

# **We're planning to take on homelessness this Christmas. Will you?**

## **COLD WEATHER ALERT**

Night-time temperatures are falling. When you're homeless, Christmas can be the hardest time of all. Cold, hungry and alone, there's often nothing to enjoy, no one to be with, and little hope of anything better. Where Christmas should be, there's just an empty space.

**You can help fill that space for someone, for just a few pounds – for £23.39, in fact.**

Crisis is the national charity for single homeless people. We're dedicated to ending homelessness and changing lives, and for us Christmas is crucial. If we can welcome homeless people at this toughest of times, with the offer of a good meal and good company, it can be the start of getting them off the streets and out of homelessness for good.

**We know that it works.**

Since 1972, when we opened our doors for the very first Crisis at Christmas, we've seen how a little comfort and support, given at the right time, can trigger a real, lasting change. John's story (right) shows how much your help could mean this Christmas.

**To make this Crisis at Christmas all it could be, and to welcome as many guests as possible, we need your help – and we need it urgently.**

As the economic downturn hits home, people on the edge of homelessness are incredibly vulnerable – and life for those already on the streets, in hostels, sleeping on people's floors or crammed into bedsits feels worse than ever. This Christmas, we want to double our efforts, and be ready to welcome more guests than ever – and that is where your gift could be so crucial.

You can help us turn our plan into reality, by reserving a place at Crisis at Christmas for someone who's homeless today. One place costs just £23.39; two places costs £46.78; and if you were able, £233.90 would pay for a whole table, giving ten people a day to remember and a whole fresh start.

**1 place** = 3 hot meals, a new set of clothes, a health check, housing and job advice, and simple companionship to feel human again.

**You can help provide all this for one more guest, for just £23.39.**

## A place for John.

When John was four his brother was killed in the Second World War bombing. Unable to cope with the tragedy, his father committed suicide. John's mother remarried three years later, but her new husband was alcoholic and would violently abuse her and the children.

At the age of 14, frightened for his mother's safety, John hit his stepfather over the head with a chair. John and his younger brother were taken into care. Soon after, John's younger brother died of leukaemia and his mother drowned herself.

When he was 18, John found work as a cocktail waiter in hotel bars. But he was often forced to sleep rough between jobs. Incredibly lonely and terrified of arrest, at night he would lie grasping his most precious possession to his chest: a picture of himself with his mother. After suffering a nervous breakdown, John spent time in an institute for mentally ill people.

Now retired, John rents a room in a lodging house. "I've come to Crisis at Christmas for the wonderful hospitality, efficient transport, delicious food and kindness of the volunteers" he says.



Crisis at Christmas has provided vital services for homeless and vulnerably housed people for 40 years.

Whilst we should celebrate the lives helped and changed and the dedication of the thousands of volunteers and donors who made this possible, it is a scandal that homelessness still exists and that we are needed at all.

With the continuing economic downturn and rising unemployment and living costs taking their toll, people from across the country are facing homelessness. Yet harsh cuts to benefits, support services and huge pressure on housing are hurting the most vulnerable in society and leading to increased homelessness.

In our 40th anniversary year Crisis at Christmas will be needed more than ever before.

**Crisis at Christmas has to open on 23 December, so please get your gift to us as soon as you can – and by 22 December at the latest.**

*Thank you.*

**Please reserve a place for a homeless person this Crisis at Christmas.**

**Please make a donation visit: [www.crisis.org.uk](http://www.crisis.org.uk) or freephone: 08000 199099 or post to: Room 042, FREEPOST CRISIS AT CHRISTMAS**

**Crisis**

From an appeal, which included a coupon for filling in payment details, published in the British Press,  
*The Guardian* (2011)

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