

## SOME CASE STUDIES

### Case study 1

A couple, Miss A, who is expecting a baby, and Mr B were living with Miss A's uncle and aunt in Seaford. They could not stay there after the baby arrived. Both of them work for a burger making chain, but their wages are low. James and the volunteer interviewer were impressed by the couple and gave them a loan of £1,405, to be repaid at a rate of £24.86 a month.

### Case Study 2

Mr C had been sleeping in his car for the past fifteen months. He had become very depressed about his situation and has been on anti-depressants. According to his doctor, he would really deteriorate unless he found accommodation. He had a small benefit allowance, so he was given a loan for the deposit and the rent of £1,060 for a one bedroom flat, to be repaid at a rate of £20.97. He won't have to spend another winter in his car!

### Case Study 3

'We recently had a client who had a past history of mental health problems and eventually became homeless. He subsequently slept rough for many years and felt particularly vulnerable. He found it virtually impossible to find any accommodation because of his lack of funds. A loan from HOMELINK, in his words, enabled him to "change his life around" and get a fresh start. He managed to find a safe and secure flat and has now got the confidence to enjoy life again.'

DOC 4A v3 Oct 2016

## Lewes District Churches

# HOMELINK



## Helping people into housing

## All about HOMELINK

**Website:** [www.lewesdistrictchurcheshomelink.org.uk](http://www.lewesdistrictchurcheshomelink.org.uk)

**Service Manager:** James Gardner

**Office:** 01273 479541 (answerphone)

**E-mail:** [homelink.lewes@googlegmail.com](mailto:homelink.lewes@googlegmail.com)

### Patrons

The Revd Nicola Furley-Smith, Moderator of the URC Southern Synod;

The Rt. Revd Richard Jackson, Bishop of Lewes;

The Rt Revd Richard Moth, Bishop of Arundel and Brighton;

Peter Field, Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex;

Maria Caulfield, MP.

Lewes District Churches HOMELINK is Registered Charity No. 1068735

## OUR BACKGROUND

Lewes District Churches HOMELINK was founded in 1997, by people from different Christian denominations, who got together because they had a great concern for the homeless, or those about to be homeless, in Lewes District. They were concerned that people were homeless because they did not have the money to 'get into housing' by renting accommodation; they did not have the down payment for the damage deposit and the first month's rent. So the founders worked with vision and passion to set up HOMELINK.

## ORGANISATION

HOMELINK has a Board of Trustees nominated by Churches Together in Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford, and a Management Committee. It has one part-time employee, who works as a Service Manager, and many invaluable volunteers. There is an office at the House of Friendship in Lewes, and interviews are conducted in Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford.

## ABOUT THE WORK OF HOMELINK

HOMELINK can 'help people into housing' by offering an interest free loan for part or all of the finance needed to access private rented accommodation. On average this amounts to £1,600 per tenancy (to cover the damage deposit and first month's rent) - an impossible amount for some people to raise.

HOMELINK works in partnership with Lewes District Housing Department to prevent homelessness. The scheme helps local applicants of any faith or none, for whom Lewes District Council has no statutory liability. All applicants are referred to HOMELINK by the Housing Department. The HOMELINK Service Manager and a volunteer interview all applicants and make decisions, based on a client's needs and their ability to repay the loan. All our clients need to be looking for accommodation in the local area.

HOMELINK refers applicants or tenants to other organisations that could help them as appropriate.

## FINANCE

HOMELINK receives an annual grant from LDC. For the last three years ESCC has also given a grant in order to assist anyone sent through LDC who needs help.

We receive regular subscriptions from churches and church members in Lewes District and we are delighted to receive donations. We invite organisations to fundraise for us, and we have a fundraising team.

Repayments from earlier loans are recycled to help fund new loans, and we are well placed to continue the lending scheme at present.

## FRIENDS AND VOLUNTEERS

All who are interested in HOMELINK become Friends of HOMELINK and receive news updates and event details by email. We are always looking for volunteers. For more information, ring the office telephone number on the front page of this leaflet.

## CAUSE FOR CONCERN

Many people, even those in work, are having a desperate struggle to make ends meet. The need for the sort of help HOMELINK can provide to homeless people is continuously increasing:

**2013: 164 applicants and 55 loans, at a cost of £76,142;**

**2014: over 200 applicants and 81 loans, at a cost of £108,247.**

**2015: 173 applicants and 66 loans, at a cost of £101,400.**

Our Service manager wrote in our Autumn Newsletter:

*'The number of applications has gone up quite significantly. This may be because there has been a large increase in domestic abuse cases and evictions.*

*It is still enormously difficult for many of our successful applicants to find affordable properties'*

*A quote from one of our grateful tenants "Thank you to all at Homelink for making it possible for me to finally move back into a home of my own. It has meant the world to me."*