and was beginning to escape using alcohol.

At University I had opportunities, but dropped out due to drug and alcohol abuse. It was not recreational, but addictive and solitary. Then, in my 20s, I had good positions in the hospitality industry in London. In this industry I was able to hide my continued drug and alcohol abuse with an outwardly charismatic role. Outside of work, however, I led a solitary, isolated existence, addicted to drugs and alcohol.

In my late 20s, my father passed away suddenly. Looking back, it is at this point that I should have gone to rehab. Everything fell apart. For the next 15-16 years, I hid my addiction within the hospitality industry, whilst progressively isolating myself, leading to financial bankruptcy, ill health and pushing everyone away. The only family support network I had was my sister, who had moved to Australia and I had no next of kin in the UK.

In the two years leading up to the Covid lockdown, I was in my darkest throws of alcoholism, drinking against my will daily, self-medicating with alcohol to a point of contemplating suicide. I was financially, emotionally and morally bankrupt. Having recognised the impact of suicide, I realised that I couldn't put my sister through it. I was at a point of losing everything. I started going to AA meetings and secured a place at a residential rehab. There, I did lots of good work and was sober for 6 weeks. However, when this programme ended, I was homeless, penniless with no support in the UK.

In the interim, my sister agreed for me to stay with her in Australia and whilst there I heard about The Nehemiah Project.

I was interviewed by Nehemiah staff online and came to Nehemiah from Australia. Since completing the initial twelve-week programme, I can honestly say that I am happier than I've ever been. I am dealing with the past trauma in my life without using drugs and alcohol as a means of escape. As I have no support network in the UK, without Nehemiah I would be out on the street. Now, I can take my recovery slowly, be safe and invest in my longer-term future.

I am now living in one of the move-on houses. I have started two courses with a view to working in brand development and marketing, away from the hospitality industry. One of the challenges that I have found in my recovery is that some people have been prejudiced against me because I don't fit the stereotypical addict. I'm well-spoken and educated, and haven't committed crime, so am seen as having less of a need than others have. ”

# Our Impact

In 2023, the charity worked with 56 men. Of these:

**31**

engaged with 'A New Future' 12-week recovery programme, completing modules.

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**23**

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

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**56**

Residents benefitted from Family Support

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**22**

Residents were in employment, training or regularly volunteering.

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Only **5% of the men** who completed our programme in the past five years have returned to prison, to our knowledge. Compared to this, nationally, **nearly 50% of prisoners reoffend within 12 months** and this figure is higher for London prisons.

# Family Support

The emphasis of family support groups in 2023 was to ensure all residents had the opportunity to engage and rebuild their relationships with their families if they chose to. Attending the family support group fortnightly has given residents a safe environment to look at unresolved matters, which previously kept them captive in addiction.

The family support work in 2023 also extended to the community around the residents where family members have had the opportunity to connect with the service. One such example of this was a resident's partner who sought support both for her relationship with her partner and his substance misuse, and her own family history of addiction.

## Volunteering at Nehemiah

Over the past 12 months 80 volunteers, alongside 30 Nehemiah Residents, have given up a total of 650 hours to support our work. Volunteering activities have included gardening at the different Nehemiah houses, healthy eating workshops at two of our houses, translating for one of the Polish Residents, running the marathon to raise funds for Nehemiah, writing Christmas cards for St John care home Residents, IT drop-in classes, administrative support, volunteering at the BASMOM soup kitchen, dyslexia one-to-one support and a festive Christmas party which involved decorating the Streatham House, mince pie making and Christmas card writing.

This year, and for the first time, we were particularly fortunate to have the support of a number of businesses choosing to volunteer at Nehemiah. 50 Volunteers from Natwest, Canada Life, Hays and Talbot Underwriting Ltd gave up a total of 5 days to beautify, prune and tidy the gardens at our Battersea, Clapham and Streatham Houses.



**“If you are willing to do the programme, honestly, it will give you your life back.”**

Resident Quote

# 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  
Monday-Friday or email [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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