



We provide good value for money, says charity

SPECIAL REPORT

Anchor House says investing in its work makes economic sense. **Rob Virtue** reports

When you're asking for millions of pounds from the private sector it's probably a good idea to explain just how much you are worth.

So, Anchor House, a Canning Town charity which helps turn around the lives of east London's homeless, was keen to publish a report that showed how it saved the economy £5million a year by reducing crime and increasing employment.



Keith Fernet: Back our cause

The report was unveiled just a week before the organisation launched its campaign to raise £9.3million.

Chief executive Keith Fernet, who worked as an economist, said: "It gives us a calling card for our appeal to say we're effective and would have a vast impact on society if we are invested in."

"If we were on the stock market people would be falling over

themselves to invest.

"I hope the City and financial institutions in Canary Wharf will take this seriously and back our cause."

The charity helps people who are left without a home for a number of reasons – be it alcohol or drug dependency or simple misfortune. Originally a seaman's mission when established in 1962, it now gives temporary housing to up to 180 people a year.

Recently it set a target of raising £15million and has so far secured £6million, all of which has been invested. The remaining figure needed now is £9.3million and on Monday the Home And Help Appeal will be launched at the Inner Temple in the City.

Mr Fernet said: "We want to build a block of studio flats for people who live here to help them go forward into independent living because we realised they are very lonely when they leave here and that's dangerous."

More money will also be spent on the charity's education facilities. It's been a very successful side of the operation with a National Training Awards prize collected last year, while at the same event former resident Aggie Chikiwa, who now teaches at the charity, was given a top award for his work.

Keith said: "The building is 50 years old and some parts haven't got proper electrics or heating. We currently have 2,500 people trained here a year not just on life skills but more importantly giving them training in potential employment."

CASE STUDY



Cameron Inniss found himself in Anchor House

Back on my feet again

CAMERON Inniss has been at Anchor House for five years. He worked as a builder living in rented accommodation when he fell from a ladder snapping ligaments in his leg.

When he left hospital he was unable to pay his rent and was evicted from his home. So the council put him in touch with Anchor House.

Cameron said: "It was a real shock to the system. I wasn't happy with it and was embarrassed about being in that situation. When I got here I had my guard up but the staff didn't pay any attention to my

negativity and gradually that negativity went away."

It took him two years to fully recover from his injuries. He has spent his time at Anchor House studying for qualifications in IT, English and maths. He also works at the charity doing maintenance and mentors other residents. He's seen first-hand just what can be achieved through investing in the charity.

"I see lots of benefits coming from this money," he said. "Things they've put in place so far have made an amazing improvement and helped a lot of people get back to work."