



Impact Report

1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

The
Shrewsbury Ark



www.shrewsburyark.co.uk

Registered Charity Number 1163476

Introduction

We are a small, independent award-winning charity in Shrewsbury dedicated to helping people without a home in our community to turn their lives around.

We do not charge anyone for using our services, but it costs approximately £360,000 per year to operate; we are totally dependent on money received from charitable donations, gifts, and grants to operate at the current level of services offering.

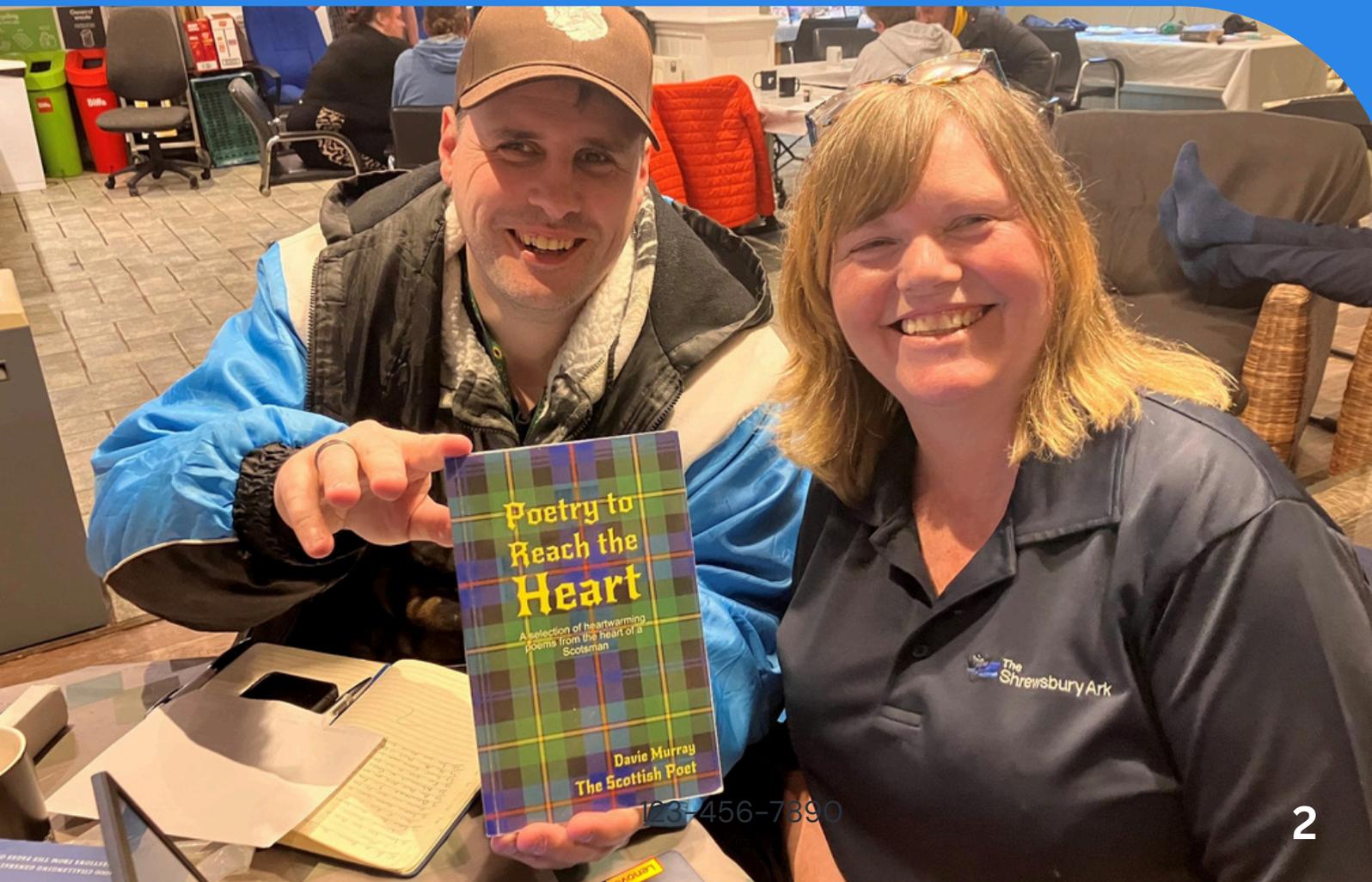
In the 12 months, 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025, we employed 11 members of staff and were supported by approximately 40 volunteers.

During most weekdays, we offer; laundry services, showers, hot food, clothing, footwear and sleeping bags. In addition, people can access advisory services for: housing, benefits and grants, and can also receive in-house treatment from GPs, Nurses, Counsellors, and Dentists.

We are the only day centre offering services for these people in Shropshire.

This report outlines the impact of our activities in the 12-month time period, 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025.

Everyone deserves a place to feel safe



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Homelessness: the facts

Homelessness is probably one of the most pressing social crises today; while rough sleeping is probably the most visible type of homelessness, there is also the hidden homeless. These include people sofa-surfing, temporarily staying with friends/family, living in temporary accommodation or living in unsuitable housing such as squats.

On a national level

The Big Issue analysis of recent government figures found a total of 327,950 households were owed support to prevent or relieve homelessness after contacting their council for help in 2024. That's up 5 per cent on the record-high 310,850 recorded in 2023.

In March 2025, the government's Rough sleeping data framework, estimated there were 7,718 people sleeping rough over the month. This is a 3 per cent increase since last quarter (December 2024) and increased by 5 per cent compared to last year (March 2024).

Official numbers at local level

For the 2024/25 Q3 the Local Government 'Understanding Homelessness in Shropshire' found:

- 19 people were sleeping rough according to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot in England: Autumn, (Data updated: 27 Feb 2025).
(NB at this time period we had 27 on our books)
- During 2024/25 Q3, 112 households were accepted as priority need and owed a main duty in Shropshire, and 59 were identified as vulnerable households.
- In 2024/25 Q3, there were a total of 221 households in temporary accommodation in Shropshire. This equates to a rate of 1.47 households per 1,000 households.
- In the latest reporting period (2024/25 Q3) most households in temporary accommodation in Shropshire comprised of a Single adult – 43% were single adult males (mean for All English unitary authorities 30%) and 21% were single female adult (mean for all English unitary authorities 15%)



Foreword

I will begin by saying THANK YOU.

Everything we are able to do to support and promote change for vulnerable people in our community is because of our community's generosity, our fundraising events and successful grant applications, and of course, our amazing team of volunteers.

It's through our supporters and volunteers' belief in us that we are able to work and help change people's futures for the better.

Once people become homeless, it is very difficult to lift themselves out of the situation; they feel alone, stigmatised, there is often underlying trauma, and they no longer see a future.

This often leads to a spiral of poor mental health and addiction.

We are part of the solution

At The Ark, we offer a safe and supportive space for anyone in crisis and facing difficult and challenging times. Our mission is to empower people to make positive changes in their lives. We support, encourage, and give people the skills and opportunity to do so.

We work closely with each individual to create a tailored development plan that reflects their goals and needs. Our dedicated and experienced team provides ongoing check-ins to make sure the right support is always in place.

It could be argued that these sorts of services should be provided by local government; however, in our experience, whether it was as a child or now as an adult, many of the people who we support have received inadequate or inconsistent support by government services and prefer to come to us as a safe haven, where their life experience is heard and acknowledged.

We are unique

We are a place where trust is built, and people are enabled, and we are proud of the team and all that we achieve.

As well as detailing enhanced quality of life and positive outcomes for the people it supports, and the benefits for the wider community, this report also highlights that robust care and support systems reduce costs for public services such as healthcare and social services.

Studies show that early intervention is far more cost-effective than crisis response. According to the charity Crisis UK [report](#), the annual cost of a single person sleeping rough in the UK is estimated at £20,128, whereas a successful intervention such as ours, costs approximately £1,426 per person per year.

This suggests that early intervention can save the public purse £18,702 per person annually. Given that these calculations were made in 2015, we suspect that figure is now much higher.

Furthermore, Crisis [research](#) indicates that preventing homelessness can lead to significant savings. For instance, tackling homelessness early could save the taxpayer between £3,000 and £18,000 for every person helped.

Like all charities, we are seeing a significant increase in staff costs and, as the owner of a premises, other running costs.

Over the past couple of years, we have spent a significant amount in renovating and maintaining our building, enabling us to deliver the life-changing services under one roof.

Our outgoings for the time period of this report were approximately £30,000 a month to deliver our services, the majority of which is spent on running costs including salaries and utility bills.

As this report reveals, our existence has major positive impacts, not just on the people we support, but to the wider community and society as a whole.

We have calculated that for every £1 invested in the Ark, it delivers £6 in social benefit.

With the right support, and encouragement, people can change, and can go on to live the best life that they can, and contribute to society in many ways.

And we at the Ark enable them to do so.

It is getting increasingly difficult to attract grants for core funding, such as salaries and ongoing operating costs; as we are experiencing a significant shortfall each month, the Trustees have had to make some difficult decisions to reduce our monthly outgoings to safeguard the future of charity.

Whilst The Trustees are looking at various methods to decrease our running costs and increase sources of income, such as renting out office space in our building, these will take time to instigate and put in place.

We urgently ask for your support. There are many ways to support us, but in particular, we invite you to become a ['Friend of the Ark'](#) by setting up a regular donation. For the cost of a single coffee a month, you could help us to secure a more reliable monthly income stream for our vital work to continue.

All the details, and ways you can support us are on our website, www.shrewsburyark.co.uk.

Once again, a huge thank you to all the individuals and organisations who continue to support us so we can give the most vulnerable and often damaged people in our society a brighter future to look forward to.



Emily Bell,
Chair to the Trustees

Our year in numbers

3289

Total Number of client interactions
(such as visits by clients and front door enquiries)

80

Number of people supported into housing

122

Number of unique clients

208

Number of appointments attended to receive medical care, due to support from the Ark

115

Clients with a local connection to Shrewsbury

597

Number of beds slept in over the winter months



Key outcomes

66 per cent of our clients supported into accommodation

Nearly **£1.5m** savings to the public purse in terms of health and judiciary services

Around **£12K/person** saving to the NHS in terms of early intervention & prevention

Every £1 given provides £6 worth of social benefit

The only place to go to when in crisis

As well as the people we support, and who are known to us, in the time period, our team has seen approximately an additional 100 people who came to our door in crisis.

Our trained and experienced team listen, support and advise on the best course of action for their situation.

While many do not need our services on an ongoing basis, they need help at that moment in time.

The impact of a person who listens with compassion and empathy, and is able to give practical advice in a time of crisis cannot be underestimated.

Personal stories

Young adults' stories

Over the past year, we are seeing a large increase in the number of young adults needing our support. Many of them have transitioned from care, and do not have the skills to carry forward into living independently as an adult.

Plus there is added trauma:

"When I left care at 18, I was moved into shared accommodation where I was sexually abused by someone else living in the accommodation. At this point I started drinking and was soon drinking a bottle of vodka in a day."

In this [blog post](#) we share some of the stories from the young adults, aged 21, 23 and 25, explaining how they came to need our services and support.



Paul's story

Paul came to us when he found himself homeless after caring for his dying father; the housing association wouldn't transfer the lease into his name, and with nowhere else to go, he found himself on the street.

"That first night I didn't know what to do, I was left to my own devices, I went behind the Gateway with a sleeping bag because I felt it was safe there. I was told about The Ark but I'd never been here, so I plucked up the courage and brought myself down. They've helped me in no end of ways."

Read his story [here](#).



Simon's story

Following a move to Shrewsbury for work that subsequently fell through, for the first time in his life, at the age of 56, Simon found himself homeless.

"The Ark has saved my life. I was really unwell when I came here and I feel much better already. I was sleeping in jeans and a jacket in the cold and found a safe place to sleep."

"Working with Chris from The Ark I am finding my way. I have an appointment at the doctors for diagnosis for my fainting, and dizziness which they suspect is type 2 diabetes."

[Here](#) he shares his story, and in this [blog post](#), he explains how his life has been turned around.



Impact of our services

Ensuring basic needs are met

Our services ensure basic human needs are met, such as:

- Bathroom and laundry facilities
- Hot meals
- Clothes
- Device charging
- Emotional support: a listening ear, and treating people with dignity and respect

Addressing sleep deprivation

After taking part in the CEO Sleepout in May, our Director Anton Goodwin shared a powerful reflection:

"Of course, we all empathise with how difficult and horrible it must be to sleep out on the streets, but even in the safety of a football stadium for one night in May, we found the cold and concrete more unpleasant than we could have imagined.

"This experience has completely changed how we view our day centre.

"At our day centre, we've always expected clients to come in ready to apply for housing or jobs – but we now realise that without rest, that level of focus is simply out of reach. If you've endured night after night of broken sleep in freezing conditions, it's almost impossible to concentrate, let alone thrive."



The NHS points out longer stretches of bad sleep do have a negative impact on our physical and mental health or wellbeing.

To help combat this, we have recently installed 8 bunk beds in a quiet area on the ground floor, where people can sleep in safety during our opening hours.

(We do not provide overnight accommodation in our premises unless Council declares Severe Weather Emergency Protocol ([SWEPP](#)) and/or has additional winter funding).



Providing practical help

Navigating complicated online systems and filling in forms can be a confusing and exasperating process, particularly if you haven't got literacy or tech skills, or you have mental ill health.

Our practical support includes:

- Form-filling and admin support
- Help with housing
- Learning basic life skills such as cooking, literacy, budgeting
- Providing an array of activities, such as craft, pamper days, gardening, and board games, all of which can help improve self-esteem and mental health.



Who we work with

We work with many organisations who have the same values and aims; that is to support and enable people to make positive changes in their lives.

Shropshire Council

We are an integral part of helping deliver Shropshire Council's [Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029](#), and work with Council in the following ways:

RESET team

Working alongside With You at Shropshire Recovery Partnership, Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT), Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS), and Intuitive Thinking Skills, as a vital partner of Shropshire Council's RESET's multi-agency team, many of the holistic support services are delivered in our premises.

Services include domestic abuse support, adult social care, housing support, substance misuse support and mental health treatment.

Hosted Council's SWEP, and extended winter accommodation programme for rough sleepers

From Jan – March 2025, the Ark provided a warm place to sleep for between 7 and 15 people each night, totalling nearly 600 "bums on beds" this winter.

Without Winter Provision they would have had just 16 nights of SWEP indoors, but thanks to this new initiative they have had an overnight option for 72 nights this year.

Details [here](#).

Rough sleeping team

In this [blog post](#), Craig, a Housing Navigator on Shropshire Council's rough sleeper team, explains how he works with us, and why we play a vital part in the accommodation-finding process for people who are experiencing homelessness.

Other partners

We are very grateful for the vital work and support from other partners including:

- [Barnabus Foodbank](#)
- [The Shrewsbury Food Hub](#)
- [Shrewsbury Homes For All](#)
- [Community Resource](#)
- [Maninplace](#)
- [KIP Telford](#)
- [Shrewsbury Town Foundation](#)
- [Shrewsbury Street Pastors](#)



Improving health outcomes

Why we need in-house healthcare services

As well as being devastating, dangerous and isolating, people experiencing homelessness face some of the worst health outcomes. Homeless Link's report, *The Unhealthy State of Homelessness*, found in its data collected between 2018–2021, that 78% of respondents reported a physical health condition, (compared to 73%, between 2012–2014).

For those reporting a mental health diagnosis, the change has become even more significant, increasing from 45% of respondents in 2012–14 to 82% in 2018–2021.

The homelessness charity, Crisis, states:

- the average age of death for people experiencing homelessness is 46 for men and 42 for women
- Homeless people are over nine times more likely to take their own life than the general population.

It's vital therefore, that homeless and other vulnerable people are connected to support services as soon as possible.

Barriers to accessing healthcare

A person who has had complex life challenges and experienced horrendous trauma often lacks the skills and knowledge to cope; often substance misuse adds another layer of chaos to a person's life too.

If you've been abused as a child, come out of care, prison or the forces, or even lost your job due to the pandemic, or cost of living, sometimes it's easier to turn to something to take the pain away.

The very act of booking a medical appointment (and going to that appointment) is anxiety inducing for a lot of the people using our services, and people experiencing homelessness or other vulnerable people are intimidated or do not feel comfortable accessing health and care services through usual routes.

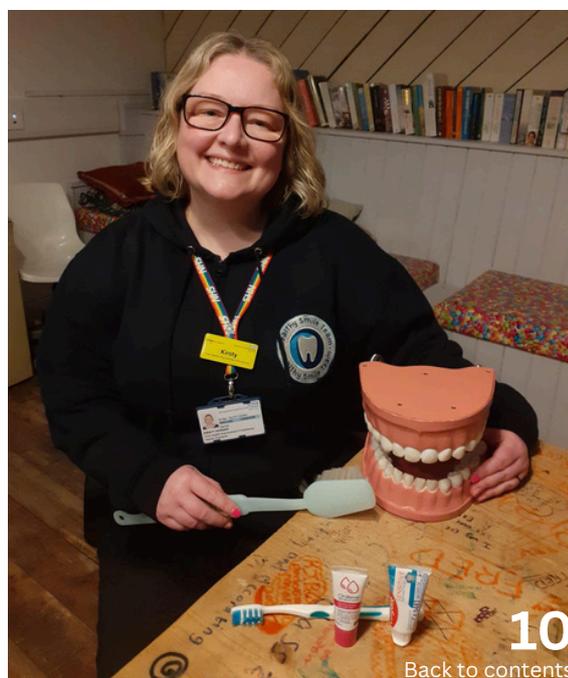
The result is health deteriorates and they only present to healthcare services when they are at crisis point; this is more costly to health services

Our In-house healthcare services (when funding is available)

GP clinic: run by Riverside Medical Practice, part of the Shrewsbury Primary Care Network (PCN), this service is vital to identifying conditions such as respiratory infections, cancer, cardiovascular problems, trench foot, and mental health issues; when identified early, and treated appropriately it prevents further deterioration.

Hepatology clinic: run in partnership with Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust and the Hepatitis C Trust, in this clinic, people are regularly tested for hepatitis; if anyone tests positive, we support them with wrap around care for their ongoing treatment.

Other health service teams include podiatrists, oral hygienists and mental health teams support clients, and our staff, with their mental health.



Cost savings to the NHS

Providing in-house GP, and other health services for homeless individuals not only benefits the patients but also offers significant financial savings to the NHS:

- **Early detection**

In-house GP services allow for more consistent and proactive care. By addressing health concerns early, these services can prevent the escalation of conditions that may otherwise require expensive emergency treatments or hospital admissions.

Furthermore, in-house services allow GPs to develop a deeper understanding of each patient's unique situation and medical history. **This continuity of care ensures that health interventions are tailored to the individual, reducing the risk of misdiagnosis or missed opportunities for early intervention.**

- **Reducing the cost of missed appointments**

Missed GP appointments cost: one study estimated that in 2022/23 the average 10-minute face-to-face GP consultation costs £56.*

There are many reasons a person experiencing homelessness fails to attend an appointment; some have difficulty to travel to the appointment, and the chaos in their lives makes them poor time keepers.

When our funding for an in-house GP clinic ceased last year, Riverside Medical Practice recorded in November, 22 appointments were booked and 15 of these were not attended, and in December, 20 appointments were booked and 12 of these were not attended.

- **Fewer emergency call outs**

Homeless individuals are more likely to use emergency services due to a lack of access to primary care. A Birmingham University study found, people experiencing homelessness in England are **60 times more likely** to visit the emergency department in a year than the general population.

The cost of an individual going to A&E depends on the type of A&E – which can range from a major consultant-led department in a hospital to an urgent care centre or walk-in clinic – and the type of treatment the individual receives.

For someone who attends an urgent care centre and receives the lowest level of investigation and treatment, the average cost in 2024/25 is £91. For an individual at a major A&E department who receives more complex investigation and treatment, the costs range on average from £137 to £445.*

In 2022/23, the estimated average cost of a patient taken to A&E by ambulance was £417. Ambulance call-outs that didn't result in a trip to A&E cost an estimated average of £287.*

*All NHS cost figures taken from The King's Fund [Key facts and figures about the NHS](#).

With these figures in mind, when we reviewed the conditions treated by the GP services and other in-house health services last year, **we estimate we are saving the NHS in the long run at least an average of £12k per person.**

This is in terms of missed appointments, fewer ambulance callouts/A&E attendants, early detection of health conditions and mental health intervention reducing the risk of deterioration and relapse.

By addressing both the immediate and long-term health needs of homeless individuals, as well as helping break the cycle of poor health and homelessness, we are providing a much-needed solution for both the individuals we serve and the broader healthcare system.

Impact on the wider community

Due to our behavioural agreements that are now in place with the clients, our relationships with the immediate neighbours are much improved.

Part of the local economy

In this year, we employed 11 staff. Positions include: charity director, fundraising manager, day centre manager, support workers and admin staff, a shop manager and deputy manager.

All our trained staff have an array of sector specific experience that makes them uniquely qualified for the role. Wherever possible we offer professional development opportunities.

Unfortunately, due to increase in both staff and energy costs, and change in the retail landscape, we recently had to make the difficult decision to close our shop and focus our fundraising on other activities.



Provide volunteer opportunities

As a Queens volunteers award recipients, we are fortunate to have the support of over 40 volunteers.

All our volunteers receive the necessary training and support for the role they are in.

Volunteer roles vary from being a part of the Board of Trustees, providing back-end admin support and helping with fund raising activities, to food preparation, giving emotional support, teaching literacy and budgeting skills, and assisting with housing and job applications, and other personal admin.



Raising awareness

We gave several talks to school who fundraise on our behalf, church groups and other local organisations such as Rotary.

We are also delighted to have become the first corporate member of the Darwin Rotary Club in Shrewsbury

'No Fixed Abode' photography exhibition: As part of her final A level exam, we worked with 18-year-old photographer Grace Church for her photography exhibition held in November 2024. Read more about this project [here](#).



Supporting our veterans

The Royal British Legion's long-held estimate is that 3-6% of homeless people have an armed forces background, but there are concerns that some homeless veterans are rendered "invisible" by the way statistics are collected.



We have taken the Shropshire Armed Forces Covenant and are committed to supporting all those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces.

Helping businesses meet their CSR responsibilities

This year we were delighted to help the following businesses' meet their CSR responsibilities:

- The Card Factory
- Co-op Mid Counties
- Radfield Homecare.



We are reaching out to the business community to offer them the opportunity to support us and further improve the overall public spaces and corporate social responsibilities.

Please contact our Fundraising and Community Manager, Kim Tunbridge, kim@shrewsburyark.org.uk, for further details.

Part of the national voice

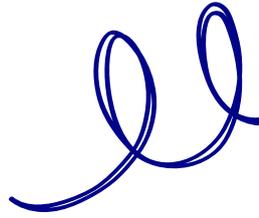
As members of Homeless Link, the national membership charity for organisations working directly with people who become homeless in England, we are a part of the national voice advocating on behalf of those who have no place they can call home.



We actively participate in the UK wide annual rough sleeping snapshot, going out at night with members of the council to do a rough sleepers count in Shropshire, and we also complete important national surveys for HomelessLink.



Governance



The Shrewsbury Ark is a project of the umbrella charity Shrewsbury Christian Centre Association, Registered Charity Number 1163476.

It is overseen by a Board of seven Trustees.

Each Trustee brings a specific skillset, knowledge and experience to the table, varying from finance and business to communications and fundraising.



Lived experience group

Recognising the importance of lived experience involvement and meaningful coproduction, we have recently established a Lived Experience Group.

The aim of this group is to support the direction in planning, guiding, and informing our work.

At the same time, we are ensuring their voices are heard, and this validates the experiences people have had, enabling them to contribute to effecting change where it is needed.

We'd like to thank everyone for their generous support

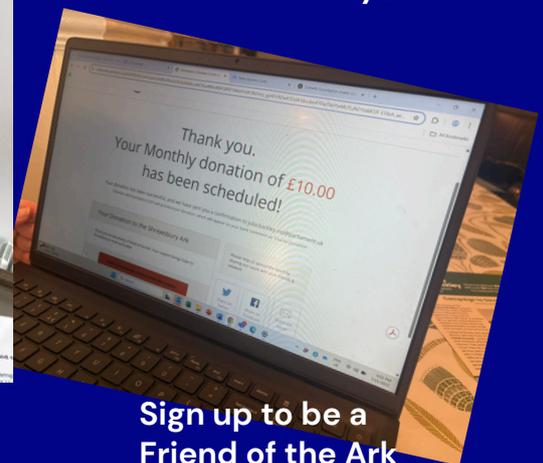
From responding to our call outs for items, to financially donating and supporting our fundraising activities, thank you!



Car wash Wednesdays



Quiz nights



Sign up to be a Friend of the Ark

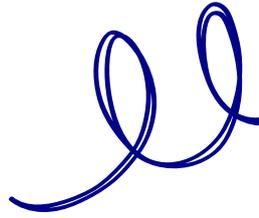
Acknowledgements

Thank you to the people who undertook personal sponsored challenges to raise funds for us.

Our thanks go to the following grant making organisations

- Lottery Fund
- Waterloo Fund
- Garfield Weston
- Millichope Foundation

We'd love your support



We NEVER charge for our services, everything you give is used purely to help those in need.

Become a Friend of The Ark

Support The Shrewsbury Ark with a regular donation. Your ongoing generosity helps us continue our vital work with homeless and vulnerable people in our community.

To set up a regular donation by Direct Debit, please follow this secure link:

[!\[\]\(a6eac08c103efb51b40f958fe35f07bb_img.jpg\) Set Up a Direct Debit Donation](#)



Other ways to support us

Donate

The Shrewsbury Ark relies entirely on generous **donations** to survive.

Details [here](#).

Give As You Live

Simply join and start giving when you shop through **Give as you Live Online** at any of the 6,000 retail partners. Vendors sell at the usual price, and there is no cost to you!

Details [here](#).

Gift in your will

You can provide vital support to our clients by leaving a **gift in your will**.

Details [here](#).

Give in celebration

If you have a special celebration coming up, would you consider asking friends and family to **donate to the ark instead of giving you a present?**

Details [here](#).



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