



Passionate, practical, tireless

2025: A year in the life of  
The Salvation Army





## A MESSAGE FROM LIEUT-COLONEL NICK COKE

Secretary for Communications



**When life seems impossible for many, The Salvation Army is here to bring hope and lasting change.**

Recently a man called Simon, who had been unemployed and ill, came to The Salvation Army's Employment Plus service seeking our help to find a job. You'll read more about him on the next page, but it was what he told us that was really striking. He said:

**'Tracey from the Employment Plus team changed my life. She sat there, listened to me and understood. She explained what she could do for me. It wasn't fake. I wasn't just another box to tick. I felt human again.'**

During the past year, many thousands have come to The Salvation Army, often as a last resort. They were desperate. They had lost all hope. They didn't know where else to turn. They may not have known what to expect, but what they found was a friend they could trust. They found people who would listen. People who had the patience and expertise to give them lasting, life-changing help.

The Salvation Army provides an amazing range of services. In this Annual Review you will find just a snapshot of the work we do, and a few examples of the people we help. **Yet every story is a testimony to the kind of patient, dedicated, tireless support we give every single day to people who are in desperate need.**

Please take a moment to read this review, knowing your support for The Salvation Army has helped to make it possible. Thank you so much to the friends who help us in so many ways – and may God bless you, now and in the year ahead.

*Nick Coke*

Lieut-Colonel Nick Coke  
On behalf of The Salvation Army



**At the heart of the community**

**In communities throughout the UK, The Salvation Army responds to the needs of local people, whether by helping them raise their living standards, providing much-needed services, combating social isolation or responding in emergencies.**

**'I felt worthless. But thanks to The Salvation Army, my self-belief is back.'**

When Simon came to us, he was at a low ebb. At 48, he had lost his job and was finding it hard to get another because of his depression. The local job centre offered him no hope. 'I felt I was a failure,' he remembers. But at our Employment Plus service he found the support he desperately needed.

Simon says, 'I spoke with a lady called Tracey. She changed my life.' She gave him back his self-belief. She talked to him about the barriers preventing him getting employment, and what she could do to help. She also helped him take his first step back into work by encouraging him to volunteer at Employment Plus, helping other clients get to grips with IT.

Simon's mental health is improving, his confidence is growing and he is starting to look for a job. He says, 'I can't ever repay The Salvation Army for what they did for me. It can be a lonely day. But hopefully not here.'



**During 2025...**

- The Salvation Army in Winton, **Bournemouth**, has held a special event to celebrate the work of 80 volunteers, young and old, who serve at our local community



hub. The hub supports over 300 people every day, thanks largely to volunteers who provide vital community services. Activities include: our Ark Youth Club, providing a safe space and recreations for young people; our Monday Activate group for older people; and our sensory garden for people who need space to relax, be calm and enjoy nature.

- When a terrible fire broke out in a tenement block in **Perth**, Scotland, in June, the local Salvation Army stepped up to help the people who were left homeless by the blaze. We became a central point for receiving thousands of donations of clothing, shoes and toiletries for around 40 people, many of whom had been left with practically nothing. We also collected gifts of furniture and white goods to help resettle displaced tenants in new accommodation.







## Ending the anguish of homelessness

Since Victorian times, The Salvation Army has worked alongside people experiencing homelessness, not only giving them food and shelter but also helping them overcome the problems such as addictions and family breakdown that cause them to be homeless.



**‘I was never given a chance, until  
The Salvation Army came into my life.’**

Vicki had a terrible childhood and a series of broken relationships. Looking back she says, ‘I was never given a chance.’

Vicki had never been good at managing money, and when she was evicted from her flat because of unpaid service charges, she found herself homeless. Things looked bad. But then The Salvation Army agreed to give her a second chance in life. She became a resident of one of our Lifehouses (residential centres for people experiencing homelessness) and found there the stability and love she had never known before.

She remembers, ‘They welcomed me. They were there for me.’ Gradually, Vicki is building a new and hopeful future. She loves working in our garden. She is also learning basic living skills, so she can move on to live an independent life. Vicki says, ‘I owe everything to The Salvation Army. I dread to think where I would be without them.’

### During 2025...

• In **Cambuslang**, near Glasgow, The Salvation Army is developing a radically new way of helping people who are experiencing homelessness, trauma or substance abuse. Volunteers have transformed unused land into thriving allotments. The site features more than 30 raised beds, polytunnels and a greenhouse. Stuart, who became homeless after a relationship breakdown, says, ‘Being out in the gardens has given me a sense of purpose. It has also motivated me to be more active. It’s great for your mental health.’



• The Salvation Army’s Housing First scheme in Wales has been described as ‘inspirational’ by Siân Gwenllïan, a member of the Welsh Parliament. On a visit to Housing First, our homelessness service in **Cardiff**, she met a number of people who have benefited from the scheme, which doesn’t just provide housing. It also provides support services for people experiencing homelessness who have complex needs, including health issues. Among them was Chris, who told us, ‘The support from The Salvation Army is amazing. It’s turned my life around.’



## Raising people out of poverty

Today too many people are desperately poor and struggle to feed themselves and their families. The Salvation Army works to offer them the practical help they urgently need and give them opportunities to break free from poverty for good.

**‘The Salvation Army’s food club is a Godsend for me.’**

Will lives alone and is too ill to work, which means he has to rely on benefits. He can barely afford the necessities, such as food, rent and heating. Sometimes he has to go hungry.

Fortunately for Will, The Salvation Army is on his side. He’s a member of the food club that we run locally to help people in poverty. For £5 a year and £3 for each visit, he can take away up to 15 grocery items without paying anything extra. ‘It’s a Godsend,’ he says.

Not only does the club make his money go further, but it has also introduced Will to a whole new circle of friends. He says, ‘I get to chat to the volunteers and enjoy a hot drink which is a massive pick-me-up.’

He adds, ‘Thanks to The Salvation Army, I feel like I matter. That’s something you can’t buy.’



### During 2025...

• In **Chester-le-Street**, County Durham, The Salvation Army gave out hundreds of free lunches to children over the summer holidays as part of our campaign to alleviate family poverty. The food was distributed by our emergency response vehicle at Community Days that were organised during the school holidays to provide the youngsters with free fun and entertainment. Working with a local charity, we also offered free pre-loved school uniforms, to families who would have been unable to afford new ones.



• Vikki, who leads The Salvation Army in **Luton**, Bedfordshire, knows how many local families are struggling with poverty. She says, ‘I watched a mother feed her baby with just one scoop of formula for a 4oz feed because she was trying to make it last. The baby was already underweight.’ Seeing this kind of hardship inspired us to start a Baby Bank, working closely with health visitors and social workers. Launched in June, it provides parents with essential items such as nappies, toiletries and newborn care packs.







## A friend to families and young people

The Salvation Army believes that every child needs a loving and stable home and the opportunity to reach their full potential. That is why we work to strengthen families and give children the best possible start in life.

**‘Coming here has made me stronger and the kids a lot calmer.’**

Muireann has found it hard to be the mother she wanted to be. She was ill-prepared for motherhood when she had her first pregnancy at 18.

When she had her second child, she became depressed and overwhelmed. Her third child was diagnosed as autistic, which at first she refused to accept. At one time she became so unhappy that she thought of taking her own life.

Muireann couldn't find anyone who could help her, until she was referred to The Salvation Army's Thorndale Family Centre in Belfast. Muireann says, 'Coming here has been amazing. My support worker taught me about myself and how to take care of my needs.'

We also helped Muireann and her husband Patrick find better ways of sharing parental responsibility. She says, 'For years I saw myself as a mother and wife, but not as me. Coming here has made me stronger and the kids are now a lot calmer.'

### During 2025...

- The Salvation Army's youth centre, Aston 614 in **Birmingham**, was buzzing with activity in July when we launched our summer activity scheme, a vibrant month of free activities for children and young people. They ranged from pizza-making and digital arts to sports and games. Not only did this introduce youngsters to new interests and experiences, but for parents it was a boon.



For four weeks they knew their kids were safe and looked after, and our free meals reduced pressure on stretched family budgets.



- In September, The Salvation Army in **Huntingdon** celebrated 25 years of our life-changing supported accommodation for young people at Kings Ripton Court. It supports 36 people between 16 and 25 who are experiencing homelessness or in need of extra support. We help them build independent living skills, gain confidence, and move on to live better lives. Often giving someone a better start means that, when the time comes, they will be better parents themselves – creating benefits that will last for generations.



## A voice for vulnerable people

The Salvation Army stands with the most vulnerable people in our communities – whether by caring for the survivors of modern slavery, supporting victims of domestic abuse, protecting potential targets of crime, or helping people break free from debt.

**‘The Salvation Army saved my life. For the first time, I feel normal.’**

Marie had an abusive childhood in South Africa, until a couple she met at church offered her an education in the UK. It turned out to be a cruel trick. In England she was forced into prostitution. Later she was sold to a man who treated her like a slave and made her take hard drugs, though she managed to avoid becoming dependent on them.

Mercifully Marie's nightmare came to an end when she escaped. She was found by a kind woman and eventually referred to The Salvation Army.

We gave her a place at one of our safe houses where she was out of reach of her exploiter. At last she felt safe. Since then our support workers have helped her rebuild her strength and independence. She says, 'The Salvation Army has saved my life. For the first time, I feel normal. You have given me the freedom to be the person I wanted to be.'

### During 2025...



- In August, The Salvation Army joined with Essex Police in an imaginative community event, combining sport with raising awareness among young people about the dangers of knife crime and addiction. It featured friendly football matches for boys and girls, together with workshops and conversations about the dangers of knives and drugs. Yassir, our addiction development officer for London and the South East, says, 'Drugs gangs often target young people. Our goal is to reach more young people to help prevent harm.'



- Ivan is one of hundreds of people who have benefitted from our Debt Advice Service, which has trained advisers at 25 centres across the UK.



Ivan had poor mental health and had built up a debt that seemed impossible to handle. He lived in constant fear of debt collectors knocking at his door. But two years after coming to us, he is debt-free. Our advisers helped him negotiate with creditors, set up direct debits and get his spending under control. Now he says, 'I don't have to hide anymore.'





William Booth founded The Salvation Army to fight a relentless, unyielding battle against poverty and suffering. 160 years later, inspired by our Christian faith, we continue to work tirelessly to serve people in need, without discrimination.

### **‘I’ll fight to the very end’**

William Booth

As a charity, we aim to make the most effective use of your donations. **90p in every £1 donated to The Salvation Army goes towards our work for people in need.**

**Thank you for all your warm-hearted support and for the lives you are helping to change.**



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The case studies in this review and the accompanying letter 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.

This review cost just 8p to produce.



### **Here are just some of the amazing things we have done in the past year, with your support:**

In 2024/25 we provided **over 2,900 beds** each night for people experiencing homelessness.



We ran around **300 clubs and programmes** for older people. More than **180,000** older people attended a weekly club or programme.

**2,409 survivors** of modern slavery received support to recover from exploitation and rebuild their lives.



We helped **3,534 individuals and families** to manage their debt problems through **25** debt advice centres across the UK.

**Over 4,905 people** contacted or started on our Employment Plus programme last year with over **1,100** people finding work.



Our **26 emergency response vehicles** responded to more than **300 call-outs** to assist the emergency services in crises such as fires and floods.