StMungo's

Frontline

Winter edition 2026



“While the stations close on Christmas Day, we're still out there, looking for people with nowhere else to go.”

Page 4



“Unlike on the streets, I know I’ll have a peaceful Christmas at St Mungo’s.”

Page 6



“We’re a community that offers kindness and hope.”

Page 8

When home feels far away for people sleeping rough this Christmas, St Mungo's is here to bring it within reach.



It's that time of year where trees are going up, plans with loved ones are in motion, and for many, a restful Christmas lies ahead.

For a lot of people living with us, this will be the first Christmas they've celebrated in a long time. So thank you for supporting St Mungo's and helping to make this a reality.

Changing lives for good

Our frontline teams continue to support people sleeping rough, who otherwise face another winter on the cold, damp streets.

So we are delighted that Prime Minister Andy Burnham has launched a national drive to offer everyone sleeping rough a route off the streets by Christmas. A pivotal moment, and exactly the kind of intervention needed to save lives.

We've been working in collaboration with the government to help make this happen. But helping people off the streets is only the first step of recovery from homelessness. It needs more than a temporary roof over someone's head. That's why we offer tailored support to meet people's needs, including someone to trust, opportunities to gain new skills, paths to employment and, of course, a place to call home. We're here all day, every day, for as long as it takes.

Words that matter

As well as providing tailored, practical support, we know how much words of encouragement can mean to our clients – especially at a time of year that can feel particularly tough.

Along with your support this Christmas, I'd be so grateful if you could send bauble messages to our clients, to help them through the festive period. Find out more on page 3.

Your winter *Frontline*

I hope you enjoy your final *Frontline* of 2026 and learn about some of the differences your support makes.

On page 4, Kirsty shares what it's like in two of London's busiest train stations, looking for people to bring into safety.

There are our wonderful clients, Ken and Howard, on page 6. After spending many years sleeping rough, they've each found a home for life with the help of St Mungo's and can finally enjoy Christmas.

On page 8, Sofia explains the special community that's been created in a London church – open to everyone, no matter their faith or background, and Bilal's reasons for attending.

And on page 10, you can read Helen's story, who's overcome so much and is now making Christmas a time to remember.

Thank you as always for your ongoing support. I hope you have a happy festive season and a peaceful year ahead.

Emma Haddad,
Chief Executive, St Mungo's

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Messages of hope.

Last year, our supporters sent messages of hope and encouragement to St Mungo's clients. Displayed in our accommodation services during the festive season, these messages reminded people that they were being thought of at what can be a particularly difficult time of year.

Here are just a few of the kind words we received, which we hope will bring a little encouragement and happiness to you, too...

I believe you're a star...now it's your turn to believe you're a star and shine bright!

I hope you meet people who are kind, considerate and generous to you, not only during the festive period but every day.

The world is happier for your presence here. Wishing you a very Merry Christmas!

You are a unique, amazing person with great potential. Believe in yourself and be strong! You're not alone – remember to take all the help offered when you need it.

Send us your bauble!

Share your own message of hope with St Mungo's clients this Christmas.

Just fill in the enclosed card and return it to us following the instructions provided. Your message could brighten someone's day and remind them they're not alone.

“We’re still out there on Christmas Day, looking for people to help inside.”

Over winter, stations are often full of people excitedly heading home for Christmas. But for some, they are a place to sleep. Working in partnership with Network Rail, Kirsty explains how she's there, helping people take their first steps away from homelessness.



What’s your role at St Mungo’s?

“I’m an Outreach Coordinator in our Network Rail frontline team, based in Victoria and Charing Cross train stations.

Why is there a Network Rail team?

They commissioned the service because the stations are some of London’s major hotspots for rough sleeping. We’re looking to help people inside and offer specialist support to end their homelessness.

What does a typical shift involve?

We spend up to four hours out, focusing on either one or both stations. It means we’re less likely to miss people and can find them in and outside the stations.

Do you find people to help every time you’re there?

Always – just before the stations open at 4am, there’s lots of people waiting to be let in so they can use the toilets and washing facilities and have somewhere safe to sit. People often spend most of their day there, particularly in the colder months because it’s warmer than the streets.

Last year, the Network Rail outreach team helped over

over 100

people into safety.

The same goes for our shifts starting at 9pm. We see people waiting in the station until it closes, who often go on to sleep on public transport overnight.

How do you help?

If I’ve not met someone before, I’ll introduce myself and offer a hot drink. Then I’ll get to know the person and understand their situation and what support they need. Because there’s often other people nearby, I offer to take people to a more private space so they might feel more comfortable opening up. That could mean going for a walk and talking or having a conversation at a St Mungo’s hub.

If there’s an emergency bedspace available, I’ll support them there and chat through what will happen next, so they don’t have to return to the streets.

What’s it like on the frontline over Christmas?

Whilst on shift we see members of the public coming back from Christmas parties or heading home for the holiday.

But it's a particularly difficult time for the people we support, who will often be dealing with feelings of



isolation, grief and having nowhere to stay. Over Christmas there’s usually more accommodation options available, which will hopefully make it an easier time for them.

There’s been an even bigger push to get people inside since government launched its national drive to get everyone sleeping rough off the streets by Christmas. We’re committed to making this happen, as well as our longer-term ambition to end homelessness and rebuild lives.

Do you still go out there on Christmas Day?

Yes, the stations are closed to the public, but we’re still on shift. There’s an increase in people sleeping outside as everything's shut, so it’s important we’re out to offer support.

We do everything we can to help them into emergency hubs, hostels, and hotels, and from there they can be supported into longer-term accommodation.

Has there been a memorable time for you?

Last New Years Eve, temperatures dropped to freezing and we needed to get people into emergency accommodation, to prevent significant harm or death to people rough sleeping.

Three of us went out on shift, referring and supporting lots of people into night shelters and emergency bed spaces, which resulted in a lot of people staying in accommodation for the long-term.

I met a man who had been discharged from hospital with nowhere to go. He was very upset and distressed. We ended up in a taxi to a hostel with him, providing lots of reassurance.

The driver got lost, so I was trying to calm our client down whilst giving directions! But we made it, and it was a nice feeling knowing he’d be taken care of and was inside.

What will this Christmas involve?

Whilst we know it’s not a magical time of the year for everyone, we’ll still be out, doing all we can to improve their Christmas and lives, to feel like they belong again.”



“It’s taken time and patience, but now I finally have a peaceful, homely feeling.”

Ken and Howard each spent many difficult years sleeping rough. Now, they have found safety and a reason to celebrate in a St Mungo’s registered care home, which provides specialist support and a home for life for people who’ve experienced homelessness.



Ken's story

“I grew up in a nice, happy family. In my younger years, I had wandering feet to see the world and travelled, mile after mile. But later, I went through a divorce and began drinking heavily, which eventually led to me sleeping rough.

“I did that for a long time, on and off, starting from the 1970’s. Homelessness isn’t an adventure. You meet a lot of people along the way – the good, the bad and the ugly.”

My survival instinct kicked in, like times when I was soaked from the rain and the cold got into my body. I’d find bathrooms in stations to dry off, which were called ‘wash and brush ups’ in those days.

On Christmas Day I’d be invited into local churches, given a food parcel and some clothing.

“It was a great chance to get help, but always short lived. After Boxing Day, you went back to what you were doing before.”

But in 2022 someone approached me on the street and said, 'this isn't the life you want.'

Things changed after that, because they referred me to St Mungo’s and soon after I was offered a room here.

A place I can be supported, but have my own space and independence, too. We can see a nurse when we need to and receive great advice from the team. I believe everyone should be entitled to that.

Christmas is very different now; it’s a big deal here! We get a present, sing carols and have a get together.

“On the streets, you're in an atmosphere of surviving the rat race, but here you’re surrounded by kindness.”

It’s taken a long time and a lot of patience, but now I finally have a peaceful, warm homely feeling.”



Howard’s story

“I was working as a support worker, but in my forties, my alcohol addiction got on top of me. I began sleeping in vehicles and didn’t think of myself as homeless. It’s when I started waking up in doorways that I felt it.

Many years were spent on the streets, including Christmas Days. It was horrible, especially when I was alone. I met a lot of kind people, and others who weren’t. But that’s the nature of the game on the streets.

“Then in 2024 I passed out at a train station and was hit by an oncoming tube. I spent a month in a coma and am lucky to be alive.”

After months in hospital, my social worker introduced me to St Mungo’s. I’d stayed in some St Mungo’s hostels over the years, but nothing like here. When the team offered me a space they said, ‘you can get the help you need here for the rest of your life.’ Words I hadn’t heard for a very long time.

Since then, I've been supported with my addiction and to manage my health issues.

“Not every day is perfect, but this is the calmest I’ve ever felt and my mental health is improving.”

This will be my third Christmas here. The team put on a party for us, with amazing food and karaoke! It’s good fun, even if you’re not hugely into celebrating.

“We get together for other religious celebrations’ too, like St Patrick's Day and Eid.”

Unlike on the streets, I know I’m going to have a nice day. I’ll receive a small gift, relax, watch some TV and visit my friends.

After feeling unsettled for much of my life, it feels ‘normal’ now. So when people tell me I’m doing well, I’m starting to believe them – I really am doing alright!”

“We’re here to offer kindness and help, no matter the time of year.”



This St Mungo's weekly hub helps people experiencing or recovering from homelessness access vital services and support, from tailored advice to opportunities to learn new skills. Based in a central London church, find out about the special community that's been created.



Sofia

“Part of my role at St Mungo’s is to coordinate the Pilgrims’ Rest hub at Christchurch in Southwark. We’re in a church, but you don’t have to be religious to attend.

Now in its third year, we’re not an emergency centre. We’re a community who meets once a week, giving people access to support in a safe, cosy environment.

“We welcome people into our shared space with hot drinks, food, twinkling fairy lights, and the freedom to chat with someone at their own pace.”

A total contrast compared to offices or doctors’ surgeries, where a lot of our clients are used to seeking help.

The teams here – both from St Mungo’s and other organisations, are essential to helping someone recover from homelessness. We offer tailored advice and guidance around housing, physical and mental health, nurse appointments, immigration and employment advice, and more to around 40 people each week. There’s also Father Lee who runs the church and is always here for a chat and advice.

Trying new things helps our clients grow in confidence and encourages them to make the hub part of their routine – with some even travelling over an hour to attend. One week we can host a music session, and the next a chance to experience the benefits of acupuncture. Our activities can help someone’s wellbeing come on in leaps and bounds, too.

I see them build a support network here and start to trust us, which for some is an unfamiliar feeling.

“There’s a general sense that kindness and looking out for others are emphasised more around Christmas, but that’s our approach all year round.”

We try to make Christmas special though, and for the past two years we’ve hosted a party. With donated presents, some songs and games, I was so pleased to see how many people joined in.

“Even people who were usually quiet and going through tough times. They were laughing and celebrating in a place they genuinely wanted to be.”

I’m excited to bring some more Christmas spirit to the hub this year, and look back on the progress people have made, and continue to make, since coming to us.”

Bilal’s story

“I became homeless in 2013 when my mum passed away. St Mungo’s introduced themselves to me when I was rough sleeping for what felt like 100 years, but it was about 10 months.

I wouldn’t wish it on anyone. You never sleep comfortably and are aware of the dangers around you – it really wasn’t easy.

But after coming into an emergency hub and living in different St Mungo’s accommodations for around 10 years, I’ve been in my own home for a while now.

“Even though I no longer live in St Mungo’s accommodation, that hasn’t stopped me from coming to Pilgrims' Rest for the past two years. The team are real, genuine people – they talk to you like you would a friend and I trust them.”

I might not be a millionaire or have the most, but here I see how treating people with kindness costs nothing, and how a collective effort can change lives.”



“I have a new life now, and St Mungo’s helped me with no judgement.”

When Helen first met St Mungo’s mental health support team, she was struggling to get through each day. She talks about the help we’ve given her, and how Christmas – and everyday life, look and feel very different now.



“A couple of years ago, the only way I could describe my mind was like a bunch of Christmas tree lights all tangled up, with no idea how to make sense of them.”



“I’d have panic attacks and was using drugs to numb the trauma I’d been through – years of abuse, control and grief.

But things finally changed when I reconnected with my mum after 30 years of being apart. A referral had been made to St Mungo’s, and the team came to see me at my mum’s house.

That’s when I met Jess, my support worker. Her visit was perfect timing – like an angel had come to me in that moment.

Immediate support

She began helping me right away. From putting a blanket over me on the sofa, to finding out who I am and what I was going through. There was no judgement and I could trust her, because she genuinely cared about helping me.

In just over a year, I’ve been helped to break down my emotions and become clean from drugs. I’ve been given coping mechanisms to help with anxiety and stress – even simple techniques like patting my head, down to my neck and chest. I felt silly at first, but it works and I feel calmer!

St Mungo’s has also helped me access a therapist, who’s helped me a lot.

That, combined with my weekly home visits, is such a support. I’ve started sleeping better and feel inner peace for the first time in my life.

How Christmas has changed

I was brought up as a Jehovah’s Witness, so there was no tree, presents or roast dinner. But I began to celebrate when I was 17. Like many people, some Christmases were happier than others, depending on what was happening in my life at the time.

Last year was completely different though. I’d been supported by St Mungo’s for a while and wanted to make it a Christmas to remember.

I went to my mum’s and did a food shop for us and my children, bought them some presents and spent all day cooking. My family were all at the table, just like you see on the TV at this time of year.

It was the first time I could eat Christmas dinner with them and have a giggle with everyone. It was complete when my son said, ‘I’m so proud of you.’

Life today

I’ve got a new life now, which can be difficult to navigate at times, and I still have my struggles. But I have so much support around me – including Nelly, my lovely dog (pictured).

Jess visits me once a week and comes along to my medical appointments, which I’m especially grateful for when I find it overwhelming to leave the house.

St Mungo’s and my family have been a blessing, giving me the help I’d needed for so long. Now, I’m looking forward to another Christmas with my kids, and I can see myself getting better all the time.”



“My support worker gave me some cards with motivational quotes, which I keep by my window and read every day. They remind me of what’s important and how far I’ve come – messages we should all remind ourselves of a little more often.”



Start 2027 with a challenge to be proud of!

Have you been thinking about pushing yourself and achieving something new? Whether it's running, walking or hosting a quiz night fundraiser. Whatever inspires you, we'd be so grateful if you chose to support St Mungo's along the way.

Every pound you raise could help more people rebuild their lives and leave homelessness behind for good.

Whether you dream up your own challenge or take part in one of our organised events, we're right behind you.

Find out more

Bucket collections

This December, we'll be hosting our festive bucket collections at some of London's biggest train stations, and we'd love you to get involved!

Whether you're a returning volunteer or joining us for the first time, just a couple of hours of your time could help raise vital funds to support people experiencing homelessness. We'll make sure you have everything you need on the day, including a St Mungo's t-shirt and collection bucket.



Sign up today!

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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