



**Porchlight**

Changing attitudes · Changing lives

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Local company supports our vulnerable citizens

Local businessman Mike Simmonds is Managing Director of global company Q'Straint, based in Whitstable. He strongly believes that local businesses should support the local community and that is why his company has just donated £10,000 to Kent based homeless charity Porchlight.

Mike Barrett, Porchlight Chief Executive says, "The donation is fantastic and the generosity is astounding in this time of financial uncertainty. We can not thank Mike and Q'Straint enough for the continued support shown to the homeless and vulnerable people of Kent.

"The support of local businesses people like Mike Simmonds makes a vast difference to a great number of lives in the county."

Q'Straint has supported Porchlight, formerly East Kent Cyrenians, for the past 6 years. Mr Simmonds is passionate about the charity's work, "I feel it is so important for business to give something back to society. Homelessness is visible and can happen to anyone. All it takes are a couple of bad rolls of the dice and it could happen to you or me. I wanted to support a local charity that was helping the people I was walking past on the street. Porchlight provides an integrated Kent wide service that is flexible and meets the needs of the individual. They have street outreach workers, hostels and other accommodation as well as preventative support to help people maintain their home.

"They also provide training and education to their service users to help them get back into education or work. It's a fantastic charity, providing a valuable service. I urge you to look at how your company could give something back to the community and get in touch with Porchlight."

Porchlight is seeking the support of more businesses in Kent to support the work of the charity through various ways such as donations, volunteering, employee fundraising or sponsorship. If you would like to find out more about the work of Porchlight and how you can help, visit our website [www.porchlight.org.uk](http://www.porchlight.org.uk).

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## **Notes to the Editor:**

1. Q'Straint is an internationally recognized company known for its commitment to manufacturing the highest quality wheelchair and occupant securement systems. For more information visit <http://www.qstraint.com/>
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. In 2007-78 Porchlight helped over 1,400 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.

Young Persons Services: This includes a direct access hostel, longer stay hostel and shared house, providing support for a number 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.

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