

Emmaus Bristol Affordable Housing Statement  
Emmaus Bristol Roof Top Community

November 2020

agile  
HOMES & PROPERTY





# Emmaus Bristol Roof Top Community .v1.0

## Affordable housing Statement

Meeting need

The development is for 15 homes, comprising:

3 x 2 bed (3 person) homes at 61m<sup>2</sup>;

11 x 1 bed (1 person) two storey duplex homes at 47.2 m<sup>2</sup>;

1 x 1 bed (1person) single storey home at 37m<sup>2</sup>.

It will be delivered and managed by Emmaus Bristol, a registered, successful charity with a long track record of supporting people. Emmaus Bristol already manages family and privately rented accommodation. Emmaus Bristol will be the landlord for all 15 homes, all of which will be for rent.

It is Emmaus Bristol's intention to become a Registered Provider.

The homes are being delivered to meet a specific need – for affordable move on and privately rented accommodation. Emmaus Bristol's companions (formerly homeless people) have a home for as long as they need it, in Emmaus Bristol's community buildings. But a lot of companions want their own home, their own independence, and the logical next step is independent accommodation. Yet there is nowhere for them to move on to, because of a lack of affordable social housing and significant barriers to private rented accommodation such as cost, competition, credit ratings and references. Some companions have been evicted from private rental properties in the past, and are not prepared to take that risk again.

It is evident, from engagement with companions, that there is no chance of finding social housing as companions applying to HomeChoice Bristol are routinely found to be Band 4 – no housing need.

Companions have struggled when moving on out of Bristol to where housing is affordable, but where they have no social connections and few employment opportunities. Individual stories provide a stark reminder of why community-led housing, within Bristol, and within the supportive Emmaus Bristol community is so important.

Number and type of affordable homes

Emmaus Bristol will provide a minimum of 50% affordable housing, available for rent at LHA rates, either as seven homes or as nine bedrooms, whichever is the greatest number of bedrooms.

A minimum of 50% is offered, because a greater % of affordable housing for rent will be made available, if additional grant is available.

Homes that are not being used for affordable move on accommodation will be made available as private rented accommodation, on assured shorthold tenancies, with Emmaus Bristol remaining at landlord at all times.

Location of affordable homes, within the development

The proposal includes 1 and 2 bedroom accommodation, shared and independent accommodation. The two bed homes are able to be used by families. This meets the express desires of companions (in their requirements for move on accommodation), the Emmaus community and wider community.

However, it is vital that Emmaus Bristol – as the landlord – has flexibility to meet local demand from companions and from the open market for homes for rent. The needs of companions will be varied and will change over time. Consequently, this proposal should not be treated in a traditional way – with an open market housing provider delivering and handing over a % homes, in specific pepper-potted locations within a development, to a Registered Provider to manage. Instead, rather than fixing the location and type of affordable home, Emmaus Bristol needs the ability to be flexible in the allocation of homes to people in need, whilst always ensuring at least 50% of homes are available at an affordable rent at LHA rates.

## Design, Access, Energy and Sustainability Statement

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## Dave's Story

I have lived at Emmaus Bristol since August 2019 and it has given me a feeling of contentment and shown me that there is light at the end of the tunnel. I now have a reason to get up in the morning, the chance to help other people and give back to society. If it wasn't for Emmaus Bristol, I'd be six feet under by now.

I was born in Wales and my mother, who was a working girl, put me up for adoption. A couple in Bradford fostered me initially when I was three weeks old, and officially adopted me when I was 6 months. As far as I was concerned, they were my mum and dad. It was a bit of a rough start, but I was always loved throughout my childhood. I did the usual things that kids get up to and sometimes I was a bit naughty and what have you, but they still loved me right up until the end of their days.

It was in 2000 when the events that led me to Emmaus began. I had been living in the Isle of Wight for many years. I lost both my parents within three years of each other, my wife and I ended up divorcing and we lost both our children through separate car accidents. I became very depressed and was put on medication; I couldn't see a future for myself and spent some time in a respite centre.

I ended up leaving the Isle of Wight and went to North Devon, spending 18 months in Ilfracombe and eight years in Torquay. It was hard to hold a job down with how I was because of my depression, and I didn't do anything when I received the two months' notice on my flat. I didn't have any self-esteem and didn't really care that much about myself at the time.

At the age of 62, I became homeless. I went to a little town called Sidmouth in East Devon and spent a month living in a tent wherever I could pitch it up. It was a very hard time, especially at my age. I've always liked to look presentable too, which is difficult whilst homeless. I made sure to dry shave every morning, and someone once



commented saying they wouldn't have thought I was homeless. Now, at Emmaus Bristol, I'm known as Dapper Dave.

In Sidmouth, a gentleman at the tourist information centre directed me to a social enterprise café called The Mustard Seed, saying that they could probably help me. I went there every day and they made sure I had something hot to eat, a cup of coffee and let me charge my phone and laptop up. It was here where I met a lady called Ann, who I can't thank enough. Ann worked with an organisation called The Gateway Homelessness Action Group and knew of Emmaus. She helped me put in an application, and two weeks later I moved to Emmaus Bristol. I have visited The Mustard Seed and Ann twice since leaving to let them know how I'm getting on.

Hearing that I had been accepted at Emmaus Bristol was like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. I knew that I couldn't have lasted much longer out in the cold. Not only has Emmaus Bristol given me a place to live, but I have no financial worries whilst I'm here. All food is provided, bills are sorted out and I receive an allowance every week which is enough to get by on. Everything Emmaus offers is a real safety net.

I also have the companionship of all the other people living in the community too. When I was living in a flat, I was all on my own, all the time. I do keep to myself a fair bit, but I know that when I need to be in company, all I've got to do is go downstairs and there will be somebody to chat to. We all try to help each other out when we can. Most recently, I was asked to take on the Companion Representative position and I'm happy to be helping others out through this role.

At Emmaus, I mainly work in our Bedminster and Stokes Croft shops. I have worked in our vintage shop on Gloucester Road a few times, but more staff are needed for the other two. I've had a lot of experience in retail and I do have quite an outgoing personality. I believe that everyone here is happy with the way I do my job and I know a lot of customers by name now. I'll tell them all about Abbé Pierre and how he started Emmaus in France in 1949, and now what we're trying to do here in Bristol to help other people who are homeless. Emmaus also offers companions training opportunities, and although I'm a bit long in the tooth to learn Spanish or something like that, I would like to renew my emergency first aid and fire awareness training.

Within four months of being at Emmaus, I had weaned myself off my medication too. It was difficult right at the beginning and I still do have the odd bad day, but I am now 12 months anti-depressant free. One of the support workers here at Emmaus Bristol can generally tell when I'm feeling a bit down and she will pull me to one side and give me a little pep talk – she's very good at that.

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Gateway and Emmaus Bristol have given me back my self-esteem and I can't praise either enough, and I certainly can't thank Ann enough for helping me find Emmaus. I will live out the rest of my life at Emmaus doing what I can to help them and help others. Back in Torquay, my doctor wouldn't prescribe me sleeping tablets when I was struggling to sleep because of one question I answered honestly. The question was – "have you ever thought about doing yourself harm?" My answer was yes, but things have now worked out for the better and I'm so glad that I'm still alive. I really am thankful that I found Emmaus.