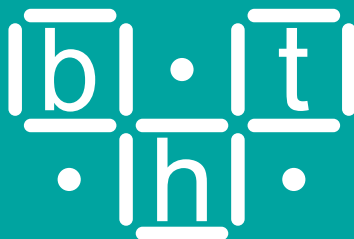


# 250 YEARS OF St Stephen's Hall

THE HOME OF BHT'S  
FIRST BASE DAY CENTRE



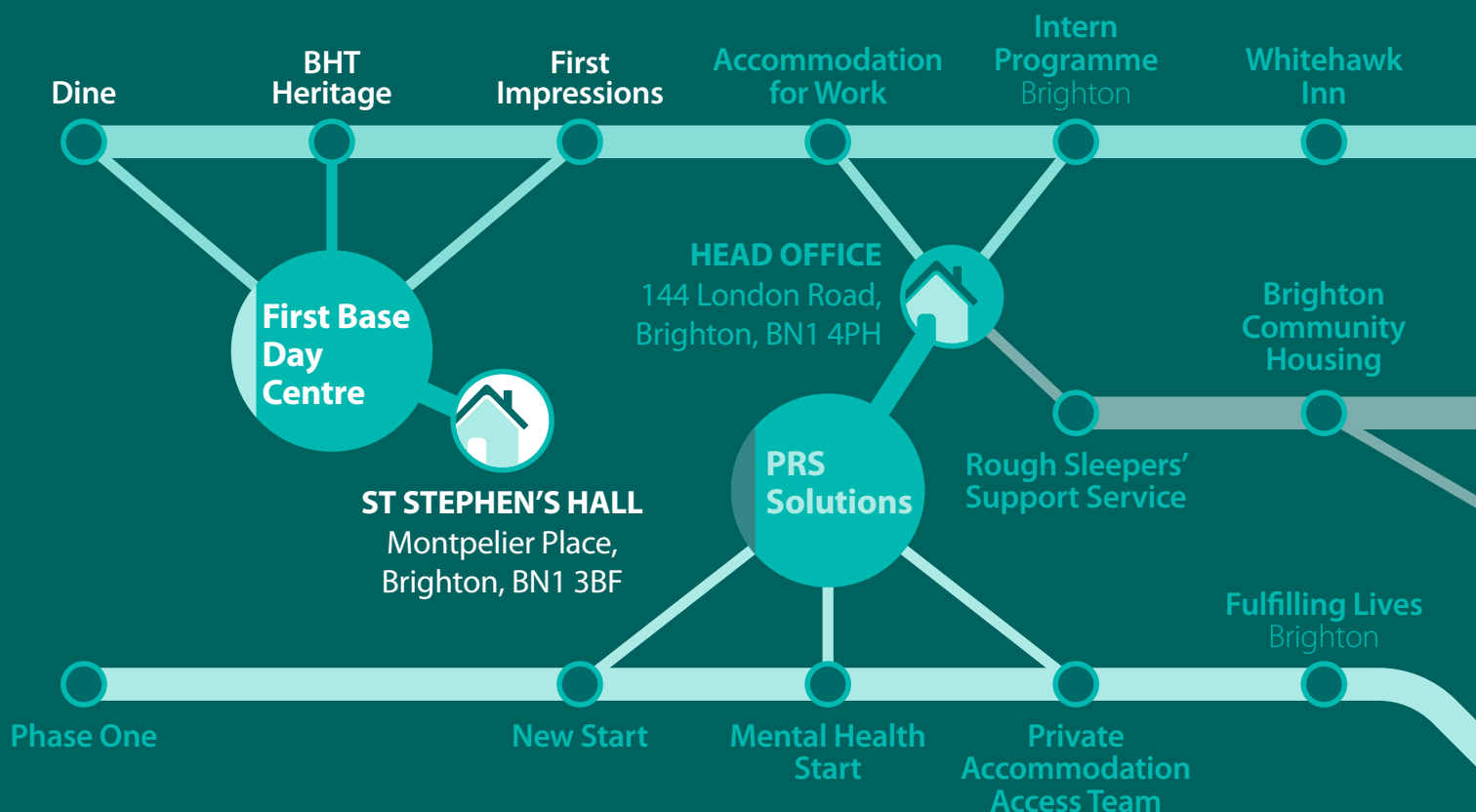
Combating Homelessness • Creating Opportunities • Promoting Change

[www.bht.org.uk](http://www.bht.org.uk)

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“ For the 288 days that First Base was open last year, we helped 306 people end their rough sleeping. That's more than one per day.





# Homelessness in Brighton & Hove

by Andy Winter, BHT Chief Executive

**This year marks the 250th anniversary of St Stephen's Hall, the home of First Base Day Centre.**

Once a ballroom visited by the Prince of Wales and later a private chapel used by Queen Victoria, it's now BHT's day centre for people sleeping on the streets on Brighton and Hove. See opposite for the history of this amazing building.



The numbers on the streets of Brighton and Hove have held quite steady over the last three years. Yet there is the perception that the number of people on the streets is greater than ever before.

**This perception is due, in part, to:**

- high profile 'hotspots' where people are making 'homes' for themselves on the streets
- people sitting on the streets, often begging, although many may not be homeless
- protest groups who do not differentiate between rough sleepers and the wider street community

There has been great joint working over recent years between many agencies, most of whom use BHT's First Base Day Centre as a safe place to meet with their clients. The fact that the numbers sleeping rough have held steady for several years is to the credit to the organisations and their staff who have led on this work in recent years.

Notwithstanding the successes we have had to date, we have made little inroads in the overall number who sleep each night on the streets of Brighton and Hove.

For the 288 days that First Base was open last year, we helped 306 people end their rough sleeping. That's more than one per day.

No one organisation has all the answers, and no one organisation can end rough sleeping on its own. The new strategy on rough sleeping, prepared by Brighton and Hove City Council, recognises this. It is ambitious, aiming to ensure that no one has the need to sleep rough in Brighton and Hove by 2020.

**BHT will play its part. But we can only do it with your support.**

**Please go to page 11 to see how you can help.**





# St Stephen's Hall



## Celebrating an Extraordinary 250 Years

by Sara Peskett, Heritage Officer

**St Stephen's Hall is the home of First Base, BHT's day centre for people who sleep rough in Brighton and Hove. Built in 1766 as an assembly room to the fashionable Castle Inn, it has a rather grand and interesting past.**

Now located on Montpelier Place in Brighton, the building's original location was roughly where the Royal Bank of Scotland now stands on the Old Steine. It was attached to the Castle Inn, one of Brighton's first and most fashionable venues which was in part responsible for putting Brighton on the map.

### Timeline

- 1814** The assembly rooms were closed and bought by the Prince Regent to become the chapel to the Royal Pavilion in 1822.
- 1847** As part of a huge sell off of parts of the estate, the building was dismantled. Town Commissioners bought the building in 1850 for £53,000 to prevent its demolition, which prompted the Bishop of Chichester to claim that as the chapel had been consecrated it belonged to the church. This claim was accepted.
- 1852** The vicar of Brighton's sister, Mary Anne Wagner, offered the diocese part of a piece of land as a site for the re-erection of the Royal Chapel and a contribution towards the costs. The building was re-erected on Montpelier Place and became St Stephen's Church.



**Above, clockwise:** St Stephen's Church interior, c.1920s | Representation of the Grand Saloon at Brighthelmston (Brighton), c.1830s | Renovation works at First Base Day Centre, 2012 | The Assembly Rooms with the Royal Chapel interior, c.1830s | St Stephen's Hall's original location, now a branch of RBS. **Below:** The Pavilion and Ballroom, 1801.



**1939** Closed due to a dwindling congregation.

**1950** Opened as the Sussex Diocesan Association for the Deaf and Dumb, which later became Sussex Deaf Club.

**1982** BHT took over the building.

**1984** St Stephen's Hall becomes BHT's First Base Day Centre.

**2010** BHT receives funding to renovate the building and restore its beautiful original features as well as create a functional, fit for purpose day centre for our homeless clients.





# Heritage Project



**In 2010 BHT received a Heritage Lottery Fund grant for a five year learning and participation project.**

**The project had two main themes:**

- 1.** To research the fascinating and hidden history of our grade II\* listed building.
- 2.** To research the history of homelessness in Brighton and Hove.

The project involved BHT clients in a range of heritage activities which provided opportunities for them to learn new skills and to explore a range of heritage and conservation experiences.

We have shared our research with the wider public through schools, college's community groups, and the wider public through a range of resources, talks, tours and events. BHT Heritage has motivated various heritage partners across the city to develop research and learning initiatives specifically for people who are street homeless.

BHT has formed new relationships with heritage partners, including Royal Pavilion & Museums, the Keep Archive, the Old Police Cells Museum and the Brighton Toy & Model Museum.



**Improved training and heritage engagement opportunities for BHT clients will continue following the end of the project.**





Of a sample of 75 client volunteers, **75%** had not previously engaged with heritage learning.

**73%** of all client volunteers had positive housing outcomes during or following engagement with BHT Heritage.

**40%** of all client volunteers engaged in vocational or pre-employment training, learning, volunteering or employment during or following engagement with BHT Heritage

**238** clients participated in BHT Heritage activities, volunteering **3,494** hours.

A further **13** skilled volunteers and **54** professional volunteers contributed throughout the project.

**346** school children educated about the realities of homelessness.

**466** members of the public visited St Stephen's Hall or attended outreach presentations about its history.





# First Base Day Centre

Photo by Stephen D. Lawrence



## Combating Homelessness by Helping People Off the Streets

by Simon Hughes, Operational Manager

**First Base offers a range of services to support people who are sleeping rough in the city, to get off the streets, start realising their aspirations through work, learning and leisure, and find a place they can call home.**

We provide a centre of excellence for our partners in the city, ensuring that by working together we can end rough sleeping, improve health and wellbeing and realise opportunity.

We run many services from First Base including the basics to sustain life and wellbeing. We provide breakfasts, showers, clean and dry clothes, tea and coffee - the sort of things most of us take for granted.

We rely on the generous support of others to help us in our work. The back cover of this publication details the many businesses and individuals who help make everything we do possible.

As clients walk into First Base they lift their heads up, sometimes overwhelmed by the beauty of our wonderful building. From a ballroom visited by a future King of England, and a chapel used by Queen Victoria, St Stephen's is now there for them.

**First Base has been an important part of the city's past and is now very much an important part of the city's future.**



LOTTERY FUNDED



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**







**From opposite, clockwise:** The launch of the Rough Sleeping Strategy *photo credit: Stephen D. Lawrence* | Christmas dinner at First Base | First Base's 'Dine' project caters for events of all types and sizes, from working lunches and boardroom buffets to family parties and weddings | The iconic facade of St Stephen's Hall, home to BHT's First Base Day Centre | The Sussex Heritage Awards, presented to BHT for the renovation work on St Stephen's Hall

## Services include:

ACCOMMODATION & RELOCATION

SEXUAL HEALTH

WORK & LEARNING

HERITAGE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

DINE, A CATERING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

We work in partnership with other agencies to provide a range of essential healthcare services for our clients including:

DENTISTRY

PODIATRY

A NURSE

MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE AND SUPPORT

OPTOMETRY

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

14,708 visits were made to the busy early morning session by 955 different clients.



955

14,708

For the 288 days that First Base was open last year, BHT helped 306 people end their rough sleeping.

288

306

258 workers from 65 different organisations worked from First Base to support clients with health, housing, legal, sport or work and learning opportunities.

65

258

# The Real Difference **We Make**



## Barry's Real Life Story

**Barry was a 50 year old man who lived in privately rented accommodation. He worked as a construction worker and had always found it easy to find work.**

The building work dried up and for the first time, Barry couldn't find a job. Having previously worked in Brighton he decided to stay in a bed and breakfast and look for opportunities. After nothing materialised, the savings that Barry was using to fund his accommodation ran out and he was left with no other choice but to sleep in his car.

It was the middle of the winter with sub-zero temperatures at night and Barry's health deteriorated, eventually developing a respiratory infection which needed hospital treatment. When Barry was strong enough, he was discharged from the hospital straight back into the freezing temperatures with nowhere to call home but his car. He remembers feeling desperately scared and alone.

Barry didn't know where to turn for help. He went to a library to keep warm and asked someone there about local services that could help him and was directed to BHT's First Base Day Centre. Due to the low temperatures, the service was operating the **emergency cold weather shelter provision** and were able to offer Barry a bed for the night. Barry felt a huge sense of relief at the thought of a warm place to stay and some food and support.

Whilst at First Base Barry was able to talk to a case worker, who discovered he wasn't claiming any benefits and was living off very little each day to survive. Barry had felt ashamed about his situation and hadn't wanted to ask for help but realised that he desperately needed help to get back on his feet again.

Barry's case worker helped him to make a claim for job seeker's allowance and made him an appointment to see the **Private Rented Sector Solutions** team at BHT. He attended training courses and was able to use the computers at First Base to look for accommodation.

**When a property became available Barry was quite simply over the moon. The long, cold, lonely nights are far behind him now and he can concentrate on getting back into work and moving on from homelessness.**







# How You Can Help

## We need your support now more than ever.

As a charity we rely on donations to provide our vital services, and every contribution makes a difference.

**Please donate today** and help someone who is homeless and vulnerable to get the support they need to move from life on the streets into a more positive future.



## Examples of how your money will help:

- £2** will pay for a client at First Base to have their clothes washed and dried.
- £5** will buy refreshments for clients to attend workshops and activities for a week.
- £25** will pay for an assessment and support plan to help someone move away from rough sleeping.
- £50** will provide a nutritious breakfast and lunch for 60 clients at First Base each day.
- £100** will pay for skills training to help a person who is homeless secure employment.
- £160** will pay for one person to receive 12 weeks of counselling.

**BHT was originally set up in 1968 and since then has developed substantial experience of working with a wide range of people with multiple and complex needs.**

We draw upon this experience when providing a quality and diversity of services ranging from specialist substance misuse services, mental health services, working with ex-offenders and high risk offenders, women only services, dual diagnosis, through to homelessness and rough sleeper and complex needs.



BHT has many projects in Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings aimed at **combating homelessness, creating opportunities** for clients and **promoting the change** that is needed for clients to live more independent lives.

These services are delivered with a wide range of partners which bring the added value of sharing skills, resources and knowledge, ultimately to deliver improved outcomes for service users. In our experience, projects that work closely or alongside other agencies and professionals produce the best outcomes for service users. Drawing on the expertise of wide ranging partners can only make services better for clients.

## Help BHT to help others all year round:

Text **FBAS20 £5 to 70070** or visit **[www.justgiving.com/brightonhousingtrust](http://www.justgiving.com/brightonhousingtrust)**

 BHT Sussex | FirstBaseBHT  
 BHTSussex  
 firstbase@bht.org.uk  
 www.justgiving.com/brightonhousingtrust

# THANK YOU

for your support



- Big Lottery Fund
- Brighton & Hove City Council
- The Mayor of Brighton of Hove, Cllr Peter West
- Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- The University of Brighton
- The University of Sussex
- The Rank Foundation
- Inspire Funding
- ROCC Computers Ltd
- Paul Bonett
- Frances Valdes and Nigel Thomas
- Mike Stimpson
- Linda Hubbard
- Lady Jane Lloyd
- Ideal
- Boundless
- Red Setter
- Fugu PR
- Beast
- Iain Riddell
- PMOD
- NEO
- Propellernet
- Create
- Michael Chowen
- Brighton & Hove Buses
- Bardsley's of Baker Street
- Naked Voices
- Sussex Police
- Big Lemon Bus Company
- Mid Sussex Scaffolding
- Sussex Masonic Charities
- VW Heritage
- Left Logic
- Colourfast Brighton
- Everybody who donates to and supports BHT
- Everyone who took part in one of our many fundraising events
- Everyone who kindly donated to our Christmas Appeal



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