

Save Lives – Help Take The Homeless Off The Streets This Christmas

Fill an empty space, and reserve a place at the Crisis Christmas table – before it's too late.

Dear Title AlsoLast,

Christmas is a time for family. A time for happiness, warmth and togetherness.

A time to relax and unwind. To forget the stresses of the year and enjoy the season with our loved ones.

For some, however, Christmas is the hardest time of the year.

When cheer becomes fear

Not so long ago, David had everything he wanted: a good job, a loving family and a home of his own. He didn't need to be a millionaire. Didn't need a high octane, jet-setting lifestyle or to climb to the top of the corporate ladder.

No... all David needed was the security of a comfortable living, a warm home, and the fulfilling love of his family after a long day's work.

But his marriage collapsed – and with it, so too did his support network. Lost in confusion and dismay, in a matter of mere months David found himself sleeping regularly in a grimy bin shelter outside a block of flats.

It was filthy and grim... but it was the only place he could find that kept him safe from the rain, the eyes of others whom he thought would judge him harshly, and the threat of physical violence from drunken revellers and those determined to take advantage of the vulnerable.

He'd lost everything, and was too ashamed of his situation to even see his own children. He just couldn't explain to them the awful reality of where he was each night. He was afraid that they wouldn't understand. That even they, who meant so much to him, would brand him a failure.

And so, facing the bitter cold, David shivered in the darkness – miserable, alone and too scared to consider what the future had in store. As he trembled and rubbed his hands together – desperately seeking warmth – David feared that he wouldn't have the strength to make it through the winter...

And that his children would start the New Year with the news that they would never see their dad again.

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This is the reality of homelessness at Christmas. People just like you and me are freezing, frightened and hopeless.

Where there should be joy, there is nothing but an empty space.

But for **just £21.62**, you can fill that space for someone like David – through Crisis at Christmas.

Together, we can turn things around

Crisis is the national charity for single homeless people. We're dedicated to bringing an end to homelessness and changing lives – and that means Christmas is crucial for us. It's a time of year that holds major significance, and if we can bring homeless people inside with the promise of a good meal and good company at this most difficult time, we stand the best chance of keeping them off the streets for good.

We know this because since we opened our doors at our very first Crisis at Christmas, back in 1972, we've seen time and time again how just a little comfort and support, at the right time, can trigger real, lasting change.

But we can't do it without the generosity and help of people like you: People who care about the wellbeing of the less fortunate, and those at risk... because surprisingly, not everyone does care. But I'm contacting you because I'm told that you do, and would like to thank you for that.

Because together, we're turning entire lives around every single day.

We're bringing real change to lives that could otherwise be lost

David, with the help of Crisis and your donations, is now on his way to a brighter future – and we won't quit helping him until he truly gets there.

Having a place around the table at Crisis at Christmas was a new beginning for David, as it is for many. He told us:

"If it wasn't for Crisis, I would have frozen to death and been found dead in the street. Crisis has given me everything. They've given us clothes – a big, thick jumper, socks, a proper sleeping bag. And I'm coming back in January to get help with my future. This place, what they've done for me, and what they're going to do for me in the future... you can't beat it."

After a hard shift, Diane used to sleep most nights in the toilets at work... rather than go home to face the undeserved rage of her alcoholic stepfather. When she lost her job, she thought her life was over – but then she found the support that she desperately needed... when she found Crisis at Christmas.

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When Julie fled her home to escape the terrifying grip of an abusive relationship, her courage found her stranded on the streets. She couldn't see how she would ever break away after going from one dire situation to another... but after coming to Crisis at Christmas, she's back on track and life looks bright for her once more.

David, Diane, Julie, and countless other people like them – whose lives have come undone unexpectedly, and through no fault of their own – would never have escaped their desperate situations if it weren't for the vital donations received from generous people like you.

This year, we want to make Crisis at Christmas really hit the heights that it should. To welcome as many guests as we possibly can. To do that, we need your help... URGENTLY.

While we hear on the news that the economy is improving for the rest of us, the reality that we at Crisis see each day is that, for the most vulnerable, the situation continues to be as desperate as ever. As cuts carry on being made and available housing remains at a shortage, those who are homeless and alone are still facing a perilous and worsening position with little end in sight.

For them, going to sleep each night carries the very real threat of not waking up in the morning. Of dying alone... starving, freezing, and forgotten. Crisis isn't just about filling empty stomachs... it's about literally saving lives.

Nobody deserves to be abandoned, and so this Christmas we want to double up our efforts and be ready to welcome more guests than ever in from the cold – and that is where your gift will be so crucial.

Reserve a place for someone at the Crisis at Christmas table this year – or better yet, two!

Put simply, here's what we're aiming for: The more seats that we can pull up to the table this Christmas, the more lives we can change for the better. Whatever you give to us, you can be sure that you are helping someone who is homeless and in real need of support have a happy, fulfilling Christmas... and a New Year that means a new start on the road to a brighter future.

Because there is indeed a light at the end of the tunnel with Crisis – and we continue to shine that light for the huge numbers of homeless people about whom too many simply don't care at all. If I thought for one moment that you didn't want to be a crucial part of that light – that you would rather pay no heed to the starving, freezing, desperate and dying – you wouldn't be reading these words right now.

We, and the people we assist, are extremely grateful for the support that you give. You and I both know that it's the time of year where even the smallest gestures can have the greatest impact, so please complete the attached donation slip right away, and simply send it back to us in the freepost envelope provided. You can also donate easily online at www.crisis.org.uk/placegift or over the telephone by calling 08000 199 099.

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There's also a space on your donation slip to include a personal Christmas message for our guests. Please do write one in alongside your reserved spaces – I'm sure your words of support will mean a lot to those seated with them.

Once again, I'd like to give you my heartfelt thanks, in advance, for your quick response, generosity, compassion and care towards this incredibly worthwhile cause.

Wishing you a very happy Christmas,

Ian Richards
Head of Crisis at Christmas

P.S. A place at Crisis at Christmas is much more than just a hot meal. It also provides a health check, free clothing, a haircut, advice on housing and employment and access to year-round services at Crisis. It's a full, fast-track ticket to leaving homelessness behind, for good – for just **£21.62** – so please send your gift today and get someone off the streets tomorrow.

P.P.S. Our centres open on December 22. This means that time is extremely short so please, please, reply as soon as possible. Now would be perfect.