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Two competitions aimed at helping local churches to support people in housing need – from advocacy and advice for vulnerable tenants to



bishop of Canterbury's Commission on Housing, Church and

The Project Lab competition, run in partnership with the Cinnamon Network, will identify five church projects working to support local people with housing needs and building community. These might include mentoring and befriending services, tenancy training and advocacy on behalf of vulnerable clients, including mediating with landlords.

The five finalists will be invited to an event in July, at which they will present their projects to an audience of philanthropists and a panel of judges. Two winning projects will receive a £30,000 development grant and there are up to five places available on the two-year 'Cinnamon Project Incubator' – where projects will receive support from industry professionals to develop their initiative.

Project Lab 2020 aims to provide a blueprint for a projects that can be replicated by churches across the nation to support people in housing need. Examples of existing work include Revd Dr Catherine Shelley, a vicar and a qualified solicitor, who set up a benefits and housing advice service in her church hall to stop people falling into rent arrears.

A separate competition, *Innovative Built Solutions for Churches*, will help to establish a small number of small-scale housing schemes involving the use of church land and buildings. Working with specialist housing consultants LivShare Consulting, churches will be offered early stage support to get projects off the ground, including technical advice and help with securing funding and building partnerships.

Keswick Community Housing Trust, for example, was set up by churches, using church land and buildings to develop affordable homes for local people, who are being forced out of the area by the rise in holiday properties. By supporting a range of exemplar housing schemes like this, the aim of this competition is to inspire more churches to make use of under-used church property to meet a local housing need.

The Commission's vice-chair, Dr Graham Tomlin, Bishop of Kensington, said: "Housing matters to God because it matters to all of us. Throughout history, churches have provided shelter to those who need it – from almshouses to establishing many of the housing associations which arose in the twentieth century. The Archbishop of Canterbury's Housing Commission is looking at how churches can respond to housing needs, as well as asking the Government and others to work with us to create real change. Project Lab and Innovative Built Solutions for Churches will play a key part in this exciting project."

Sian Edwards, Director of the Andrews Charitable Trust, funders of Project Lab 2020, said: "Churches have long been associated with street homelessness and soup kitchens, but we applaud the Archbishop's Housing Commission for supporting projects that will help people find and keep their homes, helping to prevent homelessness in the first place. As a Christian trust, we believe that churches are uniquely placed to be able to provide non-judgemental, practical and heart-filled responses to the individual needs people face. We are delighted to help fund this initiative to grow the best Christian projects."

Amanda Bindon, Co-Chief Executive of Cinnamon Network said: "Churches are on the forefront in supporting those most vulnerable in our

communities. We know many have found creative ways to help support those who are experiencing housing needs. Through Project Lab, we want to find these great ideas and help them develop so other churches can replicate their work.”

## NOTES:

1. [More information about Revd Shelley's work](#)
2. [More info about Keswick CHT](#)
3. [Further examples of church-linked housing projects.](#)
4. [About the Commission:](#) The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Housing, Church and Community seeks to re-imagine housing policy, with a focus on building better communities and homes, not just houses. As well as making recommendations for Government and others, it will also look at what actions the Church can take, in partnership with others, to help tackle the crisis at local, regional and national levels. The Commission is co-chaired by Charlie Arbuthnot and The Right Reverend Graham Tomlin, Bishop of Kensington.
5. [More about Project Lab 2020:](#) This year we are looking to develop a broad range of initiatives that address the UK's housing crisis and its underlying causes. The types of project that will be considered include: tenancy training; housing advice and advocacy; mentoring and befriending; hosting schemes; resident engagement; and co-living schemes.
6. [More about IBSoc:](#) We are looking for churches of all denominations that are actively exploring the possibility of a small-scale housing scheme using church-owned land or property to meet a local housing need. We are interested in projects that are at a relatively early stage in their development. We will offer free expert advice to five church-led projects - up to five days each - and harness the support of potential funders and partner organisations.
7. [About the Cinnamon network:](#) Cinnamon Network connects with more than 1,000 local churches the length and breadth of the UK and Ireland. It conducts research, provides advice, delivers training courses and help churches start social action projects that transform their communities.
8. [About Allchurches Trust:](#) Allchurches Trust, who are funding *Innovative Built Solutions for Churches*, is one of the UK's largest grant-making charities.

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