



# Love on the frontline

**2023 - The Salvation Army at work  
for people and communities**



# A MESSAGE FROM LIEUT-COLONEL DEAN PALLANT

Secretary for Communications



**‘When people are suffering, we are never content to stand on the sidelines wringing our hands.’**

‘It is in our nature to seek opportunities and provide help to those who need our support.’ These words come from Major Estelle Blake, one of our local church leaders, about a project The Salvation Army has launched in Oldham to support families struggling with the soaring cost of living (read more on page 3). But it could describe any of the Salvation Army initiatives, across the whole of the UK, that you will read about in this *Annual Review*.

When people are suffering, we are never content to stand on the sidelines wringing our hands. We stand right on the frontline of society’s major social problems, including poverty, homelessness, addiction, domestic abuse and modern slavery. We stand alongside people, who are going through terrible times, whatever their faith or background. We offer them opportunities to overcome their problems and rebuild their lives. We work at the heart of local communities to provide the support and services people need. It is in our nature because of our Christian faith, which teaches us to ‘love your neighbour’.

A short report like this cannot cover the sheer variety of work we have done in 2023. However, it may give you a flavour of what makes The Salvation Army so effective – our dedication, enthusiasm, humanity, professionalism, resourcefulness and ingenuity.

Thank you to all those selfless people – our officers, staff and volunteers – who have gone on the frontline to help people in desperate need. And thank you to our generous supporters who have done so much to make it all possible.

We couldn’t have done it without you.

Lieut-Colonel Dean Pallant  
On behalf of The Salvation Army





## On the frontline of ... poverty and deprivation

The Salvation Army has been helping people in dire poverty since the Victorian era. Those days are far behind us, so it's depressing to find that poverty and deprivation are still very much with us. But for as long as people are suffering, we're determined to carry on working.



**'My money problems nearly pushed me over the edge.'**

Alison has lung disease which means she is unable to work, so when her partner died, she struggled to cope financially. Things became even harder when her benefits were cut. It was a mistake in the system, but for a few months she had no income and ran into debt. 'I didn't know which way to turn,' she remembers.

Alison had no choice but to ask The Salvation Army for food, and we also put her in touch with Emilio at our debt advice service in Edinburgh. He dealt with a court order for non-payment that had been issued against her. He managed to write off some of her debts and make repayment arrangements for others. We also helped Alison apply for a council tax reduction and a grant to improve her home.

Alison says: 'My money problems nearly pushed me over the edge, but things are completely different now. I don't know what I would have done without The Salvation Army.'

### During 2023 ...

- When The Salvation Army in **Oldham** started a drop-in service to support hard-up families over the winter of 2023, we discovered how desperately it was needed. Many of the people who came were working, but simply didn't earn enough to pay their bills. With help from the council, we supported around 250 people with one-off payments towards energy costs, as well as clothing and Iceland food vouchers. Local Salvation Army leader Major Estelle says: 'In the end we had to find extra funding to continue for longer. For many, these are desperate times.'

- One of the many initiatives to help families cope with rising food prices is on **Canvey Island**, where we launched *Stuff on the Bus*. We've converted a double-decker bus into a mobile community supermarket where customers can get food at greatly reduced prices. Local Salvation Army leader Holly says: 'We're filling the gap between foodbank and supermarket. People can jump on board and get what they need.'





## On the frontline of ... homelessness

There are many different reasons why people become homeless, including economic hardship, relationship breakdowns, and drug and alcohol addiction. We help them get to the roots of their problems so they can get their lives back on track.

### **‘I’m finally living a life that I’m proud of.’**

Paul from Lancashire had a difficult family upbringing and went into foster care from the age of seven. He never settled in any of his foster homes, and things got worse when he was 17 and moved into a residential home. There, as Paul says, ‘I fell into the wrong crowd.’ He started taking drugs, his mental health deteriorated, his life became chaotic and he ended up homeless.



It was The Salvation Army that rescued Paul. He was referred to us by a social worker, and we found him a place to live. Paul remembers: ‘I was given my own flat and independence, but I didn’t feel ready. Thankfully, The Salvation Army gave me a lot of support. Everyone was friendly, understanding and welcoming.’

Now Paul is free of drugs, his mental health has improved and we’ve helped him find a job he likes. He says: ‘I’m finally living a life that I’m proud of.’

### **During 2023 ...**

- In **Bristol**, The Salvation Army has launched a monthly support session for people who are sleeping rough or at risk of homelessness. The project, called *Under One Roof*, brings together our Employment Plus service with experts from partner organisations who give advice on education, training and employment, housing and benefits. There is also support for drug and alcohol addiction. Lee, our employment development co-ordinator, describes it as ‘a one-stop shop to empower people to unlock their potential and get back on their feet.’

- In **Cardiff**, The Salvation Army’s Tŷ Gobaith Lifehouse (residential centre) is continuing to give a fresh start in life to homeless people, especially those with alcohol and drug addictions. The service includes one-to-one support, educational and volunteering opportunities, as well as de-tox, treatment and resettlement services. Simon is one of many people who came here to overcome a life-threatening addiction. He says: ‘I was dreading coming, but it was the best thing I’d ever done. It saved my life.’





## On the frontline ... for families and young people

Every child deserves to grow up in a stable and loving home, so they can develop into confident, well-adjusted adults. That's why we support families facing difficult times and work to give young people the best possible start in life.

**'It's great to see the kids busy, happy and making new friends.'**



Our *Space* project in south Leeds is a wonderful example of how The Salvation Army is bringing opportunity to young people who might otherwise have nowhere else to go in the evenings.

Our volunteers run weekly youth groups with a choice of activities. Each year we also give opportunities for kids to go on residential trips and to an outdoor adventure centre.

Ollie, 24, started coming to *Space* when he was 11. He loved it so much that he is still here – as a volunteer leader. He says: 'I do baking, but mainly I'm outside playing football with the kids. It's great to see them busy, happy and making new friends.'

'I used to be shy, but I'm a lot better now. That shyness helps me relate to the kids. I've noticed a lot of them come out of their shells here.'

### During 2023 ...

- **Shotts**, Scotland, is one of several places where schoolchildren are benefiting from *Starfish*, a mentoring programme run by The Salvation Army. Young people can often suffer from behavioural, social or emotional issues, especially those from difficult backgrounds. But spending time with a trained mentor can make a real difference to their wellbeing by helping them grow and develop as people. Nicola, one of our counsellors, says: 'I don't really advise, I listen and feed back. Sometimes it's about the young people being heard.'

- In **Bicester**, Oxfordshire, we are giving young adults with special educational needs the opportunity to gain catering and hospitality skills. At our community café they can learn skills such as food preparation, cooking and customer service – which can build their confidence and open job opportunities in the future. The initiative is the brainchild of local Salvation Army leader Jamie Slater, who says: 'The students get to be who they are and do what they want to do. There are no funds for training students with additional needs until they are adults, so if it wasn't for us, they wouldn't have these opportunities.'



# On the frontline ... for communities



In The Salvation Army we aim not only to support individuals and families, but also to strengthen communities so that people can come together, work together and help each other.

## **‘The Salvation Army finding me a job has changed my life.’**

The Salvation Army marked Employability Day in June with a series of open days for job seekers at our Employment Plus services throughout the UK. Employment Plus helps people overcome barriers to employment, such as lack of education, mental health problems, disability or homelessness.

One of the people who have benefitted is Cheyenne, a single mum from Birkenhead. Tired of being on benefits, she was determined to find a job, but was told by a job coach that with three children under five, she didn't stand much of a chance.

Fortunately, when she came to her local Employment Plus service, we took a more positive view. We helped her find a part-time job which allowed her to take her children to school and pick them up. She says: ‘The Salvation Army finding me a job has changed my life.’

### **During 2023 ...**

- In **Maltby**, South Yorkshire, we are hosting a monthly choir to bring joy to older people with dementia and their carers. Musicians from the charity *Lost Chord UK* lead the sessions and give people the chance to sing, dance, laugh and forget their cares. Sally, one of the musicians, says: ‘We see a real difference from when people walk in at the start of sessions and when they walk out at the end.’ The sessions also give carers the chance to take a break, meet new people and talk with other carers.



- In **Hamilton**, near Glasgow, we are providing a safe space for Ukrainian refugees. The service, run by The Salvation Army with South Lanarkshire Council, also helps refugees access GPs, employment and housing so they can get back to some kind of normality. Karen, who manages the service, says: ‘We want to make a home-from-home for people who have fled Ukraine in the most difficult circumstances.’ The service was recently recognised with an award from the Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland.





## On the frontline ... in a crisis

Whenever we are needed to help people through a crisis, we are there. We are there when disasters like fires or floods tear people's lives apart. We are there for victims of modern slavery and for people going through their own personal crisis.

### **'I finally see hope for the future thanks to The Salvation Army.'**

Danillo was brought up by his mother in Mauritius, but she died when he was 13 and he was sent to live with an uncle who cruelly exploited him. Danillo was forced to work long hours without pay, and when he tried to get away his uncle stalked and threatened him.

He finally fled to the UK in fear for his life. The police found him, realised he was a victim of modern slavery and put him in the care of The Salvation Army.

At one of our safe houses, we gave Danillo the support he needed to recover. He says: 'They've given me friendship. They've supported me mentally and helped me get a job. I finally see hope for the future thanks to The Salvation Army.'

Modern slavery is a growing problem in the UK and an important part of our work.

### **During 2023 ...**

- During the summer, a spate of fires broke out across **Northeast England**, putting pressure on our emergency response teams. Undaunted, they turned out as they always do at times of crisis to support the emergency services. While the firefighters did their dangerous work, our trained volunteers served hot drinks and food. We also gave emotional and spiritual support to those who needed it. 'It's a privilege to support our heroic first responders,' says Salvation Army chaplain Julie Judson.



- In **Bangor**, Northern Ireland, The Salvation Army's Befriending Service is reaching out to people who are lonely, depressed and may be having suicidal thoughts. When Steve first contacted us, he was so anxious that he struggled even to leave the house. He remembers: 'I'd rather starve than make contact with other people.' Now a volunteer meets and phones Steve regularly and he says: 'Having someone I can speak to or go out for a walk with has changed my life completely.'



## A practical kind of love – this is The Salvation Army on the frontline

Inspired by our Christian faith, The Salvation Army is dedicated to serving others without discrimination. We are active in hundreds of communities across the UK and Ireland. We work tirelessly to help people who are going through terrible times and to provide vital community services.

**Thank you for all you are doing to support our work and all the lives you are helping to change.**

### Here are just some of the amazing things The Salvation Army has done with your support in the last year:

- We provided over **2,920** beds each night in **79** accommodation-based services (Lifeshouses) for people experiencing homelessness.
- Our Employment Plus service worked with **1,567** people to help them into work.
- We supported **3,533** survivors of modern slavery in the UK.
- Our emergency response vehicles attended around **250** incidents such as fire and floods.
- In **650** local centres across the country, thousands of Salvation Army members and volunteers worked to serve their local communities.



As a charity, we aim to make the most effective use of your donations. **91p in every £1 donated to The Salvation Army goes towards our work for people in need.**



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The case studies in this review reflect the true stories of people that we help every day. Names have been changed and models used in some photographs to protect the privacy of the people concerned.

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