



CARING AT CHRISTMAS 2021

Supporting those experiencing homelessness at Christmas for over three decades

Proudly based in St Pauls and Old Market





Introduction

The relevance and urgency of Caring in Bristol's vision; creating a city empowered to solve homelessness, has never been greater. To meet this demand Caring in Bristol ran our Caring at Christmas project for the 32nd year: A week-long pop-up Day Centre and meal delivery service in the centre of Bristol.

The need of this project is critical with Christmas being an acutely difficult time of year for those experiencing homelessness. Demonstrated by many of our clients feeling isolated or only having unsafe and inhospitable housing options. But the pressure on this vital support service is growing greater. There is currently a lack of available shelter space, limited to zero social housing, a shortage of voluntary action due to covid restrictions, closing of services, the rising cost of living, excruciatingly tricky benefits, work and homelessness pathways twinned with hard to navigate asylum, refugee and welfare systems, a cut to financial aid, a destructing housing crisis, personal trauma experiences and pervasive stigma. All of these factors have led to an increased demand on our services.

December 2021 was a challenging external environment for the project, as the Covid-19 pandemic was still having a huge impact across society. Nonetheless Caring in Bristol were determined to continue our commitment to those homeless and at risk of homelessness in our city.

Designing a Christmas project which safely met the needs of our guests and clients was not easy, but it was a vital challenge which our experienced staff rose to. To navigate Covid-19 restrictions, sickness and isolations we had multi-layered contingency plans so that we could dynamically switch how we operated the Day Centre Service as uncertainty around impending lockdowns loomed. We were proud to work with the Public Health and Environmental Health departments at Bristol City Council to ensure that we operated to the safest standards, while still providing a crucial service for Bristol's homeless community over the Christmas period.

In line with our strategic vision the Caring at Christmas project had a renewed focus on measuring impact. It's not enough for voluntary organisations like ours to just highlight numbers which exemplify the sheer scale of the project. It was pertinent to demonstrate the importance of the service by capturing the impact of the project beyond its four walls, evidencing the role this Christmas service plays in supporting people out of homelessness in Bristol and beyond.

In December
2021 the Caring
at Christmas
project supported
a record amount
of people: **544**

In the following report we will illustrate the project and its successes.

Focus On The End Goal

*“The overarching desire across the project was to support the needs of our vulnerable clients and alleviate feelings of isolation across the difficult festive period. Appreciating the complexities and differing circumstances of our clients we shaped the project around two services this year. A day centre offering warmth, hot food and a safe, sociable space for our guests and doorstep deliveries to clients in temporary or emergency accommodation and those housed through the homelessness pathways. **By making the project accessible to as many people as possible we were able to support 544 individuals across the festive period, the largest reach the project has ever had.***

Running from Christmas Eve to the 30th of December we opened the doors of the Trinity Centre in Old Market, a welcoming and inclusive space where clients could socialise,

enjoy hot food, relax in the cinema area and access support and services. Fundamental to the day centre is giving our clients autonomy and choice, shaping the service around their needs and wishes. Clients received table service for food and drinks, could vote which films were screened, decide on a new hairstyle, select a new outfit, get their laundry done and choose what food they would like to take home.

From Christmas Eve to Boxing Day we also ran our doorstep deliveries. Working with Bristol’s restaurants, the community and our fantastic volunteers, we delivered gift hampers, hot meals and some festive cheer to 206 individuals, many of whom would not have seen anyone, or been able to access any services over this period.”

Mike Orme,
Caring at Christmas Project Manager





We were delighted to be able to re-open our Christmas Day Centre again for 2021 in one of Bristol's leading community venues, Trinity Arts Centre in Old Market. With a rigorous set of measures in place to prevent covid transmission, we were able to safely operate with no reported Covid cases within our community of guests.

338 individual's made **753**

unique visits over **7 days**.

With **47%** visiting on

more than one day.



Guests visiting 2 days	57	17%
Guests visiting 3 days	39	12%
Guests visiting 4 days	17	5%
Guests visiting 5 days	18	5%
Guests visiting 6 days	17	5%
Guests visiting 7 days	12	4%

22 guests were given advice, assistance and support by Caring in Bristol staff, on issues including:

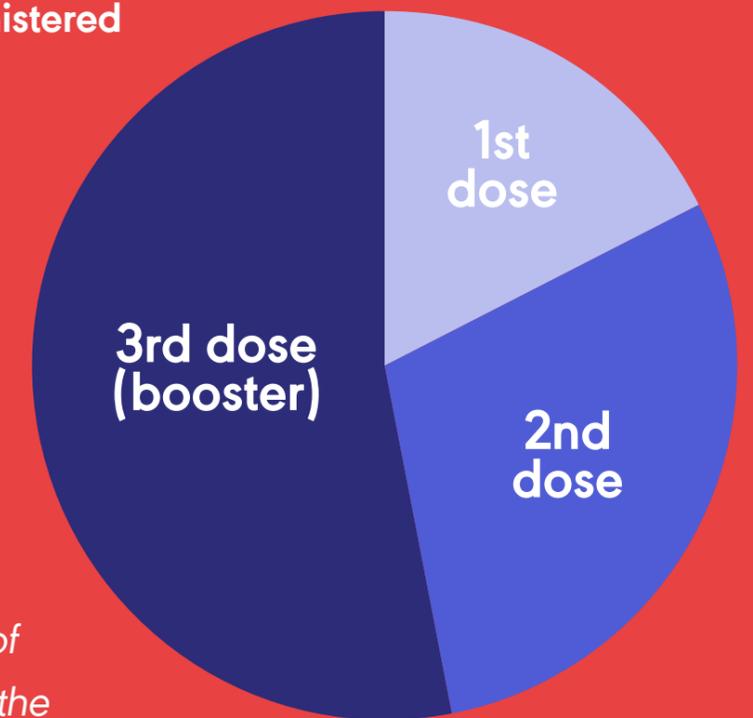
- 👤 **7** Referrals to St Mungo's Rough Outreach Team
- 👤 Support with housing issues **x4**
- 👤 Mental health / crisis support **x3**
- 👤 General wellbeing support **x3**
- 👤 Mental health signposting **x2**
- 👤 Medical / dental signposting **x2**
- 👤 Support / signposting with immigration issues **x2**
- 👤 Support with financial issue **x1**



We had **5** partner organisations visiting the Day Centre including, St Mungo's Outreach Team, Bristol Drugs Project and Golden Key.

St John's Ambulance supported **18** guests across three days.

34 Vaccinations were administered by Sirona care & health:



"We were very happy to support Caring at Christmas with an offer of on-site vaccines and pleased with the number we were able to give during a crucial time in the pandemic. Vaccination clinics are not easily accessible for people experiencing homelessness, and there is a high level of vaccine hesitancy in the population, so Caring at Christmas provided a great opportunity to deliver a high number of doses in a discreet and accessible setting."

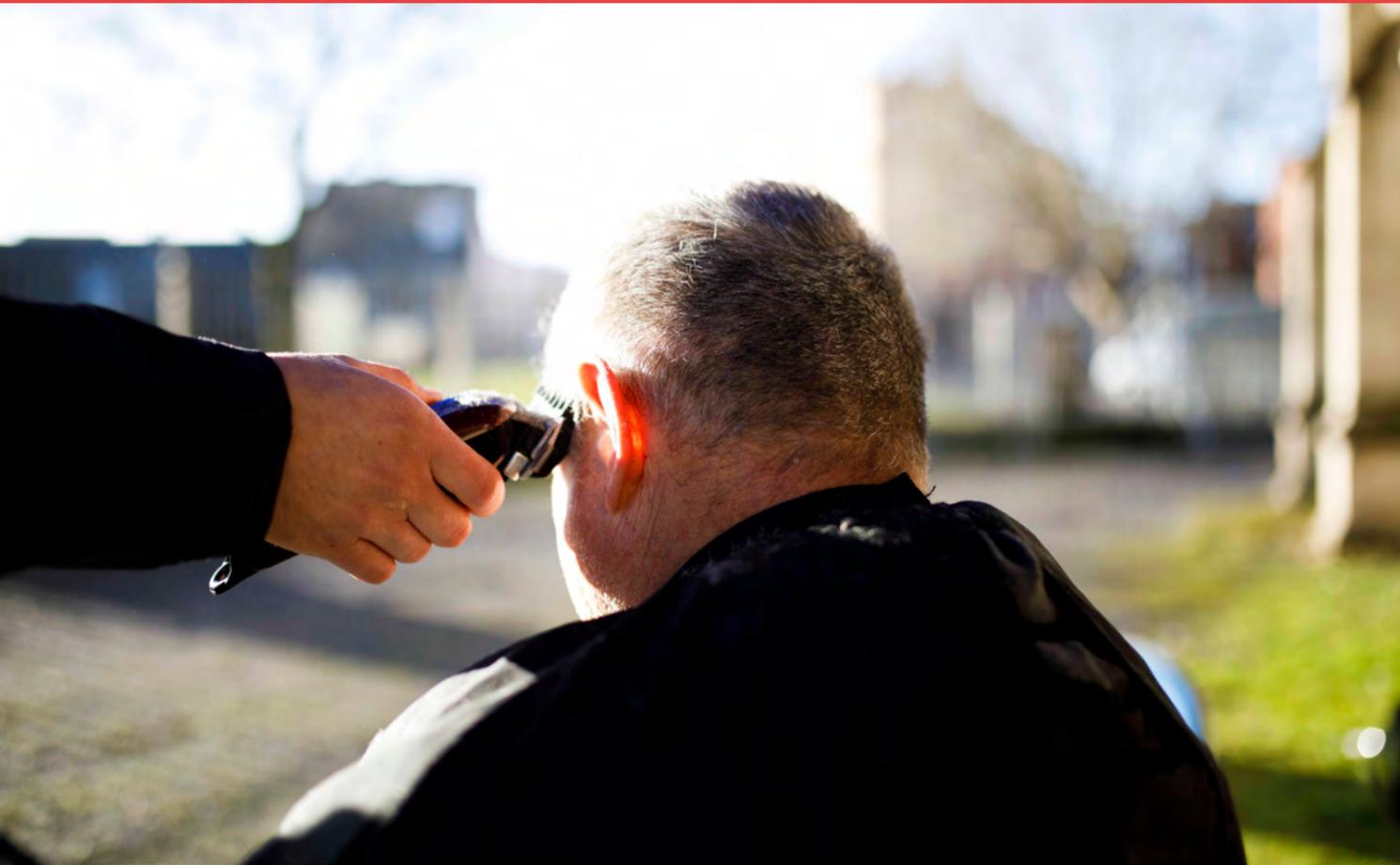
Phillipa Cozens – Sirona care & health,
Specialist Services Manager

Activities

36 Haircuts Received

6 Glasses Repaired

24 Films Screened

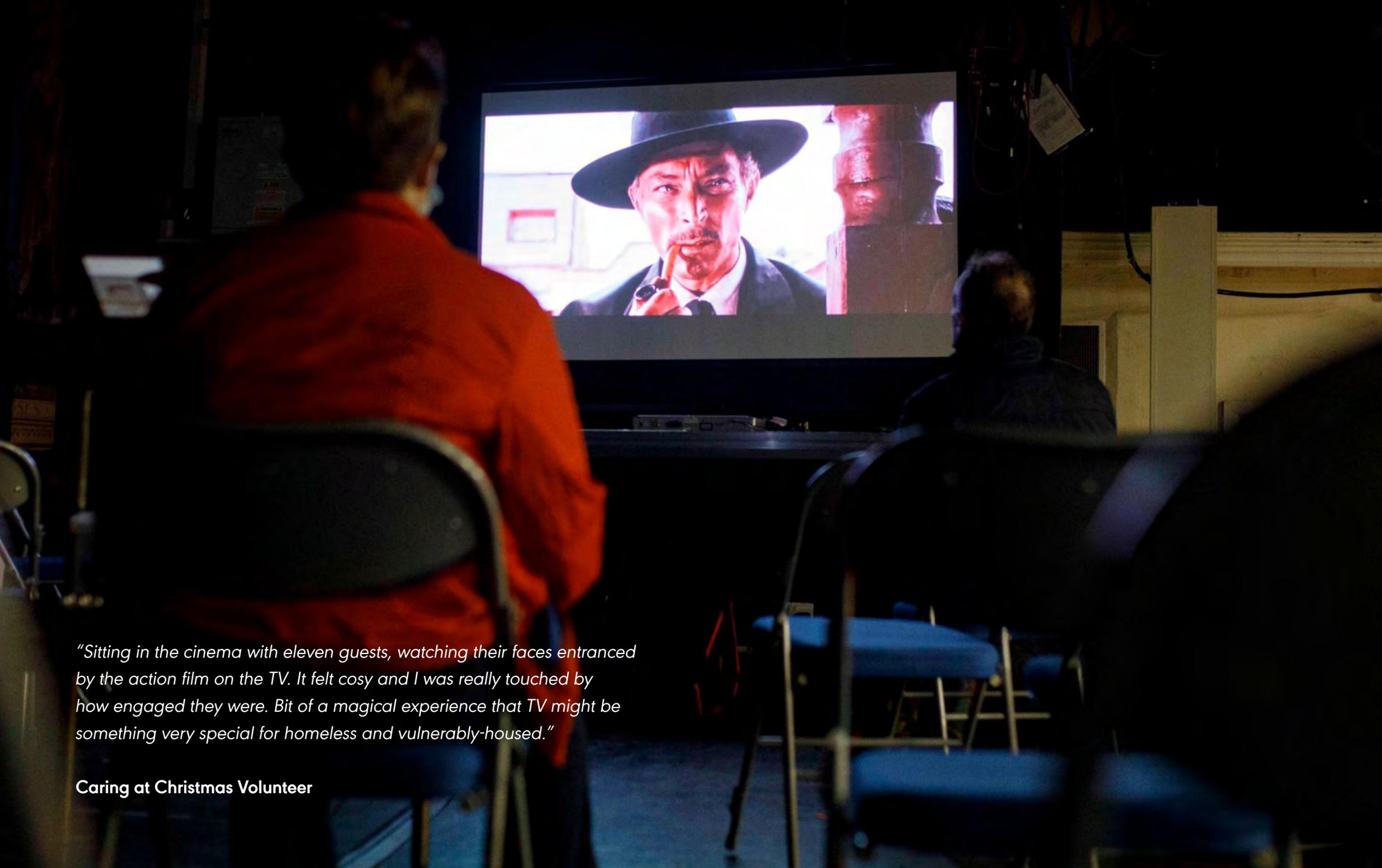


An outstanding highlight of the entertainment activities was the Cinema, that held a big group of guests each day. Our Volunteer Coordinator Roberto gives a behind the scenes anecdote:

"It was nice to see some of the same people come to the cinema on multiple days. A lot of this was thanks to Jobo, film lover, and member of the Trinity security team. Jobo took it upon himself to set up and surveil the cinema area across much of the event. Once they became quite pally, guests began requesting films they wanted to watch. So Jobo would go home after his shift, download several of the requests, and bring them in the following day. He projected the films in the order which they had

been requested to maintain all fairness. Most of the films were action-packed classics. I caught brief moments of Sergio Leone's 'Once Upon a Time in the West,' a few Bond films, I saw multiple Jason Statham characters giving someone a beating and Austin Powers lightning the mood. Altogether it was a real pleasure to see a service come together so organically and completely tailored to guests' wants."

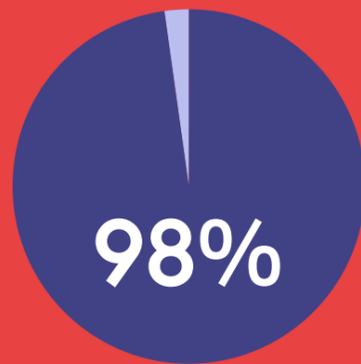
Roberto Dooner, Volunteer Coordinator (and film lover)



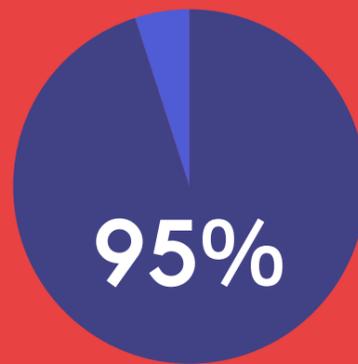
"Sitting in the cinema with eleven guests, watching their faces entranced by the action film on the TV. It felt cosy and I was really touched by how engaged they were. Bit of a magical experience that TV might be something very special for homeless and vulnerably-housed."

Caring at Christmas Volunteer

Our Guests



98% of guests told us they would like to come back to the Day Centre.



95% of guests told us that they "enjoyed the experience at the day centre" ¹

¹Have you enjoyed your experience here today?

95.18% Yes / 0% No / 4.82% Don't Know.

This question was answered by 83 guests over two days.

Caring at Christmas 2021 provided a great opportunity to reflect on our impact and advance our understanding of our service users. It became important to illustrate the breadth and scope of housing vulnerabilities and homelessness experiences that our guests were living through. This supports a better understanding of the housing crisis landscape in Bristol.

Guests were asked to describe their current living situation. Of the 80 responses that were identifiable, we can use the following %.

Temporary & Emergency		
Accommodation	24	30%
Rough Sleeping	24	30%
Vehicle	11	14%
Supported Housing	9	11%
Social Housing	5	6%
Sofa Surfing	4	5%
Probation Service	1	1%
Women's Refuge	1	1%
Care Home	1	1%
Other		
No answer	174	
Not clear	84	

How was your day?

-  *"Everything was beautiful"*
-  *"Brilliant day thank you, perfect"*
-  *"10 out of 10"*
-  *"Sound, it's been really good for me the last two days as I have just got out of prison"*
-  *"Enjoyable, friendly and plenty of food"*
-  *"Better distraction than being on my own"*
-  *"It was better when I walked in the door, until then it was rubbish"*

*Brilliant, Wonderful, Totally Awesome,
Relaxing, Welcoming, Lovely, Fantastic*

Where would you have been if you didn't come here today?

"I would be shoplifting"

"Home alone"

"in an off license or pub"

"Sat in an empty room staring at walls and sitting thinking of the past"

"I would be in the betting shop because I have a gambling addiction"

"By myself in a house with no electric"

*I would have been:
"sad and lonely"*

"In bed, under the covers. Nothing else open"

"At home alone very lonely"

"On my own"

"Bored in room or sat in town"

"At home by myself being a recluse"

"I have nowhere"

"On my own in my freezing cold flat"

"walking round the streets or asleep in a doorway"

What was your favourite part of Caring at Christmas?

"Food was good. Meeting other volunteers and the staff. People who care"

"Conversation"

"Meeting new people"

"Meeting People, talking and not being judged"

"Friendly team of volunteers"



People First

Creating a community of volunteers is a special component of Caring at Christmas that has far-reaching impact on the lives of our clients and knowledge held on homelessness in Bristol.

Many of our volunteers value the close contact they are granted to those with lived experience and leave with a greater understanding of our cause and organisational need.

In 2021 we were overwhelmed by the amount of people hoping to donate their time to our cause, this allowed us to create 11 different volunteer roles drawing on our communities wealth of skills and abilities. From sorting and mending donations, to cooking, waiting tables, logistics, present wrappers, card writers and delivery drivers. We had a role to suit everybody.

51% of volunteers were volunteering at Caring at Christmas for their first time.

16% have been volunteering for more than 5 years.

92% of volunteers said they felt 'well prepared' for their shift.

98% of volunteers felt that Caring at Christmas was a welcoming project to be a part of.

4.6/5 average rating of volunteering experience by volunteers.

Over **99%** of volunteers said they would volunteer for Caring in Bristol again.

96% of volunteers felt more informed about homelessness in Bristol as a result of volunteering at Caring at Christmas.

347 Volunteers donated their time to the project.

2916 Volunteer hours logged.

£27,702 Value of volunteer's time at living wage.



"Processing hundreds of applications, I was taken aback by the overwhelming quantity of people who wanted to spend their Christmas helping others. Seeing the event finally happen, working with kind and dedicated volunteers and seeing the results of everyone's efforts come together was a fantastic experience. It was a privilege to be a part of this community, and of the remarkable team effort that made Caring at Christmas 2021 happen!"

Roberto Dooner,
Volunteer Coordinator

Working with partner organisations and the Caring in Bristol team, our volunteers received the following training:

-  **31 Volunteers** - **Drug and Alcohol awareness**, provided by Bristol Drugs Project.
-  **47 Volunteers** - **Introduction to supporting people with Mental Health Needs**, provided by St Mungo's ACE team.
-  **41 Volunteers** - **Guest Management** - covering communication, managing boundaries, and de-escalating situations, provided by Caring in Bristol.
-  **10 Volunteers** - **First Aid**, provided by Hidden Depths Scuba.



"[My best moment was] Finding out that one of the guests who we've looked after for 5/6 years has just been given permanent housing!!!"

"[My best moment was] Seeing the smiles on guests faces at the Trinity centre"

"There are some very happy people out there because of the efforts of the Caring at Christmas team.... Well done to you for your planning and perseverance... against all the challenges... you have prevailed and succeed... Celebrate a job well done!!!"

"[My best moment was] I loved delivering food to people and having a chance to chat on their doorstep. Playing scrabble with one of the guests. Having a guest tell me about a series of books he was enthusiastic about and feeling his joy in sharing."

"Good team vibes all round."

"The whole experience was great, it really exceeded my expectations. The team and visitors were great I'll definitely be signing up for opportunities in the future"

"I just wanted to thank you all for putting together the Christmas project - I can only imagine the tremendous amount of work, organisation and care you all put in. You made it look as though the whole project was seamlessly operated and that is clearly due to your supreme efforts... Anyway many thanks for everything from the exceptional training programme to the help on the day"

"[My best moment was] Being able to offer support in what felt a safe environment for the guests!"

"[My best moment was] Seeing familiar faces returning to the Trinity Centre each day."

"[My best moment was] When one of the guests wrote my name for me in Arabic and gave it to me! It looked very impressive!"

"[My best moment was] When guests were leaving and saying goodbye as if we had all been at a function together as a group. It felt very inclusive, relaxed and positive."

"[My best moment was] Learning that a guest had secured a job and was planning for a brighter future thanks to the support in Bristol"

"[My best moment was] Guests trying on the clothes and discussing style with them"

"[My best moment was] Being genuinely thanked by several guests meant a lot; above all it was the self realisation that I was a very lucky person in the overall scheme of life."





"[My best moment was] Having a couple of good, long chats about anything and everything with one of the guests"

"Wow not sure where to start. Meeting the guests was great and so interesting to see what goes into the event and the various organisations that get involved"

"Had a great time talking with the visitors and volunteers. Learnt a load about drawing techniques from the Amazing artist visitor, and just generally communicating with others. Had a great time with other volunteers and was so beautiful to spend Christmas day with other like minded people."

"[My best moment was] Giving a guest a sleeping bag and him telling me 'I'd saved his life' and gave me a hug. Was heartbreaking but just shows how much the day means to the guests."

"[My best moment was] Being able to have conversations with the individuals who visited us and learning more about them as people. Was great that we have enough volunteers to allow for these conversations to take place"

"[My best moment was] Sitting down and chatting with guests and hearing their stories"

"[My best moment was] Talking with the guests and being shown their artwork. Interacting with volunteers and feeling valuable."

"[My best moment was] Seeing lots of happy breakfast guests on Christmas Day"

"[My best moment was] Seeing the set-up at Trinity Hall - it was better than my Christmas!"

"I enjoyed every minute of it!"

Collaboration

“Collaboration runs deep across all elements of Caring at Christmas and it’s a testament to the drive and sense of community in Bristol to see all of the committed people and organisations coming together to help make this amazing project happen.”

Both new and continued partnerships with chefs and food charities mean we can serve our guests and clients top restaurant quality food. The relationships which Caring in Bristol holds with established organisations in the homelessness sector are also key in allowing us to effectively reach our clients and support the project, from referrals to our doorstep delivery service to providing sector specific training to our volunteers.

It was hugely rewarding drawing on the expertise and working with over 35 other individuals, charities and organisations in the planning of the project and seeing the successful delivery through everyone’s involvement. I look forward to seeing the breadth and depth of these relationships continue to grow each year.”

Georgia, Caring at Christmas
Project Coordinator



Food Partners

Bridging the gap between what is available in our city and what is accessible to our clients remains a firm promise in our food partnership work with restaurants.

Collaborating with Bristol's top chefs and food organisations enabled us to serve high quality and diverse hot breakfasts and delicious two-course lunches, plus hundreds of sandwiches for people to take away and eat at their leisure. The Day Centre also provided a continuous spread of snacks on offer thanks to our successful appeal for donations from the generous Bristolian public (thank you!).



660
Breakfasts
served

1050
Lunches
served

826
Desserts
served

1300
Sandwiches
eaten

Diets catered for:

Halal

Vegan

Vegetarian

All allergens

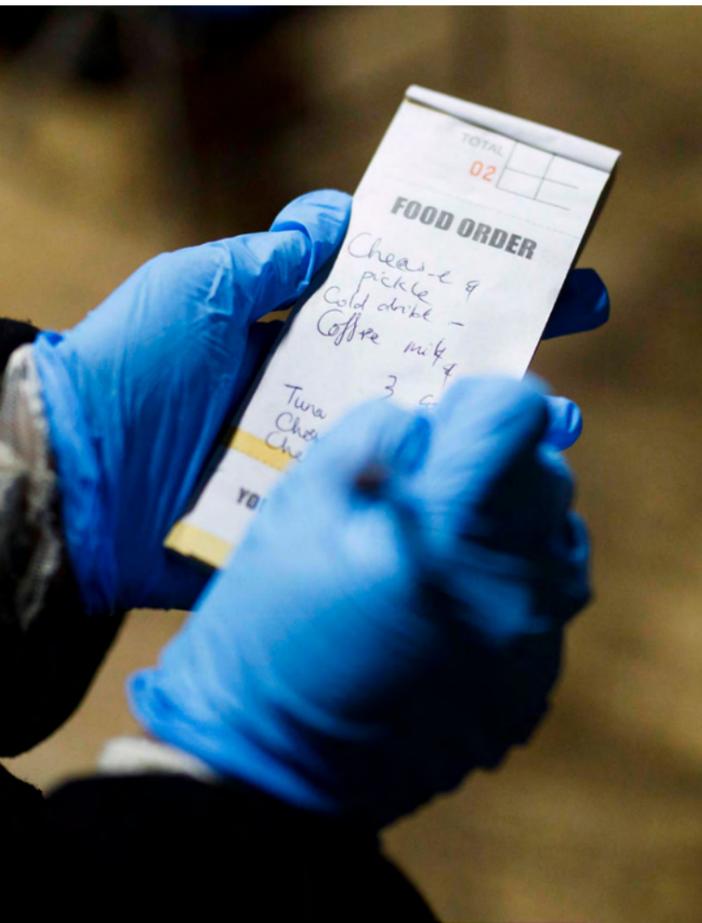


Food quotes from clients

"very good quality food, thank you so much"

"[My favourite part of Caring at Christmas was] Bacon Roll for Breakfast"

"[My favourite part of Caring at Christmas was] Tracey the star waiter"



Food quotes from volunteers

"[My best moment was] being a waiter - a long standing ambition! I think the table service worked very well; enabled more contact with guests and enabled a more equal power balance which is hard to achieve"

"[My best moment was] The many thanks from guests for serving their meals to them - I personally loved the fact they had table service as it truly felt like they were guests (I never get my dinner guests to queue at a hatch!!!)"

"[My best moment was] When the guests thanked us for such nice food"

"[My best moment was] Helping in the kitchen on Christmas day - being part of a great operation to feed lots of homes and clients"

Food quotes from chefs

'It was really fun and brought back good memories from Cheers Drive, about coming together and working outside our usual box. It was inspiring and was great to be part of the project'

Ben Harvey & The Bianchis Family

"We were so pleased to be able to get involved again this year, the guests, staff and volunteers all make it so special. Seeing the city's independent restaurants and food organisations coming together to support such an important project is what Bristol's all about. Just doing our bit, providing decent meals for Bristol's amazing community is the least we can do. I can't imagine Christmas without it"

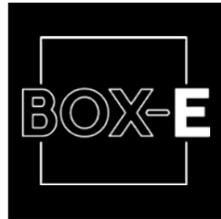
Shona Graham - Team Canteen CIC / Emmeline

"Cooking a Christmas roast with all the trimmings for 400 people is no mean feat! However, I passionately believe that good nutritious food should be accessible to everyone, and the guests and clients of Caring at Christmas deserve only the best. I was chuffed to be able to work with Caring in Bristol again this year"

Josh Eggleton - The Pony Bistro

A big thanks to our...

Food Partners:



Josh Eggleton



Referral Partners:



Meal Deliveries

Following the successful model of Caring in Bristol's Cheers Drive Project, Caring at Christmas ran a doorstep delivery service alongside the Day Centre. From the 24th-26th December volunteers buddied up with a co-driver to deliver quality hot meals, Christmas hampers and the opportunity for a friendly chat to people across all postcodes of Bristol. We worked with 12 referral organisations who put forward their clients who were at risk of homelessness or had been housed through the homelessness pathways.

525

Meals delivered

185

Christmas Hampers delivered

433.3

Miles covered by drivers over 3 days



Who we delivered to:

Accommodation type

Temporary and Emergency Accommodation	52	27%
Social housing ²	40	21%
Newly housed	38	20%
Supported housing for young people 16-25	26	14%
(forms of) Supported housing	21	11%
Asylum support accommodation	10	5%
Unknown	3	2%
Sofa surfing	1	1%

²Social homes are provided by housing associations (not-for-profit organisations that own, let, and manage rented housing) or a local council. As a social tenant, you rent your home from the housing association or council, who act as landlord. → [What is social housing - Shelter England](#)

**Where we delivered
food across Bristol**



What our referral partners had to say:

"Two years in a row this has been a fantastic service for vulnerable adults during a difficult period of time for many of them. It has offered them happiness, less stress over a stressful season and something to look forward to over what can be a hard festive period for many individuals. We have always had positive feedback from clients, this year we had clients coming back saying they were very happy to be receiving meals and found the volunteers to be very nice as well, which in our view is just as important as good food, being able to see a friendly face over the Christmas period."

"Our clients were really pleased to get their meals, for many it was the only way they would eat/see a friendly face that day, so super appreciated."

"All our clients were very happy, felt cared for. Some of them are not in contact with their family and didn't have a nice meal for Christmas since a long time. It could be a difficult period of the year, so they are touched that people organise this for them. They were grateful and asked us to thank all people involved."

"Feedback [from my clients] was fantastic. These vulnerable young people have support needs and feel isolated. The deliveries, along with the gifts were greatly appreciated at a very difficult time of year. The volunteers were engaging and friendly and made a huge difference to them. The quality of the food was noted as very high and felt not 'token' gesture for people struggling."

"We had 11 young people between the ages of 18-25 receive these hot meals over Christmas. They are all people without anywhere to go for Christmas, so to have this delivery was really great! We had several of them say how tasty the food was and how thankful they were, making Christmas a bit more enjoyable."

"My clients were so incredibly grateful for the care of volunteers, the quality of the meals and for the delivery option that made accessing Christmas an easier thing for them."

"It brought them joy and comfort at a particularly lonely time of year for them. It also provided warm filling meals which they are unable to make themselves or access in other ways."

"I had some amazing feedback from those who were referred. This has meant some very isolated and vulnerable individuals have felt connection and Christmas spirit at a very challenging time for them."

"It provided them hot meals and solidarity during the Christmas period when most of their support networks had closed"

"Our clients were able to have a good filling hot meal over the Christmas period when other services were busy or closed. This has greatly impacted them positively with feedback to match. Having it delivered to the houses to meet our staff also worked well in making sure that nobody was left out/food taken from the fridge meant for a particular client."



Feedback from clients:

"One said that the Lasagna was the best she'd ever tasted!"

"This is for me, really? Thank you so much, it will cheer me up"

"Good food, on time, well cooked"

"The food was fantastic, my favourite one was the Christmas meal, which was delicious"

"They were really nice, and I enjoyed the food a lot. Thank you so much"

"Thanks for my presents, I've not had a present in years and it's really made me feel cared for"

"Do I deserve it, why people are doing this for me?"

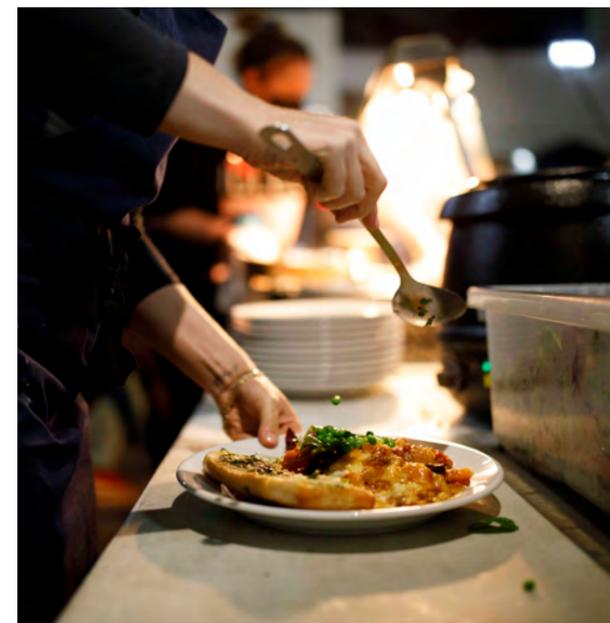
"So good, better than beans on toast. Thank you"

"They wanted to say thank you for the delicious food and kindness shown over the Christmas period"

"All clients who were referred through myself had very positive feedback on the food as well as the service and they would all have missed out on the Spirit of Christmas otherwise if it had not been for your service. Many thanks from myself and my clients"

"Hugely grateful and one fed back that the gifts were really useful and they liked the hat, gloves especially. Also that the quality and variety of food was very high. One who is experienced cook was particularly positive about the food"

"Expecting a small meal and very happy to have a roast with all the trimmings"



Feedback from referral partners:

"We really appreciate this wonderful service. As we close for the Christmas period its really reassuring to know that someone is providing some care to our clients while we are not there."

"Thanks for putting this on, it was valued by our organisation and our clients!"



What our volunteer delivery teams had to say:

"[My best moment was] Seeing how much a hot meal and hamper meant to those we delivered them to."

"[My best moment was] How grateful several of the people we delivered meals to were - it obviously made a real difference to them and that was great to see."

"[My best moment was] Following Abdi (Social Worker for St Mungo's) in convoy on his bike from one sheltered house to another, he was our Christmas star! He was brilliant at engaging with all the residents and getting them to enjoy a warm lunch and having a joke with them."

"Me and my partner got to see the same faces three days in a row. We had one guy who liked to chat with us. On the last day, we was out and so I called him to say we had a food delivery, and we could just leave it, but he said no, he would be there in a minute. And sure enough in a minute he came running down the hall. He told us how he is hoping to move out of Imperial since it is more expensive than if he were to live in a shared house. I really hope he finds a great place to live..."

"[My best moment was] Delivering to someone who couldn't leave their flat due to injury and the sense that we were really making a difference to their day."

"[My best moment was] seeing how much those at the meal drop off places looked out for each other"



Corporate & Other Partnerships

Meeting such an important need across this festive season, it was crucial to proactively seek out the help and support we needed from our corporate partners to make this Christmas a great success for all our clients. From monetary donations, to service support and even giving gifts in kind; we have been overwhelmed by the corporate support we received this winter.

Businesses in this passionate city have a duty of care to the community that they operate in, and this Christmas we witnessed just how much of a difference these companies can make. We would like to show our appreciation to all those that supported some of Bristol's most vulnerable this year.

The Jolly Hog
1,000 sausages

Yeo Valley
37kg Butter, 110L Milk, 23kg Cheddar, 9L Cream

Warburtons
205 loaves of bread and 1080 bread rolls

Essential Trading
£550 of health food

Community Farm
£1,500 worth of fruit, veg and meat

Bristol Wood Recycling Project
Designed and donated wood for a stage barrier

Burges Salmon
£250 worth of gloves and socks.

Crescent China Hire
Supported the project with cost-price hire of catering equipment

Taziker
Loaned a van for the duration of the project to support the logistics and doorstep deliveries

Autolyn
Loaned a van for the duration of the project to support the logistics and doorstep deliveries

Jollie Socks
1,000 pairs of socks

Nivea
Cosmetic products for hampers and guests

Elizabeth Shaw
Chocolate for hampers

 Jollie's

 **Essential**
TRADING SINCE 1971

 **TAZIKER**
Infrastructure Access Engineering Industrial

 Yeo Valley
ORGANIC

 BRISTOL
WOOD
RECYCLING
PROJECT

 NIVEA

 THE JOLLY
HOG

 Burges
Salmon

 CRESCENT CHINA HIRE
0117 9864 462

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 the community
farm .co.uk

 WarburtonS

 Elizabeth Shaw

Corporate & Other Partnerships

A huge thank you to the trusts, foundations and other partnerships that supported this project, your support was crucial to the success of this year's Caring at Christmas and made all the difference to our guests.

TAP for Bristol - Bristol City Centre BID & Redcliffe and Temple BID

Desmond Harris Charitable Trust

G F Eyre Charitable Trust

G T Pearce Charitable Trust

Irwin Mitchell Charities Foundation

John James Bristol Foundation

The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

The Rotary Club of Chipping Sodbury

The Thompson Charitable Trust

The Social Bite





Are you a business or organisation passionate about helping people experiencing homelessness affect positive changes in their lives?

Join us and support our work by emailing:

partnerships@caringinbristol.org.uk

As featured in:





Caring in Bristol

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