



Catholic charity for the homeless appeals for £9m

BY DAVID V BARRETT

AN AWARD-WINNING east London homeless charity has launched a £9.3 million appeal. Anchor House is launching a "Home and Hope Appeal" to redevelop its 50-year-old centre and provide new education, training and rehabilitation facilities for its homeless residents and local community.

Formerly a seaman's mission, Anchor House was established in 1962 by the Catholic London Inter-Diocesan Council of the Apostleship of the Sea. It is based in Canning Town, the most deprived ward in Newham, the third most deprived borough in the country.

The appeal will fund the development of 25 new transitional "move-on" studio flats to help Anchor House residents through the transition back into independent living, and a new training kitchen for people to gain catering qualifications.

Keith Fennell, director of Anchor House, said: "Mental health, drug and alcohol abuse from as early as eight years old, reoffending and escape from war and rape from the Eritrean army – these are the types of problems our residents are facing. While the local community continues to contend with soaring unem-

ployment, high levels of deprivation, teenage pregnancy and a second generation out of work.

"Our waiting list for new residents grows longer every day, but this development will ensure that over the next 50 years we will be able to support an extra 20,000 people in the community to turn their lives around."

High-profile patrons supporting the appeal include Lord Patten, Ann Widdecombe, the Archbishops of Westminster and Southwark, the Bishop of Brentwood and Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank.

Despite it being a small charity Anchor House's results are astounding, said its chairman Mgr John Armitage.

"Last year 58 of our residents moved on to independent living, 32 were in employment and we trained more than 1,249 locals within the community," he said.

"Anchor House is a charity worthy of investment, not only because it succeeds and makes a difference, but because it is focused on helping society's most marginalised and vulnerable who are often overlooked."

Last year the charity was recognised as a National Centre of Excellence and was awarded five National Training Awards by the UK Skills Council.