

The Church of England's Social Impact Investment Programme today announced its first investment, a £1.6 million commitment to the Women in Safe Homes fund.

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The Women in Safe Homes fund is a joint venture between fund managers Resonance and Patron Capital, working in partnership with specialist organisations to provide safe, stable and affordable homes for vulnerable women and their children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The fund aims to house 6,000 women over its lifetime.

The [Social Impact Investment Programme](#), was established within The Archbishops' Council earlier this year with £16 million of grant funding from the Church Commissioners for England. The programme exists to deploy social investment capital to advance the Church of England's missional objectives and will support projects which share the Church of England's Christian values and benefit society.

This first investment will support the purchase and refurbishment of properties which are then leased to women's support organisations who in turn, let them at affordable rates to vulnerable women at risk of homelessness, whilst also providing them with individualised and specialist support. Many of these women will have been victims of domestic abuse or victims of exploitation or are leaving prison. Safe and stable accommodation is critical to helping them rebuild their lives. There are many Church of England and other faith-based organisations working with vulnerable women and this investment further supports their mission.

Vanessa Morphet, Head of Social Impact Investment at the Archbishops' Council, commented on the investment:

"Women in Safe Homes is an innovative fund addressing a pressing societal problem of inadequate access to safe and stable accommodation for vulnerable women. People and organisations across the Church of England community already work to support vulnerable women and this investment is an excellent example of how the Church can use its social investment capital in further support of its mission.

"It is exciting to announce our first investment. There are a growing number of impact focused fund managers tackling some really difficult social and environmental challenges in the UK and we look forward to putting more of our capital to work in this way."

Louise Swinden, Resonance Property Fund Development Manager, said:

"The chronic lack of suitable and affordable housing specifically for women is leaving thousands at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Women who have experienced trauma, domestic abuse and violence are particularly at risk. However, with a shortfall in the number of refuge spaces available – and over 57% of refuge referrals declined – many women are either being placed in inappropriate accommodation, choosing to sleep rough (35% of women who have slept rough left home to escape violence) or have no option but to remain with their abuser.

"So, we are delighted the Church of England has joined the efforts of the Women in Safe Homes fund, making its first social impact investment into the fund. This investment will make a significant contribution to the impact the fund is making, providing safe, decent, and affordable homes for women at risk of homelessness. It will also enable more women to access specialist support services, to be empowered and to live their lives how they choose."

