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TV star and ex-boxing champion become patrons of homelessness charity

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Former Carry On and EastEnders actress, Barbara Windsor MBE, has joined former World Boxing Champion and ITV's Hell's Kitchen winner, Barry McGuigan MBE, to help raise much needed funds for award winning homeless charity Anchor House.

They have joined the growing list of celebrity patrons supporting the East London charity, including BBC's Jeremy Paxman, former MP Ann Widdecombe and ITV News at Ten presenter Julie Etchingham.

Located in Canning Town, in one of the most deprived areas of the country, Anchor House provides accommodation for up to 180 single homeless people each year.

It addresses the root causes of homelessness through training, education and personal rehabilitation.

As patrons, Ms Windsor and Mr McGuigan will be helping to raise awareness for the charity's £9 million Home and Hope Appeal which is aiming to fund a new 21st century training and education facility with move-on transitional accommodation.

Born in Shoreditch, Ms Windsor says she is very happy to be coming back to her roots – supporting an innovative centre that's just a stone's throw away from where her acting career began – in Stratford's local theatre workshops.

"I applaud Anchor House for the work that they are doing and look forward to working with them," Ms Windsor said. "They are innovative and are empowering the homeless to help themselves through a programme that's designed by the homeless and for the homeless."

Irish born champion boxer, Barry McGuigan, knows only too well what the importance of physical fitness and health is in transforming lives. As a patron, he aims to support the growth of Anchor House's health and wellbeing programmes.

"When I first visited Anchor House, what struck me most was how happy, respectful and grateful the residents were," Mr McGuigan said. "They felt really lucky to be at Anchor House and to be given the opportunity to turn their lives around. And I believe fitness and education has played a big part in that." "It's not just been about giving them a bed, because that's only the start of it. It's about giving them the skills and knowledge to manage their problems and take full responsibility for their lives."

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