

StMungo's

Frontline

Spring edition 2026



“We’re here to help people with their mental health and show they’re not alone.”

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Your mindfulness exercise
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“I’ve been supported to make it through difficult times and start again.”
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Thank you for supporting St Mungo's to be there for people who need us. Helping someone to improve their mental wellbeing is part and parcel of ending their homelessness and can prevent a return to the streets.

or helping them start to look for work. These are all moments which have the potential to be transformational.

I'll often meet people who tell me their story and talk about rebuilt confidence, hope and new beginnings. The resilience and power of the human mind and body is remarkable. Someone who is proof of this is Perry. On page 6 he shares how St Mungo's helped him during a particularly difficult time.

There's also Caz and Emma on page 4. They talk about the work their service does in supporting the mental health of diverse communities in Bristol, and some memorable moments from over the years.

But first, I encourage you to take part in the mindfulness activity on page 3. For some people we support, writing down their feelings is a beneficial self-care technique. I hope you also find the activity helpful and can take something positive from it.

As always, thank you again for your continued support. The stories you read in *Frontline* and thousands more wouldn't be possible without your help.

**Emma Haddad,
Chief Executive, St Mungo's**

We know that many of the people we meet are living with mental health challenges. Supporting them towards living a happier, more peaceful life takes time. It's an ongoing, careful process which looks different for everyone.

That's why in this May issue of *Frontline*, we're exploring how our teams work to understand the mental health of our clients and support them with it, whether it's giving them access to services through our own teams, or in partnership with the NHS and other organisations.

It's essential we show humanity in every conversation we have with the people we support. It's these moments in times of darkness that can create real change. Colleagues across St Mungo's are doing this every single day – on the streets and in our services, we create environments of warmth and safety.

We show kindness through cooking or gardening together, accompanying people to appointments

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Being kind to your mind

Sometimes we'll encourage the people we support to try simple mindfulness techniques as a form of self care. By taking a moment to pause, it can help them feel calmer in the present moment.

We know that written exercises aren't a solution to the trauma or complex challenges many of our clients' face. But they can be a way to express thoughts, feelings and experiences.

It can be helpful for all of us to take a moment of reflection. So, this page invites you to take a brief pause, by writing down three things you're grateful for today – big or small. We hope this activity offers you something positive, just as it can for the people we support.

Today I'm grateful for...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____





Caz

“We’re helping people process trauma, so their lives can be improved.”

Our Assertive Contact and Engagement (ACE) team help people with complex mental health needs – particularly those struggling to access traditional support services. Find out the life changing difference ACE makes, alongside Jackie, who's experienced this impact herself.

“We’re here for people from all different communities, including people rough sleeping, LGBTQI+, asylum seekers and refugees, or those with addictions.

We specialise in engaging with people to offer support, like visiting someone sleeping rough. Other times, someone who is vulnerable

might be afraid to go outside. We’ll spend months having a conversation through their letterbox – doing all we can to build a trusting relationship.

We also train different organisations on our knowledge, to prevent others with complex needs falling into homelessness.

Creating a positive experience

Sometimes people have already tried to get help and it didn’t work – maybe because they’re homeless or life is too chaotic, and turning up to an appointment scheduled weeks in advance isn’t achievable.

“A lot of people have been let down, where experiences with professionals have been peppered with disappointment. We’re here to change that and ask, ‘what can we do to make things better for you?’”

The right kind of support

When they accept help, there are a lot of therapeutic tools to draw on, depending on the person. We have a small team of therapists who provide long term support. If someone misses an appointment, they won’t get thrown off a list. Instead, we adapt, like talking during a walk – not the typical therapy scenario you imagine.

When someone needs specialist care, like for a personality disorder or addiction, we’ll accompany them to see a drugs support worker or introduce them to community groups to improve their confidence.

Jackie (right) is someone I’ll never forget. I’m so proud of how far she’s come, after living with such deep-rooted trauma. Now, she’s using her voice for change and achieving so much.”

Emma



“Complex mental health issues often come from trauma associated with housing, abuse, addiction and other hardship.

“We help people process this trauma, so other areas of their life can be improved. Someone might want to reconnect with a sibling, so we’ll identify how to make that happen one day.”

Sometimes the first step is to teach skills typically learnt in childhood. Because how can we expect someone to engage in therapy if they don’t know how to handle difficult

conversations or physically look after themselves?

Never giving up

We’re relentlessly optimistic! Some days we’re told to go away, but we gently return. When a person learns to predict our behaviour, it helps them feel safer.

I’ll always remember someone who was living with severe anxiety, delusional beliefs and paranoia. We got to know him well and introduced him to our community groups.

Gradually, he began to enjoy life. The thoughts in his head still existed, but he was no longer consumed by them. He discovered his passions and is now living independently – which once seemed impossible.”

Jackie

“Before ACE, I’d been misdiagnosed and received incorrect treatment for depression and stress. But really, I had five decades of trauma piling up.

I saw a flyer about ACE and found the strength to get in touch. Within a week I was in a support group and enrolled at the recovery college – a place to meet other people, which helped me realise I wasn’t alone. I was extremely quiet at first, which is hard to believe now!

“I was helped to slowly grow into my confidence.”



The team introduced me to dialectical behaviour therapy, which I feel blessed to have accessed and still use the calming tips today.

Because ACE made it possible to find and use my voice, I campaigned to get the Domestic Abuse Bill through and now advocate for better mental health support, so more lives can be saved. The team makes ACE accessible for people living with trauma, so we can find ourselves amongst the deep fog.”

“It can be hard reflecting on the past. But I have a fresh start now, which I’m holding onto.”



After many difficult years, Perry hit rock bottom and began sleeping rough in the woods. He shares how St Mungo’s helped bring him into safety when there was nowhere else to turn.

*Before reading, please note this article discusses sensitive topics, including suicide.

“Over the years I’ve struggled with ADHD, anxiety and mild depression. This led to an alcohol addiction and I’d drink to calm my thoughts.

I decided to move to Australia, where my mum and stepdad were. But I was stuck in a cycle: my mood would

improve, then crumble again. Eventually I moved back to England, but it felt like I’d failed and I became really depressed.



I was drinking heavily and had to leave the rented property I was living in. After checking into a hotel, I’d had enough and attempted to overdose on my medication. But I woke up the next morning – my plan hadn’t worked.

“It was summer and I pitched a tent up in a secluded spot in the woods where no one could see me.”

I spent a week there and got through each day by focussing on simple tasks: getting food, water and walking into town to charge my phone. Before, it seemed that ending my life was the easier option. But it

helped knowing I had these small goals, rather than one huge problem.

Seeking help

I couldn’t stay out there much longer and created an alert for myself using StreetLink – a service that notifies local outreach services I was sleeping rough.

St Mungo’s frontline team searched for me, but I was so hidden they couldn’t find me at first. But they kept trying until they did. When they asked what had happened, I spilled everything out.

“They listened and invited me to a St Mungo’s service, where there was a camp bed waiting. It was a big step forwards and I felt safer there.”

Everyone around me and my support worker Lizzie were so nice to chat to. She helped me write a list of things we needed to prioritise and we chatted about things that aren’t heavy too, like our favourite films!

After three weeks, the team helped secure me a room in another accommodation. It was the start of a new chapter, which is still sinking in.

It can be hard reflecting on the past, but it wasn’t for



nothing. It gave me this new start, which I’m trying to hold onto.

“St Mungo’s is helping me to look at things from a new perspective and remember my mental health doesn’t need ‘fixing’. It’s about how to take care of it and manage it.”

I’m being helped to break my problems down into steps, to identify my triggers and how to move forwards.

Finding creativity again

Some great opportunities have come up, like starting a volunteering role with St Mungo’s in graphic design. I used to work in design and have a degree in it. I’m also now a member of St Mungo’s Client Advisory Board, helping to guide the future of the charity.

Being creative helps focus my mind. I enjoy getting in the zone and putting my personality into my work. I’m taking things day by day, and the goal is to get back into employment and maybe be a listening ear to others who have been through similar experiences as me.”

“There will be dips along the way, but St Mungo’s is helping me do things I enjoy and remember that I’ve made it through difficult times before, and can do again.”



Run to help end homelessness

Royal Parks Half Marathon

Join us on 11 October 2026 for London's most scenic half marathon.



The 13.1 mile route will take you through four of the most picturesque parks in the capital. Challenge yourself and raise funds to help end homelessness in the process.

We'd love to see 138 runners representing St Mungo's on the course this year, each representing one of the 138 vital accommodation services that help people rebuild their lives.

Find out more: mungos.org/royalparks26

Thank you for reading this edition of *Frontline*. We hope you enjoyed it. If you have any questions or feedback, feel free to contact us using the details provided.

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