

stMungo's

Frontline

Summer edition 2026

**"We're helping to keep people with their pets,
who give them a purpose and reason to keep going."**

Page 4



**A day and night on
the streets from
Ernie's perspective**

Page 3



**"Casper isn't just
a dog to me, he's
my family."**

Page 6

When someone experiences homelessness, a pet can be their lifeline. They shouldn't have to choose between their best friend or a home. Thank you for supporting St Mungo's and helping us keep people and their pets together.

It's thought up to a quarter of people experiencing homelessness in the UK have a pet. Less than 7% of pet owners who are homeless would give up their dog in exchange for accommodation, yet only 10% of all UK homeless accommodation services currently accept pets.*

St Mungo's is one of those organisations that offers pet friendly accommodation. Most of the pets we meet have never been apart from their owner and are incredibly loved by them.

When we keep pets and their humans together, there's a stronger chance of both rebuilding their life after homelessness. After all, they are each other's family, and it should stay that way.

Someone who knows this all too well is Beni, whose story you can read on page 6. Caring for his dog gave him a purpose when he slept rough, and Beni now has a home at St Mungo's with his dog, Casper.

Peter, who is part of the St Mungo's team, shares the difference staying with a pet makes to the people we welcome into our accommodation. Find out more on page 4.

And on page 3, follow along with our character Ernie the dog through a day and night on the streets.

I hope you enjoy your *Frontline* magazine and know the difference you're helping to make – both to people and their furry friends. Thank you so much as always for your support.

Emma Haddad,
Chief Executive, St Mungo's

**StreetVet charity*



Contents:



Ernie's day

The streets through Ernie's eyes



Meet Peter

Keeping people with their pets



Beni and Casper's story

A special kind of bond



The streets through Ernie's eyes



6am

Me and Grace wake up under our blankets. It's cold today, so I'll stay extra squished to her. I can hear lots of loud noises. We didn't get much sleep, so Grace gives me some head scratches and I doze off again.

8am

It's busy now – sooo many shoes walking past! Some people say hello to me, but not always to Grace. “What’s his name?” they ask her. A nice man leaves us breakfast, and I’m given the tastiest bits. Yum!

11:30am

We're up and about. I can smell sausages! I used to eat those in our home before we had to leave it. The days can feel long and I'm not sure where we're going. But as long as I'm by Grace's side, it's ok.

2pm

After a lot of steps, we find a new place to sit with our things. A kind human gives Grace a cup of tea, and some biscuits for me. I heard them say what a good boy I am, which is true!

5:30pm

We've finally found a place to spend the night and wrap up to feel warmer. We're tucked away and I can hear someone shouting in the distance – I hope they don't come closer to us.

10pm

We're getting sleepy, so I stay close to Grace and listen out, to protect us from anything scary. Grace is sad, I can sense it. But she kisses my head and I know she'll never give up trying to keep us safe.

*Told from a dog's perspective, this story is inspired by the real experiences of the thousands of clients we support each year.

"Coming to St Mungo's means people and their pets don't have to be apart."



Peter's a team member at a St Mungo's pet friendly accommodation. He shares the transformational difference keeping people with their pets can make, and the sense of community it creates too.

What's your role at St Mungo's?

"I'm a Client Progression Coordinator, based in a St Mungo's hostel, which houses up to 68 people. I support clients in their recovery from homelessness and help plan their move to more permanent housing.

What's it like being part of a pet friendly accommodation?

Very rewarding! Especially when you see the stability and companionship pets bring to their owners through the toughest times.

We have four dogs with us at the moment, and I love the atmosphere they bring – they add something that makes the harder days seem easier.

Is there a process for allowing pets?

It's important our hostel is right for a pet, as well as its owner, so we do a short assessment to check they'll be ok here. We see what they're like in a busy setting, around new people.

As the owner of a very nervous rescue dog, Finn (pictured), I know how important it is to get the environment right, for their safety and everyone else's.

Can pets make it easier for you to bond with a person?

Definitely. Because we've not asked someone to make an impossible choice between a home or their pet, people are often more trusting and



willing to engage, which makes it easier to get to know them.

Pets can also help break the ice. Rather than diving straight into their backstory or future plans, it gives us something relaxed to chat about first.

Do you see people putting their pets' needs before their own?

We do – recently a client told us about the bond he has with his dog and how distressed he'd be if anything happened to her. He always makes sure she's fed and well cared for, before himself.

When he was homeless, she was a constant source of emotional support. He was so glad when he found St Mungo's because he'd be lost without his dog by his side.

How much of an impact can a pet have on someone's recovery?

They can make a huge difference in helping someone move forward – giving them a reason to get up and the motivation to keep trying.

Pets give people a real sense of purpose and, even on difficult days, having that bond can mean so much.

How do other clients respond to pets in the service?

One of the nicest things is seeing how clients care for the animals. Even if a pet isn't theirs, they'll look out for them, which brings people

together. It could be helping to walk a dog, giving them treats or looking after them for a day.

Often, people who've experienced homelessness are used to looking out for one another. If someone's got a pet, that's the same thing – it's a shared sense of responsibility.

What support do you give to pets?

We do what we can to support both people and their animals. We've built relationships with other organisations that help provide veterinary care and food, and they even step in to foster pets if their owner needs to stay in hospital, for example.

Are there any memorable moments of a client and their pet?

Gemma and Kaylee (pictured below) come to mind. Kaylee's owner has been poorly for some time and since stepping in to care for her, Gemma's transformation has been incredible.

Having someone to care for has helped Gemma start looking after herself more, and she's got a new sense of responsibility. You wouldn't believe the difference it's made to her. It's a real reminder of the difference pets can make to our client's lives."



Gemma and Kaylee



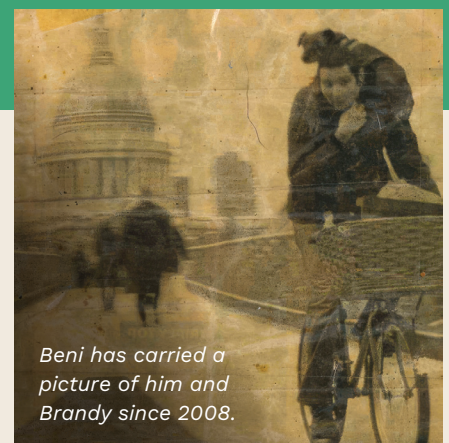
“Having dogs brought responsibility back into my life, at a time when I felt sad to be alive.”

When Beni first experienced homelessness, the companionship of his dog helped him through the toughest days. Now, living in St Mungo’s accommodation, that bond between Beni and his current dog, Casper, is just as important.

“In 2006 I began sleeping rough by a station in central London. Each day it felt like I was nearly dead. I was addicted to heroin, and after each hit, I’d wake up feeling sad to be alive.

One day I met a man who had a four-month-old puppy named Brandy (pictured). I could see he wasn’t able to care for her and she needed to eat.

“So I went and bought her some food and the man said I could keep her. From that day, Brandy gave me responsibility again. It was my job to look after her.”



Beni has carried a picture of him and Brandy since 2008.

We went everywhere together and slept in a car park. Brandy helped me through those times, and I felt safer with her. She was always on high alert, especially at night-time, listening out for sounds.

People would give me money and say, ‘this is for the dog, so you can buy her something to eat.’

Brandy's the reason I gradually got clean from drugs. I eventually found us accommodation in a St Mungo's hostel which kept us together, and I got myself a job.

Losing everything

I had 16 years with Brandy until she died in 2019. I didn't have a partner or my own family. But she was my family, and so after losing her I relapsed on drugs again after 13 years of being clean.

"From there I lost everything else: my home, job, bank account, and motorbike. Absolutely everything was gone."

After a difficult few years, I went into rehab. After some time there, I got clean again. Before my mother passed away three years ago, she told me she believed having another dog would keep me away from drugs. So, she helped me buy a new dog before I had the chance to relapse again.

Meeting Casper

I was in the West End in London when I saw a man selling Casper. Straight away I wanted to look after him and knew that doing so would keep me away from drugs. I bought Casper that day – the best money I've ever spent!

We began living between different hostels, but they weren't suitable for us. He's a big dog and needed somewhere to settle.

"Eventually a referral was made for us to stay in a St Mungo's accommodation, just like I did with Brandy all those years back."

That was a year ago and we've been here ever since, which we both enjoy. Casper has an outside space and gets a lot of attention from the other residents and St Mungo's team.

Life today

Having a home with Casper means a lot, because he's not just a dog to me – he's my baby and doesn't leave my side. I like to keep myself busy, so he comes to work with me at a foodbank.

He gets to play, eat some food and keeps my colleagues happy too.

One of my dreams is to open my own coffee van business. I'm originally from Italy, so I'd like to combine two of my favourite things – coffee and cars!"

"But for now, things are going well and we have a good life. In between Brandy dying and getting Casper, I took drugs because I felt so alone. But with him in my life now, it's different. I have no reason to go back to that way of living."





**Leave a
gift.**

**Rebuild
a future.**

Many of us wonder what the world will look like when we're no longer here. By leaving a gift in your will, you can help shape that future and offer lasting hope to people experiencing homelessness.

After taking care of your loved ones, a gift to St Mungo's, no matter how big or small, could help more people move beyond crisis.

Each year St Mungo's supports thousands of people to move away from a life of rough sleeping. Your gift could help fund long term, personalised support. From our frontline work, to therapy, recovery services, skills training and healthcare – the building blocks of a more stable future.

Because when everything's fallen apart, your kindness could help someone hold their life together.

For more information, contact our Gifts in Wills team on **legacies@mungos.org** or **020 8600 3000**. If you've already remembered St Mungo's in your will, thank you. We're so grateful for your support.

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.



StMungo's

Supporter Care team

Email: supportercare@mungos.org

St Mungo's, 8-10 Warner Street,
London, EC1R 5HA

Registered Charity No. 1149085. Company No. 8225808
(England and Wales) Housing Association No. LH0279

Follow us on social media:

  **@StMungos**  **@StMungosUK**

If you would like to change your contact preferences or sign up to receive *Frontline*, please contact our Supporter Care team. Our privacy policy explains how we use personal information, for more details please visit: mungos.org/privacy-policy