



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Porchlight backs National Housing Federation campaign on supported housing**

Kent based homeless charity Porchlight is joining a range of agencies throughout the south east to mark South East Supported Housing Month from 16 November to 11 December. The National Housing Federation campaign is aimed at raising awareness of the 2,700 crucial services running throughout the south east that help over 136,000 of the most vulnerable people enjoy independent and fulfilled lives.

Services provided range from foyers for young people, temporary accommodation for families, refuges from domestic violence and sheltered and extra care housing for older or disabled people. With recent changes to the way funding is allocated for these services, it's more important than ever that those that hold the purse strings are aware of the impact they are making. Last year over £189m was spent on housing support services in the region, and national research from the Department for Communities and Local Government shows that every pound spent on Supporting People saves £2.12 on other public services.

Porchlight provides 41 supported accommodation projects in Kent, and to raise awareness of this important work has set up a dedicated page on their website [www.porchlight.org.uk/SHM](http://www.porchlight.org.uk/SHM) which includes a video interview with our Chief Executive, Mike Barrett.

Mike said, "Supported Housing is not just a case of putting a roof over someone's head. Within our accommodation dedicated and highly trained staff understand the complex range of issues faced by our vulnerable service users and work with them on a one to one basis to make sure they receive tailored support. It is this approach to helping individuals that has meant we have had huge success in breaking the cycle of homelessness."

Coordinated by the National Housing Federation (South), the campaign comes after an announcement last year, which gives Local Authorities much more freedom to decide how they use 'Supporting People' grants. The removal of the ring-fence is aimed at giving councils the chance to be innovative in how they commission and provide services for vulnerable people.

Raife West, Chair of the National Housing Federation's South East Supported Housing Forum commented: "South East Supported Housing Month is an excellent opportunity for providers to join forces in the south east and highlight the contribution supported housing and support services make in the region. It will help to demonstrate the money that is being saved to other public services, as outlined in CLG's Capgemini report.

With the removal of the ring fence around Supporting People funding, it is vitally important that commissioners, MPs, stakeholders and Councillors are fully aware of the contribution that the sector is making in supporting and improving the lives of so many individuals in communities throughout the region."

To find out more about the work of Porchlight visit [www.porchlight.org.uk](http://www.porchlight.org.uk)

**ENDS**

## Notes to the Editor:

### About Supported Housing Month

1. South East Supported Housing Month is being organised by a broad mix of supported housing and floating support services providers, with coordination and other assistance from the National Housing Federation's South Regional Office. It is aimed at being a representative and inclusive sector-wide initiative.
2. The South East Supported Housing Forum is one of the National Housing Federation's Regional Interest Groups. It helps promote working partnerships between housing associations, managing agents and Supporting People Administrative Authorities.
3. The National Housing Federation represents 1,200 independent, not-for-profit housing associations in England and is the voice of affordable housing. Together, our members provide over two million affordable homes and community services for around five million people. For further information see [www.housing.org.uk](http://www.housing.org.uk)
4. iN business for neighbourhoods is a long-term project launched by the National Housing Federation and its members as a major initiative to raise the profile of, and promote, the neighbourhood work of housing associations. For further information see [www.iNbiz.org](http://www.iNbiz.org)

### About Porchlight

1. Porchlight is a Kent wide independent local charity that works to support single, vulnerable homeless people or those at risk of homelessness. It was established in 1974 as Canterbury Cyrenians and works throughout Kent.
2. Porchlight has accommodation based projects in Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and Ramsgate. The outreach team works with street homeless people as well as supporting former homeless people in their own homes, to prevent them returning to street life. Other services support people in their own homes who are at risk of becoming homeless.
3. In 2008-9 Porchlight helped over 1,600 vulnerable people. Porchlight projects include:

Kent Outreach: Our street outreach team work across Kent including working within prisons to help offenders who will be released from prison homeless. They operate a 24 hour free phone helpline for help and advice with housing emergencies - 0800 567 7699

Young Persons Services: This includes a direct access hostel, longer stay hostel and shared house, providing support for a number of years, until each individual is ready to live independently.

Mental Health: We run a housing project in Dover specifically for people with enduring mental ill-health. We also provide support to 7 clients in another purpose built accommodation project in Margate. In addition we also have a young persons' mental health service that enables young homeless people with mental health problems to better access the health services they need.

General Accommodation: We have hostels in Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and Ramsgate. They range in the levels of support provided from high support needs with staff available 24hrs a day, to medium support with staff available on a 9-5pm basis.

Floating Support: This is a preventative service that provides support to vulnerable people in their own home who are at risk of becoming homeless. Many of these clients have been through the hostel system and are almost ready to live independently but just need a little support every now and again.

Training and Service User Involvement: We have a team that works with people accessing any of our services and helps them develop their skills and education. We provide tailored training and encourage people to get involved in the running and improvement of their project, or volunteer on a more formal level in the organisation. Porchlight is committed to involving our service users throughout all the activities of the charity. They are actively encouraged to become involved in education, employment, volunteering and service user involvement opportunities.

For more information about Porchlight visit [www.porchlight.org.uk](http://www.porchlight.org.uk) or contact Mark Parry on 01227 813196 / 07734 595308 or email [markparry@porchlight.org.uk](mailto:markparry@porchlight.org.uk)