

This blog is written by a member of the independent Commission. These views do not necessarily represent the views of the Archbishops' or the Church of England.

West London Mission (WLM) has been empowering people affected by homelessness, poverty and trauma since 1887. Set up and governed by the [Hinde Street Methodist Church](#) and [Kings Cross Methodist Church](#), they have offered all the standard church-linked approaches – night shelters, day centres and hostels for people with various needs and challenging circumstances.

Their Christian ethos is key to their success, enabling them to meet people's spiritual and emotional needs alongside their physical demands. Recently, though, an element has changed. Where previously they were just responding to crisis need, they've expanded to have a more preventative approach.

Churches should 'enable people to empower themselves'

Rev Peter Cornick, Superintendent



For example, The 'Pret House at WLM St. Luke's' marks the unique and innovative partnership between WLM and Pret Foundation, providing newly renovated accommodation with high spec and comfortable communal spaces and access to expert advice to help homeless people transition into the private rented market through the 'Rising Stars' programme. The programme offers so much in terms of support around employment, providing a 360° spectrum of guidance. People are empowered to build their confidence, financial capability and other skills. They're guided in saving money to move into private rented accommodation. This aims to skill people to the level where they are not using services and back in the workforce.

WLM is also providing housing for fourteen key workers who would otherwise not be able to live in London through their **Low-Cost Housing for**

Key Workers service. They offer high quality, low-cost rooms for single people working full time to deliver essential services that keep the city moving such as emergency service workers, hospital staff, health care workers, teachers, care workers and cleaners. The rooms are in a large refurbished building with excellent shared facilities - a large kitchen, lounge, smart shower and bathrooms. The monthly rent covers everything and the money they pay goes into the running costs of WLM helping people affected by homelessness, poverty and trauma to live more fulfilling lives.



By providing people stable and affordable housing, WLM is contributing to reduce the need for their crisis support services, acting as a safety net - catching people before they become homeless, offering their services to everyone inclusively.

Not every church is running a £3.3 million charity, but there's something we can learn from WLM. We're called to help the most vulnerable, but

that includes ensuring that as many people as possible don't get there in the first place. The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Housing, Church and Community is pushing churches to think about how their response to homelessness can be preventative. Providing affordable, stable housing is a key part of that.

WLM are currently running their [**COVID19 emergency appeal**](#) and kindly ask for contributions as they are facing a triple blow of reduced income, increased costs and very vulnerable residents during the pandemic.

[Want to receive occasional updates from the Commission on our work and stories from around the country? Join our mailing list here.](#)

Notes:

1. This blog only focuses on some of the aspects of WLM's work. For more information on how they empower people affected by homelessness, poverty and trauma to make positive changes in their lives, see their [**website**](#).
2. WLM is a unique model, as it is technically a circuit of the Methodist Church. Where most circuits are a group of churches, West London Mission Circuit has two churches along with various professional services to deal with homelessness through WLM charity.
3. The churches in the circuit - Hinde Street and King's Cross Methodist Churches – have a fine tradition of relieving poverty since 1887 with innovative community services.
4. The Low Cost Housing for Key Workers service is available to key workers and the rooms are offered for a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 24 (with flexible extension) to give an opportunity to save and move into something more permanent.
5. They have a chaplain, aided by chaplaincy volunteers, who work across all the WLM Services, working with people of all faiths and none, to offer support with faith, spirituality, and questions around life and meaning. This includes group work and one to one support. This helps ensure WLM works holistically with people. As Superintendent Minister of the WLM Circuit, the Rev Peter Cornick exercises oversight of the churches, student hostel and WLM professional services, whilst having particular pastoral responsibility for Hinde Street Methodist church.

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/archbishops-commissions/housing-church-and-community/church-blogs/old-we-travel-new-west>