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Anchor House seeks funds for upgrade of its facilities

Homeless charity Anchor House has launched an appeal to help it raise £9.3million to redevelop its 50-year-old centre and provide new facilities for those in need.

As part of its Home and Hope Appeal, the charity, which is based in Barking Road, Canning Town, wants to provide new education, training and rehabilitation facilities for its homeless residents and local community.

The development will also include 25 new transitional "move-on" studio flats to help residents return to independent living, and a new training kitchen for people to gain catering qualifications.

Keith Fernett, director of Anchor House, said the only way to break the cycle of homelessness was to address the root causes of why someone becomes homeless in the first place, which is the sole aim of the appeal.

He said: "Mental health, drug and alcohol abuse from as early as eight years old, reoffending and escape from war and rape from the Eritrean army –these are the types of problems our residents are facing," he said.

"The local community continues to contend with soaring unemployment, high levels of deprivation, teenage pregnancy and a second generation out of work.

"Our waiting list for new residents grows longer every day, but this development will ensure that, over the next 50 years, we will be able to support an extra 20,000 people in the community to turn their lives around."

The charity has enlisted the help of an 18-member appeal board recruited from the business sector, including chairman Michael Dawson and vice-chairman Simon Hall.

It has also attracted great support from its patrons, including Lord Patten, Lord Glasman, MP Ann Widdecombe, television presenter Jeremy Paxman, newsreader Julie Etchingham, actress Barbara Windsor, former champion boxer Barry McGuigan, *Big Issue* founder John Bird, the archbishops of Westminster and Southwark, the Bishop of Brentwood, Sir George Bull, Sir Christopher Benson and Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank.

For more information or to donate to the appeal visit www.anchorhouseuk.org or phone (020) 7476 6062.

At the launch were (from left) Monsignor John Armitage, Anchor House director Keith Fernett, Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank, Barry McGuigan, Julie Etchingham, John Bird, the Bishop of Brentwood Thomas McMahon, Muhammad Bari and Sir George Bull

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