



PRESS RELEASE

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London's first independent volunteer scheme Reconnect launches to provide FREE services to the homeless

In July 2019, Reconnect launched a new 'pay it forward' style volunteer scheme in London. Businesses across the city can now provide services free of charge to homeless people.

Human kindness versus harsh austerity

The link between punitive austerity cuts and rising poverty has become clear. Across the UK, homelessness is rising; around 1 in 52 people have no fixed address in London – the highest in the country¹.

Living in unstable housing is an alienating experience, and Reconnect aims to recreate social links and bring homeless people back into the heart of their communities. By buying vouchers at their favourite cafe or hairdressers, for example, people in the community can turn their desire to do something to help into a tangible action – without the moral dilemma of giving cash directly to someone clearly in need.

Quotes from team and partners

Reconnect team advisor, artist and photographer Geraldine, describes from experience how basic needs can mean so much to the street homeless: "Somewhere safe to store my belongings would have meant I wouldn't have lost my passport, driver's licence and items of sentimental value. Having access to a telephone to call my parents. Somewhere to wash my clothes and get a haircut would have been amazing."

One of our partners, Mo, who runs Babuji, an Indian street food kitchen in Kentish Town, explained his reasons for supporting Reconnect in his area:

"The thought of people sleeping rough is one that fills me with sadness, I feel in our society, homelessness should not exist. As a country we have all at our disposal to eradicate this ill, all we need is a real desire to make it happen. To provide a home and support to people who are at the most vulnerable stage of their lives."

How Reconnect works

Businesses looking to give back to their communities can make an informal commitment to become Reconnect Partners for free. Once they have their distinctive green and white round Reconnect stickers on display, customers can become Reconnectors by purchasing service vouchers for homeless people to use.

Help us spread the word!

ENDS

For media enquiries, contact Christie Koko at info@reconnect-uk.org and 07947 502004.

Notes to Editors

- ¹ Source: [Shelter](#)
- [Reconnect](#) Project team was started in 2018 and inspired by the successful French initiative [Le Carillon](#)
- Reconnect co-advisor David Fussell was recently featured in VICE's documentary 'The Homeless Man Who Made a Horror Movie'
- The multi-ethnic, multi-national team is made up entirely of volunteers, some who are or have been homeless, and work in a diverse range of sectors, from the arts and technology to international development
- Reconnect has 7 partners at time of writing, mostly in Kentish Town & Camden Town as well and areas of South London. The initiative is aiming to grow its network of partners throughout 2019.