

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **Make a donation** - (please make any cheques out to "WDGB LTD" - our old name! - and send to the address below). Gift-aid accepted.
- **Become a Friend** - follow our news, support our activities, ask to join the mailing list.
- **Join our Mailing List** - receive newsletters and information about events.
- **Run a fundraising event** - coffee morning, table-sale, concert, quiz, cake-sale, boot sale etc.
- **Make us your church or group project** - we will support with talks and information leaflets, displays etc.
- **If you are a landlord** - please consider accepting our clients, secure in the knowledge that they will be given ongoing tenancy support.
- **Consider joining our Board of Trustees** - we are looking for local people with a real heart for, and commitment to, helping local people to avoid homelessness.

Please contact us if you are interested in any of the above.

KeySteps Drop-In Times:
Mondays & Wednesdays 10am - 2pm
St John's Hall on the Boulevard

KeySteps

Patron: Lord Brian Cotter

**Room 1/2, St John's Hall. The Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare,
North Somerset, BS23 1NA. Telephone: 01934 617617
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KeySteps is the working name of WDGB Ltd

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Recently Supported by:

MacRobert Trust; Lloyds Foundation

Beatrice Laing Trust; Henry Smith Foundation; Marsh Christian Trust

Olive Tree Trust; Portishead Nautical Trust; Souter Trust



Newsletter

June 2017

LANDLORDS NEEDED

KeySteps aims to help people to access the security and opportunities afforded by having a place they can call home. We are looking for landlords who share this philosophy.

People on low incomes who do not fall into a priority need category for housing by their local authority are increasingly being left out in the cold - some of them literally.

We specialise in supporting tenants on low incomes to maintain their tenancies. Once we have helped a person by providing a bond to cover their deposit, we offer on-going and on-demand support with all aspects of renting a property.

We have a high success rate of keeping people housed, and a bank of case-histories to show how we have helped people to turn their lives around (see Geoff's Story overleaf).

"People ... are increasingly being left out in the cold"

However, we face one serious problem - a **shortage of affordable rental property**.

Whilst the rental market is increasing in the South West, accommodation available to people on low incomes has markedly decreased.



"We can't stand by as people slip through the cracks"

According to the National Housing Federation the rate of rent increases in the South West are second only to that of London.

Competition for places from people who can no longer afford to buy means a reduction in options for those struggling as the result of life-disrupting issues such as relationship breakdown, job loss or physical and mental health problems.

Where will these people end up without our help? We can't stand by as people slip through the cracks.

If you have a rental property and feel you would like to make a real difference to someone's life, please contact us (details on back page).

GEOFF'S STORY

Geoff worked in education in London for most of his life, but when his circumstances changed he found himself in a temporary home in a sleepy North Somerset village with few opportunities.

"I wouldn't be where I am now without all the help I've had from KeySteps"

Geoff applied for a Deposit Bond in early 2014 and we found him a quiet flat in central Weston where he would have a better chance of finding work, training or volunteering.

Recently, Geoff came to our office to celebrate three years of having a place to call home.

OUR NEW PATRON



We are delighted to welcome Lord Brian Cotter as our new Patron.

He has always kept us up-to-date on his progress and we support him with form-filling, or any issues that may have arisen. He is determined to sustain his tenancy so his landlord has no worries about his reliability.

The security of having his own home has helped Geoff to complete training and education courses and to find voluntary work, which has boosted his confidence greatly. He now has the opportunity to volunteer for a Health and Social Care provider. KeySteps has helped him apply for a passport so that he has the required photo-ID and will provide him with a written reference.

Geoff hopes this opportunity will lead to employment, fulfilling his long-term ambition to work in the Health and Social Care sector.

Brian served as the Liberal Democrat MP for Weston-super-Mare from 1 May 1997 to 5 May 2005. In 2006 he was made a life peer and joined the House of Lords.

He is a patron of several local charities and his interests include health care, people with disabilities, small businesses and education.

Brian is married to Eileen. They have three adult children and eight grandchildren.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS...

Our thanks go to The Lighthouse Café, Portishead for donations of £203.02. Many thanks to those who have kindly made personal donations or worked hard raising funds on our behalf - we greatly appreciate your support.

HOMELESS SUNDAY

On 28th January KeySteps and Somewhere To Go teamed up to organise a special service at Emmanuel Church in Weston.

Four people gave their testimonies about their journeys from homelessness to being settled in new homes, and the roles played by both charities along the way.

Donna Pilgrim, Assistant Manager of Weston Foodbank, gave a thought-provoking and inspiring talk about homelessness in Weston and how local people can help.

The service was taken by the Rev Rebecca Clark.

Attendees included Lord Brian Cotter, Cllr. Raymond Armstrong (the former mayor) and Chairman of the Town Council, Cllr John Crockford-Hawley.

The collection raised over £300 to be split between the two charities.



TRUSTEE PROFILE



Wendy Griggs' has had a long career in education - she worked as a Deputy Head in a secondary school before she retired.

She is currently a governor in a local school and a parish councillor.

Wendy has experience of working with young people and young adults, some of whom have severe educational and social needs, and feels strongly that these vulnerable groups need the support of organisations like KeySteps to help them have a roof over their heads.

Wendy works hard to support the charity in any way she can.

"Your job is not to judge, your job is not to figure out if someone deserves something - your job is to lift the fallen, to restore the broken and to heal the hurting."

SONGS FOR KEYSTEPS

On 1st October 2016 the Gloucester and District Christian Choir came to Yatton Methodist Church. They gave a magnificent concert of Christian songs which enthralled an audience of over 60 people.

Everyone was sorry when the Choir's coach arrived to take them back to Gloucester. The superb evening raised £450.00 for KeySteps. We are all grateful to the choir and audience for coming and helping to raise this amount.