



**YEARS  
OF  
CRASH**

1996  
-  
2016



**CRASH  
CHARITY**

Creating  
Places that  
Care for People

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

# “WE SHAPE OUR BUILDINGS AND AFTERWARDS OUR BUILDINGS SHAPE US.”

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After the famous Commons debating chamber of the Houses of Parliament was destroyed by a bomb in 1943, Members debated whether to rebuild it in a different shape. But Churchill insisted that the adversarial, rectangular form of the old chamber be restored, because that shape had led to the two-party system, the essence of British parliamentary democracy.

He said: “We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.”

His words have not lost their validity over the passing of time, a testament borne out by the construction industry’s charity CRASH.

**2016 marks CRASH’s 20th Anniversary, over which two decades the charity has channelled the expertise and materials of the construction industry to build, refurbish and develop buildings that help to positively shape the lives of vulnerable and homeless men and women.**

“CRASH was founded as the construction industry’s charity, and it still is the industry’s charity,” says CRASH Chief Executive Francesca Roberts. “We have deliberately kept our focus narrow; we don’t manage or run homelessness shelters: we help to build and refurbish them. We deliver something no other charity delivers, that makes us unique and it’s immensely gratifying.

“The industry should be enormously proud of their charity, but our potential to help hasn’t by any means been reached yet.”

Francesca is referring to the recent announcement that CRASH, with permission from the Charity Commission, is expanding its beneficiary base to include helping hospices in the same way it supports homelessness charities throughout the UK.

Research has proven that well designed and expertly built environments have a positive effect on how individuals feel and behave. This is especially true for people who are homeless, vulnerable or have life limiting illness as well as those who care for them.

“By concentrating on what CRASH does best, what our industry does best we can have the maximum impact on helping the men, women and children who most need our support,” says Francesca.

CRASH moves into its third decade not only with an expanded beneficiary base, but also with a new Chairman at the helm.



**Francesca Roberts Chief Executive CRASH and Alan Brookes Chief Executive of Arcadis and Chairman of CRASH.**

Arcadis Chief Executive Alan Brookes took on the role in November 2015. "We have a moral obligation to look after others less fortunate than ourselves and working with CRASH is a great way of doing this," he says. "It genuinely makes a difference to people's lives."

CRASH receives no Government funding and is entirely supported by companies and individuals within the construction industry. These Patron companies underpin every single project that the charity supports.

"As a business we work hard to improve the quality of life through our projects and we can do the same through the charitable work we undertake with CRASH," says Alan, who is certain that the partnership has demonstrable, positive impact on Arcadis when its employees get involved with the charity's work.

Through CRASH, Patron companies have the opportunity to be instrumental in delivering places that care for vulnerable people. And not just through donating money. It enables them to use their skills, capabilities and products to provide a service which, in many cases, money can't buy.

"That's what is so unusual about CRASH, it's a circular relationship, what goes around really does come around," says Francesca. "It's a genuine benefit to the company when they get involved and a genuine benefit to communities and individuals around the United Kingdom."

CRASH's unique, collaborative approach has been recognised by our current Prime with a Big Society Award. Presenting the Award, David Cameron praised the 'remarkable achievements of everyone involved.

Whilst this acknowledgment of the industry and its charity CRASH is rewarding, more importantly it serves as a reminder that by remaining true to foundations and keeping focussed on what we do best it can – and does – make a tangible and lasting difference to the most vulnerable members of our society.



“Real charity is about sharing what we are best at to help those less fortunate than ourselves.”

Francesca Roberts,  
Chief Executive of CRASH





Through CRASH, you can make a real and lasting impact on the lives of vulnerable people in homelessness projects and hospices by sharing what you are best at.

### You can:

#### **Volunteer Your Professional Expertise:**

the skills you use every day at work will make a huge difference to the projects CRASH helps and, in many cases, provide them with a service that money simply can't buy.

#### **Donate Your Building Materials:**

which offers you and your company the opportunity to share resources you produce and are proud of with homelessness and hospice charities across the UK that urgently need your help and expertise.

**Volunteer Your Time:** it could be argued that the most valuable thing you'll ever have in this world, outside of your health, is your time. As a small team CRASH is always looking for people to volunteer their time to help support us at industry events, exhibitions and awards evenings.

**Volunteer Your Creativity:** to raise money for CRASH. Your financial donations will be combined with donations of professional expertise and donations of building materials to make a real and lasting impact on the lives of vulnerable homeless people and those with life limiting illnesses.



# OUR HISTORY

Concerned by the sight of people sleeping on the streets of London, Tony Denison, whose background was in Construction, was convinced that the industry could do something to address the situation.

The economy was in recession and the central London office sector was suffering which meant that there were more empty commercial properties in the capital than usual.

And yet there were people sleeping out on the streets.

He was sure that, with the right approach, property owners could be persuaded to loan their properties to become temporary emergency shelters for the capital's rough sleepers. He also hoped that the construction sector could contribute its skills and products to re-fit the properties as shelters.

On investigation, Tony discovered that properties let out for charitable purposes attracted a mandatory business rate relief of 80%, with an option for local authorities to waive it altogether. Moreover, occupied properties were at less risk of vandalism and decay than empty ones.

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*"Tony spotted an empty building on Marsham Street and called me to ask if he could have it for six months," explains CRASH Trustee Jonathan Turk. "The former Government offices, Neville House, were part of Land Securities' extensive development of the area."*

*It made sense for us to let CRASH set up a Winter Shelter there. Homelessness was a big issue in the area with people making their beds in almost every doorway."*

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## Our Timeline

1991



Tony Denison, John George and Patrick Barbour collaborate to create first temporary cold weather shelters which were operated by charitable organisations including St Mungoes.

92/93



Six temporary cold weather shelters set up with the help of six major contractors, 15 building materials producers and 17 builders' merchants.

First statistical survey on cold weather shelter users produced by Tony Denison. There were no official Government figures produced at this time.

94/95



1996



CRASH was formally registered with the Charity Commission and Tom Biddlecombe was appointed Executive Director.

CRASH review of single homelessness research produced in partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

A review of single homelessness research

1998

Research summaries

1999



CRASH's first flagship project – refurbishment of the West London Day Centre at Seymour Place SW1.

13 cold weather shelters set up in London and operated by Single Homeless Project, St Mungoes, Salvation Army, Centrepoint and CRISIS.

99/2000



CRASH goes national supporting day centres, hostels and training workshops throughout the UK that offer sustained care to homeless people.

2000



Building upon the success of these first two shelters, CRASH and its supporters set up six cold weather shelters in London with the help of AMEC, Balfour Beatty, John Laing, Trollope & Colls, Wimpey (now Taylor Wimpey) and Wates. Fifteen major building material producers gifted materials free or at low cost whilst 17 builders' merchants offered help with deliveries. Generous funding assistance was provided by Barbour Index plc (now Barbour ABI).

Tony galvanised a group of building material producers to supply materials free of charge and, before long, CRASH set up two temporary winter shelters: one in Marsham Street and the other in Holborn Viaduct. Realising the importance of delivering expert quality services to homeless men and women, these shelters were run by homelessness charities St Mungoes and Centrepoint.

From the very moment that Tony Denison started CRASH it was his intention that it should be established as the construction and property industry's own charity.

He was supported in the early years by Tom Biddlecombe, Jim Warren and Gill King.

Individuals at London Shelters 1996-2000 (source [crash.org.uk](http://crash.org.uk))

Year	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
Individual shelters	1693	1494	1223	1178
Total resettled/ accommodation	833 (49%)	786 (56%)	755 (61%)	764 (64%)

## Developing CRASH Services

CRASH's efforts with cold weather shelters increased year on year, reaching a peak in the winter of 1999/2000 of 13 shelters in London as well as others nationally.

Building on the ever improving knowledge of the causes of homelessness, the Rough Sleepers Unit (RSU) then changed its policy, and replaced the cold weather shelters with the Rolling Shelter Programme. This reduces the number of temporary shelters to a maximum of four but they operate throughout the year, providing short term placements for long term rough sleepers, enabling assessment of their needs while finding suitable move-on accommodation and support.

## Beyond the Capital's Streets

Initially, funding from the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) was available to assist only with reducing rough sleeping in London. It soon became apparent, however, that it was a significant problem in other towns and cities, and CRASH (and RSI) support was given to temporary winter shelters in Brighton, Cambridge and Bristol.

## Beyond Temporary Shelters

The call for CRASH's services rapidly grew beyond temporary cold weather shelters. Before long, homelessness charities were asking for CRASH assistance with day centres, hostels and supported, move-on accommodation. And the demand was not just from London-based charities. CRASH received requests from all over the country as word spread about the help it could provide.

It was realised that whilst these temporary cold weather shelters provided a vital resource, homelessness was an all year round issue, therefore services needed to be available to rough sleepers 12 months of the year.

2000



First Tony Denison Research Award presented for work judged to have made the most important contribution to the body of Single Homeless Research.

2002



26 project applications for help received from homelessness charities including the Big House providing supported accommodation for homeless ex-servicemen.

Homeless Link receives CRASH award for Best Practice Guides for the Homelessness Sector.

2004



CRASH receives 41 project applications from homelessness charities across the UK including Skylight Café, a CRISIS project run by homeless people designed to rebuild social and practical skills.

2005



2006



Ian Tyler takes over from Sir Christopher Wates as Chairman of CRASH.

2006



Flagship Project: Kairos Community Trust's Linden Grove Hostel and Day Centre in London.

2007



Francesca Roberts is appointed Chief Executive of CRASH.

2010



Flagship Project: St George's Crypt Day Centre and Night Accommodation in Leeds.

St George's Crypt, Leeds. CRASH helped renovate a Day Centre used by 120 people each day and a 15 bed Night Refuge.

"St George's Crypt partnership with CRASH has had so many positive outcomes – invaluable financial support, materials at no or low cost and development of strategic relationships, which stand us in very good stead for the future.



"CRASH is an immense resource for the homelessness sector in facilitating best value in our development projects, and in helping partners in the construction sector to make a crucial difference to the lives of homeless and disadvantaged people up and down the country."

**Martin Patterson**  
St George's Crypt  
Leeds

## Where We Are Today

An office consisting of a team of four full time staff has replaced Tony Denison's garage and CRASH has 35 Patron companies whose annual donations underpin the charity and every project it undertakes.

With approximately 20 "active" projects at any one time, CRASH continues to channel the expertise, products and generosity of the construction and property industry to create places that care for people.

The charity remains true to its foundations and unique in the way it helps renovate and construct emergency night shelters, hostels, day centres and move on accommodation by:



- Offering pro bono professional expertise



- Sourcing building materials and the technical knowledge to use them



- Awarding cash grants

This collaborative way of working was recognised in 2014 by Downing Street with a Big Society Award.

2012



Flagship project:  
Step by Step,  
New Build Hostel  
for young homeless  
adults in Aldershot.

2013



Emmaus Brighton  
& Hove. CRASH  
provided extensive  
support in terms of  
professional expertise,  
materials, volunteering and cash grants  
to create and refurbish accommodation  
and retail spaces.

2014



Flagship  
project:  
The Pilsdon  
Community, a  
working farm  
and refuge  
in Dorset.

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## Prime Minister David Cameron, said:

"The innovative approach CRASH takes harnesses the world-class skills and products of our construction industry to tackle the issue of homelessness. This Big Society award recognises the remarkable achievements of everyone involved."

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# LOOKING FORWARD...

CRASH is recognised by Downing Street with a Big Society Award.



2014

## Why Hospices?

There are a number of parallels between homelessness and hospice charities, one being that both sectors aim to help people when they are at their most vulnerable and another that their buildings are key to the services they deliver.

It is a fact that well designed and expertly built environments have a positive effect on how we all feel and behave. This is especially true for people who are homeless, vulnerable or have life limiting illness and those who care for them.

CRASH was established to work with the construction industry to create places that give people a sense of dignity, security and calm. However, just as the communities in which we live and work are changing, CRASH must evolve to ensure we are doing the very best we can to support those who need our help the most.

Working with hospices as well as homelessness charities means CRASH and our Patron companies will be able to help even more vulnerable people as well as their families and the staff and volunteers who care for them.

2015



Alan Brookes becomes Chairman of CRASH.

CRASH celebrates its 20th Anniversary and, with the Charity Commission's permission, expands its beneficiary base to include supporting hospices as well as homelessness projects.



2016

## CRASH Chief Executive Francesca Roberts, said:

"I love the fact that we are staying focussed on buildings and creating places, it's what our industry does best. By doing this we can have the maximum impact on helping people who are vulnerable and have life limiting illnesses."

**“Facts and figures are all very well but they only tell half the story. A charity like CRASH has to be judged by the effect that we have on the lives of those we are ultimately seeking to help.”**

When CRASH founder Tony Denison passed away in 2013, the charity decided to give an annual award in his memory to the person who epitomises the values and ethos on which Tony established CRASH.

Presented at the charity's Annual Patron Reception, the award has gone to individuals who exemplify best working practice in caring for homeless men and women.

Here some of the recipients explain the impact working with CRASH has on their charities and the homeless people they care for.



**Dilys Hunt – The Pilsdon Community:** The new accommodation we can now offer homeless people has had a marked effect on them. I have seen tears in the eyes of one man, who when I showed him where he could stay, whispered: “This is too good for me”.



**Mossie Lyons – Kairos Community Trust:** Dignity. Respect. Valued. Home. These are potent and powerful words. This is how they are made real. CRASH enables Kairos to provide welcoming, comfortable homes where a person feels valued and respected and is treated with dignity.

That man or woman will have probably been street homeless for years, be suffering poor health and will have experienced long term social isolation. Settled in and feeling at home in a Kairos house, he or she begins to feel human again and slowly, with help, is able to address underlying problems.

Since 2005, CRASH has made it possible for Kairos to extend and/or refurbish properties and thereby provide this type of accommodation: safe, healthy and reasonably comfortable.

Valued in this way, people respond by caring for their home – friendships develop, support is at hand and community evolves. Likewise with workers – they take pride in their place and life as a therapist or a support worker is aided by pleasant, clean and congenial surroundings. It works.

It was humbling but at the same time a privilege to be able to offer him such hospitality. Our new buildings are shaping our community in so many ways, and may this shaping continue, in many ways, for many years to come.



**Rose & Cliff Akenclouse – SVP New Bridges Project:** CRASH has helped us change homeless people's lives by helping us create nine one bedroom self-contained flats that give homeless people a place to live and offer opportunities to learn life skills.

Each flat is well designed and expertly built which has a positive effect on the client's ability to work towards independent living. CRASH not only gave sound advice but put us in touch with their Patrons who provided us with high class materials and equipment either free of charge or at cost price.

The result is that this building is now refurbished, giving a much higher standard of accommodation than would have otherwise been possible and it's all down to the help and support of CRASH.



**Christine Squince –  
Emmaus Brighton & Hove:**  
The Brighton Community opened in 1997 on the six acres site of a former convent and today provides a place to live and work for 47 men and women.

To embark on the transformation of such a site, from a convent to a home of multiple occupancy as well as retail spaces, a café and admin offices was always set to be a long and expensive journey, one which takes patience, money and friends in the right places.

This is where the CRASH team, under the leadership of Francesca, came to help... always willing to listen to and consider the many requests for help, CRASH has provided pro bono advice, materials, labour and sometimes hard cash in the form of a grant.

The partnership with CRASH is one which has benefited the Community in a number of ways over the years.

We always enjoy the time we spend with the CRASH team, the professional approach to getting the job done and taking pride in delivering what was promised.

Companions and staff are very grateful to CRASH for linking us to its Patrons – connections we would never have made ourselves. We have achieved great things together.

## What our residents say...

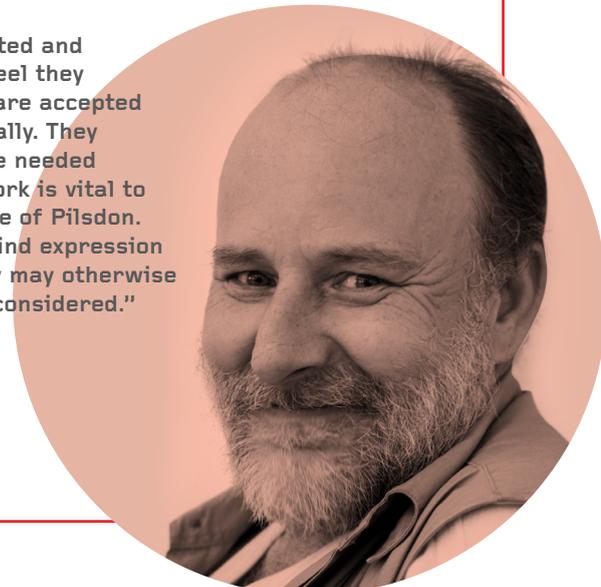
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“I feel safe here living in the community with other people. There's always more to do and I can learn new skills. I like working here and making it a good place for everyone. It's better than being on benefits. The real benefit is earning your own money.”

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“The unwanted and those who feel they have failed are accepted unconditionally. They find they are needed and their work is vital to the existence of Pilsdon. They often find expression in work they may otherwise never have considered.”



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# MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE AS A PATRON OF CRASH

CRASH Patrons commit to making an annual donation of £8,000 to the charity. This annual commitment allows the charity to budget effectively and operate efficiently, enabling CRASH to deliver a high level of practical support to frontline homelessness agencies and, from January 2016, hospices throughout the UK.

Some Patron companies choose to give further support by supplying materials and/or staff time where individuals can offer specific on-site expertise.

Here is why some of our industry leading Patrons choose to support CRASH in this way and the positive effect it has on their employees.



**Tony Giddings – Argent:** "I find it so sad walking along the streets of London – one of the wealthiest cities in the world – and seeing people huddled in shop doorways. Having a home is one of the first things anyone should have as a basic right. And that's why it's essential we help these people. You can say 'they got themselves into this situation' or 'they should get a job' but in reality that's not always an option."

Many of these people have had things happen to them in their lives beyond their control – broken homes, unemployment, illness.

Tackling these issues and trying to prevent them happening is an ongoing challenge but, as an industry, we can help people once they have found themselves in this situation. And that's where CRASH comes in. Taking responsibility for helping people where we can is very important."



**Alan Brookes – Arcadis**  
"Getting involved with CRASH makes a difference to your business. People recognise your company is serious about Corporate Social Responsibility, giving something back to the communities in which you work and making a

difference in the world in which we live. It also makes your organisation one that people are proud to work for. One that does more than just its job. But for me, it's the feedback from the people that do get involved with events or helping out on a project that is the most rewarding. When I go around the offices anyone who has been involved with a CRASH project will put it up on the wall to show everyone else what they have been doing. They get a great sense of pride that they have been involved with something that has made a difference."



**Trevor Cotterell – Areen Design:**  
"We were looking for a charity that staff could get fully involved with. Not only by raising money, but really getting involved, giving something of themselves, their time and their skills. What we found in CRASH was all that and more."

We have seen first-hand the impact of sourcing and donating furniture for young homeless people's accommodation to give them a decent start in their adult lives. We've also helped with design, architect and planning to create more bed spaces in supported accommodation for people recovering from addiction, something which is in scarce supply. The real benefit for us is that, through CRASH, our people know they can make a tangible difference to the lives of those less fortunate than themselves and that is something that money can't buy."

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**Mike Chaldecott – British Gypsum:** "It's not just about donating money or materials, it's also about going out to see the projects and the people involved. It completes a circle. Not everyone can donate huge sums of money but companies can help in different ways. By lending the services of

your architects or QSs or supplying plasterboard or boilers you can really make a difference. And see the people who benefit.

With CRASH you can offer a more serious commitment. You can get people throughout the company really involved. They can get in and close. It's a challenge, these projects need materials yesterday. Our team is able to operate efficiently and make sure everything is delivered on time. They really drive it, they go above and beyond."



**Nick Goff – BAM Construct UK:** "You don't realise how many people there are who need help but who don't seem to fit into the formal social services framework. CRASH makes contractors think about others. Clearly the focus is on homelessness but CRASH does make people think for a few minutes that it's not all about yourself, that it's not all about your company. You can

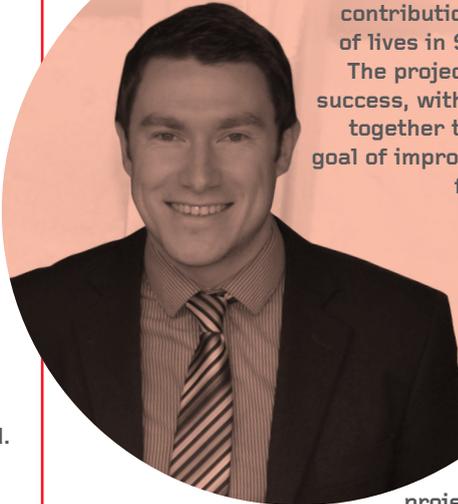
do things. We have access to facilities and CRASH brings us together and makes us think about that and we can go ahead and do something."

## What our people say...

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"Becoming involved with CRASH as Project Manager of The Pilsdon Community project was a fantastic opportunity for me and Arcadis to make a significant contribution to a large number of lives in South West England. The project was a tremendous success, with all parties working together towards the common goal of improving accommodation for homeless people.

Throughout this 18 month project I came to fully understand the magnitude of the work that CRASH does and how any contribution can reach homelessness projects all over the UK."

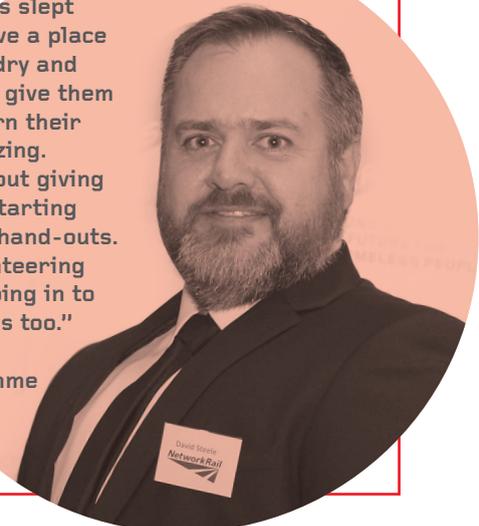


Scott Moore, Quantity Surveyor – Arcadis

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"Knowing that my skills will help someone who has slept out on the streets have a place to live that is warm, dry and comfortable and help give them the opportunity to turn their life around, was amazing. For me, it is more about giving people their dignity starting again, as opposed to hand-outs. I'll definitely be volunteering again and I'll be popping in to the community's shops too."

Dave Steele, Programme Controls Manager,  
– Network Rail





Our Patron companies underpin every project that CRASH supports. Please join them and help us make a real difference to the lives of vulnerable, homeless people and those young and old with life limiting illnesses.

**These companies are proud to be Patrons of CRASH:**



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Company registered in England & Wales No 3175906. Registered Charity No. 1054107



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