SMART!
“Helping people to help themselves”

IMPACT REPORT 2020

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SMART CJS was founded in 1997 and has grown into an organisation with amazing people doing amazing things – staff, trustees and volunteers. **We believe in:**

**“Helping people to help themselves”**

Our services are person-centred, empowering people to help them make positive change.

**SMART services today include:**
- Homelessness and rough sleeper services
- Residential drug and alcohol detoxification
- Community drug and alcohol support.
Foreword from our Chair of Trustees

It’s important that Trustees feel they are in tune with the organisation they represent, oversee and guide. That they have empathy with, and care about, the cause that they are devoting their time and energies to. SMART definitely does that for me! I can’t think of two more important social and well-being issues which, if supported and funded sustainably and seriously, can turnaround the lives of people so positively. And those two issues are homelessness and substance misuse. And we all know that both are on the increase and magnified because of the effects of COVID-19.

I am so impressed this year with the resilience and staying power of our people in every service we run. That includes paid staff as well as volunteers. And of the magnificent outcomes for the people we have helped in such unusual times.

It’s such a refreshing change to hear some good news coming out of the pandemic; with food, shelter and kindness on offer, we now have people, who were homeless, recovering faster and getting their lives, relationships and livelihoods back. I have also noted that people who have benefited from our residential detox programme have come back to work for us as staff members. A mark of how much people want to give back to a programme that has helped them get back on track.

Great news which provides us with a feeling of hope and optimism for the future. On behalf of Trustees, a heartfelt thank you.

SMART CJS Values and Vision

We believe that everyone needs a little help sometimes and, with trust, respect and honesty, people can make incredible changes.

Our vision is to transform communities so that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential, participate in and contribute to all aspects of life.

Our mission is to provide safe spaces to work with vulnerable people within our communities, empowering them to make positive changes and take control of their lives.

The stories featured in this Impact Report show what a positive difference SMART continues to make to people’s lives.

Dave Rawcliffe
Chair of the Board, SMART CJS
We know that our services are needed more than ever as we learn to live with the longer-term effects of COVID-19 as the toll taken on people reveals itself.

In our Wokingham service, numbers increased by a third in 2020. In Bedford and Milton Keynes, our teams saw unprecedented numbers of people needing support. Thank you to the people in SMART who coped so professionally.

In England in 2020, there were c100,000 hospital admissions with a diagnosis of drug-related mental and behavioural disorder. And nearly 17,000 for poisoning by drug misuse.

Those experiencing homelessness for three months or more, cost per person, on average £4,298 to the NHS, £2,099 for mental health services and £11,991 when in contact with the criminal justice system. In total, over £18,000.

In comparison, a charity like SMART can provide successful interventions for less than £1500 per person: you do the sums which show that if we are properly funded, we can provide cost-effective solutions and work alongside statutory services.


The biggest change came with accommodating people in hotels. Looking back to where we started in rough sleeper provision, using big halls with rows of camp beds – it’s incredible how far we have come in such a short time! We were able to offer much improved, stable, accessible accommodation - treating people kindly (meals, shelter, medicines and emotional support) and helping them mend and recover.

We have helped at least 1500 individuals who have experienced rough sleeping and homelessness, and/or substance misuse. Many of these needed support due to traumatic events, break up of relationships and falling on hard times because of job loss. It’s testament to the compassion and commitment of our teams that they have worked tirelessly to provide a 24/7 service to those that desperately need it.

We have not being able to host any fundraising events during 2020 or have the usual community engagement with schools, faith groups, local businesses etc. People in Bedford, Milton Keynes and Oxford have continued to support SMART with donations of money, food and clothing. And you have donated time as well, particularly when help was needed with moving clients into their own independent accommodation to start afresh.

Thank you! It means a lot that we continue to be an integral part of the communities we serve and seek to help – and, above all, that YOU care.
2020 in numbers

We directly helped more than 1,500 people across Wokingham, Oxford, Bedford and Milton Keynes with substance misuse and homelessness. Many more individuals were helped with access to our online resources and sign posting to partner services.

1257 Referrals from GPs, Schools, Outreach Services, Local Authorities and individuals asking for support

1539 Adults helped who were experiencing homelessness and/or were being affected by alcohol and other drug use

210 Young people reached by working with Schools, Social Services and responding directly to under 18s who had referred themselves

23,986 Interventions to help people reduce/abstain substance use and to aid access to medical, financial and housing support

389 groups held, covering topics such as building motivation, safer drug use, learning life skills and mindfulness

More than 500 individuals and 60 groups have donated 1000s of items of clothing, bedding, toiletries and food

34 Full-time employees and 30 Part-time employees worked across 4 locations

8 Trustees (volunteers) gave up their time and lent their expertise to help guide our charity and keep us on track

42 regular volunteers gave 30,452 hours so that our workers could focus their time on people needing help

327 donors and fundraisers raised £144,772 through one-off donations, regular giving and fundraising events
SMART CJS Homeless Services

SMART CJS operates Homeless Services across Bedford and Milton Keynes. Although the number of rough sleepers increased nationally by 141% since 2010, Bedford and Milton Keynes have seen a reduction for the fourth consecutive year. It’s testament to SMART’s dedication and effectiveness in its work.

As England went into the first lockdown in March 2020 all local authorities provided emergency accommodation for rough sleepers; the "everyone in" initiative, to help prevent the spread of COVID19 and provide a safe space for individuals rough sleeping to stay. Working closely with local councils and following additional government guidelines, SMART CJS combined its homeless services in both Bedford and Milton Keynes into a central hotel base in each area. Having former rough sleepers and specialist services under one roof has created a new and positive approach to tackling homelessness.


SMART CJS Homeless Services - Bedford

SMART Prebend Centre: A Homeless Day Centre – up until March 2020 it was open 365 days of the year offering adults facing homelessness or rough sleeping access to hot meals, phones, internet, medical advice and showers. Working alongside other specialist support agencies, SMART workers helped people using the centre to make plans to address their immediate issues. The building is being utilised during COVID-19 by other community organisations as it is not suitable for a day centre use during the pandemic.

Rough Sleeper Initiative: A team of caseworkers supporting people to move from rough sleeping into accommodation, with ongoing help to sustain accommodation.

Somewhere Safe to Stay: A hub providing direct access to a safe place to sleep with on-site support for mental health problems, finding suitable housing, claiming benefits and gaining employment.

During March 2020, SMART CJS’s Bedford homeless services relocated to a central hotel-base.

“Having everyone in one building, including former rough sleepers, specialist workers and partner agencies has created a quicker and deeper rapport with our guests. Doctors, nurses, drug and alcohol specialists, mental health professionals and housing officers onsite have enhanced multi-agency working, which has led to better care and rapid results for the guests.”
Jen Robus, Area Manager, SMART CJS.

From March 2020 – December 2020 all known rough sleepers in Bedford were offered accommodation.
A Snapshot of Everyone In, Bedford

"You were the ones on the ground maintaining delivery of our services to rough sleepers with true commitment every day. The strength and unity of everyone working together throughout the pandemic has not only enabled ‘everyone in’ to a safe place but has also helped so many people move on to more settled housing solutions to rebuild their lives. “ Tabitha - Bedford Borough Council, Rough Sleeper Coordinator.

SMART workers delivered 4586 interventions including:

✓ Improving motivation
✓ Better self care
✓ Developing healthy social networks
✓ Accessing benefits and employment
✓ Budgeting, planning and goal setting
✓ Understanding offending behaviours

A high percentage of service users needed help with drug & alcohol use and mental health:

- 82 % Substance Use
- 42 % Mental Health
- 53 % Substance Use and Mental Health
With on-site access to Doctors, Nurses, Mental Health Specialists and drug & alcohol Recovery Workers, her health improved, and she was better able to focus on her life goals.

Together with a dedicated SMART support worker and Council Housing Officers, Beverly received help with the benefits system. She was able to find independent accommodation - a one-bedroom flat which she moved into in July 2020.

Fast forward to the present day and Beverly says she is very happy in her new home, has made friends and has enjoyed decorating her flat. She is living a more stable lifestyle and is an active member of a group supporting people who have been victims of miscarriages of justice - giving back to the community that helped her.

She is now able to consider an even bigger life step - obtaining a degree in economics!
SMART CJS Homeless Services – Milton Keynes

Rough Sleeper Initiative: A team of caseworkers, including a specialist drugs and alcohol worker and EEA focused support, helping people to move from rough sleeping into accommodation, with ongoing help to sustain their accommodation.

Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub (SStSH): A hub providing direct access to a safe place to sleep with on-site support for mental health problems, finding suitable housing, claiming benefits and gaining employment.

During March 2020, SMART CJS’s Milton Keynes homeless services relocated to a central hotel-base.

“2020 was a year of change for SMART Milton Keynes. As part of ‘Everyone In’ we moved our services to a hotel. This allowed provision of a fast pathway to safe accommodation for anyone facing homelessness. Working under one roof with the council and partner agencies (e.g. the NHS and substance overuse services) led to better and quicker results for those we support.

In August we returned to the SStSH model, previously a night facility for rough sleepers. Due to ‘Everyone In’ we can provide those sleeping rough a safe place to stay day and night, and support when needed. We work closely with our service users to help overcome challenges, prepare for moves into alternative accommodation and support those placed in housing provided by the Council.”

Louise Kinton, Deputy Manager, SMART CJS.

SMART Milton Keynes teams delivered over 8,000 interventions during 2020, including access to healthcare, skills for independent living, budgeting skills, and managing benefits and finances.

From March 2020 – December 2020, all known rough sleepers in Milton Keynes were offered accommodation.

HOTEL

117 individuals were supported at the hotel between March and August 2020.

More than 400 individuals were supported in 2020.
Alan “my mindset has completely changed, and I feel like I am getting back on my feet.”

Prior to going to prison, I had issues with alcohol and cocaine and was on a downward spiral. My relationship with my family had deteriorated and I was homeless.

During my time inside, I was supported in getting help for my issues with alcohol and drugs. I was released from prison, clean from drugs and picked up by outreach workers from SMART.

I worried about being able to stay away from drugs as I did not have any stable accommodation to go to. The SMART team took me to emergency accommodation where I was given a room. I was very apprehensive and felt like I was going to relapse on drugs in my first few days; I felt myself going to a dark place again.

SMART staff supported me, and this helped to pull me from this dark place and stay in recovery.

I am still at the hotel looking at accommodation options available to me and I have found the experience incredibly life changing; my mindset has completely changed, and I feel like I am getting back on my feet.
Drug & Alcohol Services: SMART Wokingham

*SMART Wokingham is a free community treatment service, helping adults and young people affected by drug and alcohol use. It saw a phenomenal increase in clients in 2020 – almost certainly as a direct result of the pandemic.

Adults access a broad range of evidence-based interventions including one-to-one psychosocial support, counselling, group sessions and clinical services to reduce alcohol and opiate dependency and problematic substance use. Referrals are received directly from local residents and the NHS and partner services, with the greatest proportion being self-referrals.

Young people have the support of a dedicated worker, who also helps schools and local NHS workers with advice and resources.

For residents affected by another person’s substance use, SMART Wokingham offers email, phone and face-to-face support based around the ‘Steps to Cope’ model.

* From April 1st 2021 – the service is operated by Cranstoun

SMART Wokingham Adult Support Service

In 2020 SMART Wokingham received 547 referrals, an increase of 34% compared to 2019. This resulted in 529 adults accessing support in 2020, an increase of 32% from 2019.

More than one half needed support to reduce or stop problematic alcohol use.

Around one third required help with opiate dependency.

Just over one quarter of all adults needed support to reduce or stop using non-opiates drugs, such as ecstasy and cocaine.

SMART Recovery Workers delivered:

3614 evidence based one-to-one interventions**

820 clinical interventions

339 interactive groups

**Including topics such as safer drug use, reducing alcohol use, understanding co-dependency, building recovery capital & resilience, setting goals and planning for the future. In response to COVID-19 approximately 80% of assessments and interventions were conducted online or by phone during 2020.
I come from a working-class Irish background, my father was a drinker, my mother teetotal. Drinking was always acceptable and part of our culture. I always loved football, including drinking before and after matches. As a teenager I was involved in several violent incidents resulting in fines but never a custodial sentence, always with alcohol involved. I travelled to break away from peer pressure and the alcohol misuse I knew was the cause of my offending.

I started a career in engineering and, as work became scarce in the UK, found a job in the Netherlands. It was non-aggressive and laid back; it was a revelation that people drank alcohol and smoked cannabis but there was no violence. I stayed 11 years and saved to buy a house.

My father passed away and I dealt with it by drinking heavily. I became a support engineer and flew all over the world training others. I consumed 30-40 alcohol units every night. I woke up every morning hating myself, thinking "How has this happened again?"

I was now in debt and moved back to my mother’s and rented out my property. Even with three incomes, I had to remortgage my house. I was facing disciplinary charges for overspending on company credit cards on alcohol. I resigned rather than having gross misconduct on my record. My life had become unmanageable.

I completed Dry January in 2020 then went back to drinking. My GP told me to stop drinking completely as I had Type 2 Diabetes, needed to lose weight and reduce blood pressure/glucose levels. Despite this, I continued to drink, was unemployed and wasting money.

I called SMART when I had been drinking and driving, almost falling asleep at the wheel and veering across lanes narrowly avoiding serious collisions. They helped me to see:

- This is to do with me, not an alcohol issue because I was continuing through my own volition. It is my own decision; nobody was forcing me to drink - only myself.

- I had to face my problems and work through them with support from others.

SMART has been the conduit to becoming sober, the facilitator to take me from problem-drinker to someone realising the enormity of addiction and the impact on my life. Without SMART I would still be drinking daily, still be unemployed and in a negative, self-pitying frame of mind.

In my new job I drive every morning; I have so many reasons not to drink alcohol.

As of February 2021 - I am sober and taking one day at a time.
There were **14,291** young people in contact with English alcohol and drug services between April 2019 and March 2020. This is a 3% reduction on the number the previous year (14,777) and a 42% reduction on the number in treatment since 2008 to 2009 (24,494).

**Helping young people with substance misuse as well as mental health issues like suicide and lack of self-worth.**

Many young people will use cannabis, sometimes combined with other substances. This can adversely affect their mood and make them feel anxious and suicidal.

“In these situations, our work at SMART focusses on building the self-confidence of young adults, getting the right mental health support in place, and providing practical help with reducing or eliminating drug and alcohol use. Other factors are often at play here, like difficulties with family relationships and acknowledging this and helping to mend rifts can add that much-needed support back into a young person’s life.”

**I helped someone like this and have learnt recently that they are going onto university. This is really good news and proof that our supportive and holistic approach works.**

Rachael Kerrigan, SMART Wokingham Young Person’s Service Lead.

SMART has been instrumental in the success of the new 6-week Positive Pathways project. It is clear from the student’s intervention packs that they have taken a lot of information from the workshops and can now identify the risks both physically and mentally to the human body due to substance misuse.

Paul Brown, PL strategic lead / PL kicks lead, Reading Football Club Community Trust
Amy’s SMART Family Support Worker explained: “She struggled with the lies her partner told about money and where it went. It was hard seeking support from friends who did not really understand and would say things like: ‘He will always be an addict’. So, we sought support from those genuinely wanting to help rather than writing him off and making her feel worse. He used to not eat, sleep, or engage in family life and she could see patterns in his behaviours relating to alcohol that we talked through.”

Things started to change once John stopped using drugs and alcohol. **John and Amy found hope**, taking pleasure in things they had not done for a long time, like going for walks as a family and laughing together.

Both Amy and John received assistance from multiple team members at SMART and helped John prepare for residential rehab support.

The Family Support Worker found it rewarding to witness Amy change over the last year. **Amy now understands what “enabling behaviours” are in relation to addiction and has really changed her own behaviour, putting boundaries in place.** She is now able to remind John that his alcohol and drug use is *his* behaviour which *he* is responsible for.

Amy said: “John is now stable, not using any alcohol or drugs and heading to rehab to work on the issues that underpinned his addiction. He’s been given that chance and I’m excited to see his progress. Everyone has our backs and is rooting for us.

I feel like I’ve won the best prize. There is hope for everyone; even if you think it is impossible, it is possible.”

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SMART Wokingham’s Family, Friends and Carers Service is available to adults who have concerns about another person’s drug or alcohol use. Advice information, support and signposting is provided by a specialist worker face-to-face, online and by phone.

**Amy: “There is hope for everyone; even if you think it is impossible, it is possible.”**

Amy, 36, came to SMART Wokingham as she had discovered her husband, John, had been taking cocaine on top of heavy alcohol use. She was struggling to cope with her feelings about him buying and using drugs, and with the practicalities of working, parenting and what to do about his drug use.
SMART Howard House is a unique, publicly funded, 10-bed residential drug and alcohol detoxification service for residents of Oxfordshire.

Individuals stay for 12-14 weeks to complete a medically supported detoxification. During this time, they receive support, motivation and guidance from dedicated workers, therapists, & medical professionals.

94% of residents completed the 14-day isolation period
67% completed treatment at Howard House
33% moved onto Residential Treatment
31% reintegrated into the community

The Impact of COVID-19

Referrals decreased and screenings for potential residents became difficult as GPs and partner agencies reduced their services.

20% of the team were required to shield long-term, with a further 20% diagnosed with COVID-19 at one point. To remain open, staff were split into ‘bubbles’ of two or three and, where possible, worked remotely.

Initially, government funding for PPE was unavailable, which meant staff had to locate and purchase equipment to keep everyone safe.

The number of available beds have reduced because a facility was required to enable residents to isolate for 14 days.

Visits from residents families and friends were restricted which made treatment extremely tough for residents.

“I’m so proud of my team and the residents who kept going despite the enormous challenges and changes during 2020. We continued our full therapeutic programme; groupwork, support sessions and daily check-ins were often carried out remotely to keep everyone safe.

The team has been flexible and adapted to new ways of working, using their creativity to adjust our normal group activities into ones that continue to provide stimulation, education and relaxation. We have maintained stringent PPE practices which meant that Covid-19 did not spread across the team or to our residents.” Niki Rowlands, Service Manager.

94% of residents completed the 14-day isolation period
67% completed treatment at Howard House
33% moved onto Residential Treatment
31% reintegrated into the community
Over 150 structured groups continued remotely during 2020 covering topics for building motivation, understanding addiction, developing life skills and preventing further substance misuse.

Activities such as counselling, gym trips, group walks, attending external addiction and recovery groups, visits to local museums and the cinema were replaced by telephone and online counselling, online museum tours and escape room challenges, one-to-one walks with volunteers and BBQ fire pit evenings. Addiction and recovery meetings e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous were attended online.

How Howard House Works

Well-being groups continued throughout the year

45 socially distanced art therapy groups

40 garden yoga classes

45 garden and online mindfulness sessions
Broken and Hopeless to Trainee Support Worker...

“I came to Howard House a broken man, in a state of despair and hopelessness. I wasn’t sure if I was cut out for recovery after trying and failing several times; with each attempt the feelings of guilt and shame got worse. I’d reached a point where I didn’t want to carry on using drugs, but I was afraid to try recovery again – I thought it would be better just to end it all.

Thankfully, I managed to keep going - I was lucky to be granted a place at Howard House and another shot at recovery. Having been in treatment several times before, I couldn’t see what more I could learn and only knew one way, to be honest I was pretty sceptical. This time I was shown an approach to recovery that came with love and care, sometimes tough love, but always with love.

I was introduced to a range of different recovery routes and materials, some of which I knew, others I’d never heard of and this got me interested because it wasn’t a one size fits all. I refreshed my understanding of therapies I’d tried before and also some of the alternative treatments. At the end of the day I got to learn about all of the different ways to tackle my problems and I picked the one that was right for me.

I was introduced to a 12-step fellowship, which I am passionate about; it helps me immensely in my recovery. After completing my detox at Howard House I prepared with the help of SMART workers to go to a longer spell of residential treatment, and it was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made.

My time at Howard House was immensely rewarding and has been the start of a new and more fulfilling life. I got free from addiction and it was this experience and talking to staff that inspired me to become one of the team. I am currently completing my training to become a Support Worker at Howard House and it’s an honour and a privilege to give back to the place where so much was given to me.” James McGrath.
Our website contains advice, tools and resources for professionals and members of the public.

88,412 website views during 2020 and for the fourth year running, ‘screening and assessment tools for professionals’ was the most viewed page, seen 16,474 times.

169 people reached out for support via online forms.

7542 drug and alcohol support resources and tools were downloaded.

SMART CJS Online

Changes for 2020

A bespoke digital referral form, available online, provided an additional and more efficient way for medical professionals, partner agencies and individuals get help.

To meet government Covid-19 guidelines, assessments, groups and one-to-one sessions moved online across many SMART CJS services.

Interactive online tools were developed such as alcohol and drug diaries for clients to record quantities, thoughts and feelings associated with their substance use.

The addition of QR codes to external communications provided rapid access to SMART referrals and resources.
Our People: Employees

During 2020 SMART CJS employed up to 72 full and part-time employees at and any one time.

Staff benefit from ongoing training, professional and clinical supervision, reflective practice and a comprehensive employee benefits scheme.

We offer great career progression with 55% of our current management team promoted internally from front line roles. A high percentage of our volunteers go on to become paid employees.

“I joined SMART when my one of my businesses closed because of Covid and I needed to find a purpose. I’d heard about the great things SMART were doing and wanted to get involved.

In the work I normally do I am used to talking to people from all walks of life, so I knew that would come in handy. I didn’t quite realise how useful this would be! The people I’ve been working with are lonely and love interaction, they just want to chat and to know that someone cares about what they have to say – I love this.

The things that are really meaningless to everyday folk make such a big difference to some of the people I’ve been working with.

Helping someone to get a passport they’ve been without for years because it wasn’t as important as getting food and finding somewhere warm to sleep - is incredible. We forget that having a passport is not just about going on holiday, it means you can get your life back together, find work, get somewhere to live or gain some sort of funds to live life.

I own a salon and it will reopen but I won’t be giving up working for SMART. The experience has made a big impact on my life in such a short time - I can’t walk away. There are more people I want to help to reach some form of ‘normal’ and if I can help them in any small way then I will.”

Matt O’Neil-Kemp, Homeless Worker, SMART Bedford.
Our People: Employees

“I like helping people and I wanted to do some good for others. I enjoy a challenge and this works gives me that. Some days are tough, but working alongside a great team really helps.”
Sandie Harrison, Homeless Support Worker.

“I joined SMART in 2014 as a Drug and Alcohol Recovery Support Worker. Over the years I’ve had numerous roles, each one has been challenging, but immensely rewarding. SMART helped me when I needed support and I’m now in a position to help others.”
James Whitcomb, Business Dev. & Communications Manager.

“I’ve been supporting residents at Howard House for more than 6 years. It’s a special place to work and I consider it a privilege to be part of such a great team. To be involved and present in the life of a resident’s journey and to experience their growth is truly a gift”
John Sugden, Senior Key Worker.

“Every day is different. Coming into work is interesting because you never know what quite what to expect. I like that I get to work closely with people every day and build relationships with them, following alongside them as we work together towards their goals.”
Em Bond, Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker.

“I write this on my 9th anniversary of joining SMART, and I never imagined when I joined that I would still be here now. My job is enjoyable and rewarding and my work colleagues continue to be simply the best.”
Neville Smith, Administrator.
Our People: Volunteers

During 2020 SMART had 42 regular volunteers who donated 30,260 hours to help us help others.

Our volunteers make up almost one half of our workforce and save us money in all our services by helping with important tasks that we would otherwise have to pay for. We simply couldn’t run our services without their time, skills and commitment.

“I have been a volunteer at SMART Wokingham for almost 6 years. My role is varied, I answer the phone, let people into the building and update client records. I also prepare paperwork for clinics, write up meeting minutes and do jobs around the building, and anything else that frees up Recovery Facilitators to spend more time with those who need support.

Even though I only volunteer for one day a week I really feel like I am part of the service. It feels good to be part of a charity that is making a difference to people’s lives and doing voluntary work is making my retirement a much richer experience.”

Ian Helmore, SMART Wokingham.

“I was furloughed in April 2020 and wanted to use my spare time to help within the local community. SMART really stood out to me, so I contacted them and became a volunteer with the Bedford team.

It was completely different to my previous roles, but I loved every moment and felt privileged to meet so many kind souls along the way.

Inspired by my experience I applied for a job and I’m super-excited to say that I am now support worker at SMART Milton Keynes.

I feel proud to be involved in a charity that makes such a difference to people’s lives.”

Yasmin Taylor-Powell, SMART Milton Keynes.
I volunteer because it’s a major part of keeping my own recovery going. I can help others by sharing my personal experience around my life of addiction and my journey towards recovery. Being open and honest can empower others to believe they can beat addiction and build a better life.

I have always felt part of the team, not just a volunteer. It’s so rewarding supporting service users on the first part of their recovery journey to see the change in them while in Howard House is a privilege.

Darren Gregory, volunteer at SMART Howard House for 4 years.
Our People: Trustee Volunteers

In order to run the charity effectively and meet legal requirements, SMART has a Board of Trustees that ensures that the organisation is run robustly and using funds and resources in-line with its stated purpose. One of our longest –serving Trustees, Shahin Bekhradnia, stepped down in November 2020.

Shahin was hugely supportive of SMART and committed to its aims, over a long period. She was always generous with her time, participating fully in celebrations and events. Talking in 2017 at SMART’s 20th Anniversary, Shahin remarked: “I joined a few months after meeting SMART’s co-founders Phil Skillen and his probation officer, Mike Howard, in the 1990s. They were hoping to communicate to people like me involved in the criminal justice system about the needs of people with substance addiction.

Thanks to their outstanding advocacy, they were able to secure the trust and belief of a number of agencies in Oxfordshire and began to develop a model.” That model later became SMART Howard House.

SMART’s CEO, pictured with Shahin in September 2019 said: “Shahin always attended our events and donated items for auction in order that we could raise funds. We are incredibly grateful to her for her loyalty and steadfastness over the years and SMART owes her an enormous debt of gratitude for her long voluntary service.”
Fundraising and Community Support

Although COVID-19 prevented many groups meeting up in the normal way and put a stop to our normal fundraising events, we still received an enormous amount of backing from our supporters.

More than 327 individuals and 52 groups raised a combined total of £144,772

More than 500 individuals and 60 groups have donated 1000s of items of clothing, toiletries and food

4024 followers on social media

2433 page likes on Facebook

Our posts were seen 302,206 times on Facebook

“We are delighted to support around 50 homeless and rough-sleepers currently in temporary accommodation at the hotel managed by SMART. We have completed 12 deliveries of staple food and three deliveries of freshly made cakes.”
Charan Sekhon, Chairman, Seva Trust UK.

“Unable to hold our usual Boxing Day event at my barber shop, I opted to cycle the 500km Rapha "Festive 500", which must be completed between 24 – 31 December. Before this, the furthest I had ridden was 25 miles. I completed it in four days raising £1200 from friends, family, and clients. I was happy to do something for the homeless in Bedford and know the money has gone to a good cause.”
Siobhan Moriarty-Jones, Owner of the Cavalier Barber Shop.

“We use my social media platforms to collect toiletries and other goodies to bring a little happiness to local homeless and rough sleepers. Our supporters donated thousands of items, many of which went to SMART Bedford to support the wonderful work they do.”
Mel Stratton, Love in a Bag, Bedford.
The pandemic and its effects mean that concrete plans are difficult to make right now. Demands on the public purse mean that charities continue to struggle for regular and reliable statutory funding over the medium to long term. And restrictions over gatherings mean that significant fundraising with community engagement is not possible - YET.

What we have proven is that we are strong and resilient. When people have needed different support from us (or greater support from us) we have stepped up to the plate and provided it. And when we have asked the community to help – you have been there; I am hugely proud of what we have achieved together in 2020. Thank you.

In 2018, the Government pledged to end rough sleeping and homelessness by 2027.

And with the help of organisations like SMART, we are well on the way to achieving that and to housing people rapidly and more effectively. The emergency provision that we have been able to offer during the pandemic has been the impetus for a new dawn in our collective approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.

We have proven that with consistent support, shelter, nutrition, health (and mental health) care, addiction treatment and hope – that people recover from being homeless more quickly. We have also shown that with caring, supportive and person-centred approaches to substance misuse in the community and in residential homes – we can help people face their demons, conquer them and move on successfully with their lives.

SMART hopes to be an integral part of supporting and building communities back up after the devastating effects of COVID-19 on individuals, jobs, housing and mental health.

We are not sure what that will look like, but linking our work to employment, training and education for the people we support is something we want to play an active role in.

Like you, we don’t want to see rows of empty shops and offices in city and town centres – we would much rather they were repurposed, reused and supporting people who need our help.

We are not defeated by the knock we have all had and relish the challenges that face us and society as a whole. And I am looking forward to working with YOU to make a difference and continue to improve people’s lives and fortunes in 2021 and beyond.

Anita McCallum, CEO, SMART CJS
How you can help

Here are the ways you can lend a hand:

DONATE
Support one of our services by making a financial donation, either one-time or reoccurring.
www.smartcjs.charitycheckout.co.uk/profile

VOLUNTEER
Make a difference as part of the team by volunteering at one of our centres. www.smartcjs.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer

FUNDRAISE
Join our fundraising heroes and raise money whilst having fun. www.smartcjs.org.uk/fundraise

SPONSOR
Support SMART CJS by sponsoring one of our fundraising events. Contact supportservices@smartcjs.org.uk
THANK YOU

To staff members, volunteers, and stakeholders for sharing their time, stories and faces to help produce this year’s Impact Report.

We would also like to give heartfelt thanks to all individuals and organisations who have generously donated in support of our work.