



Evaluation Report: Help Us Help Christmas Cabin Initiative 2025

Executive Summary

The Help Us Help Christmas Cabin campaign returned to Sheffield City Centre in 2025 after a three-year hiatus due to COVID-19. This initiative aimed to raise awareness of homelessness, promote local charities, and encourage donations and volunteering. Over one week, the campaign engaged thousands of people, distributed over 1,500 newspapers, collected hundreds of essential items, and raised £923.60 for local charities. Social media amplified the message, reaching 40,000 views and generating 1,000 interactions. Public engagement feedback and volunteer reflections highlighted the campaign's success in improving understanding, fostering empathy, and strengthening partnerships.

Introduction

Originally launched by the Sheffield City Centre Retail Forum and Percival Markets, the Help Us Help Christmas Cabin initiative has been a cornerstone of homelessness awareness in Sheffield. After a three-year pause during the pandemic, the campaign returned in 2025 thanks to funding from Sheffield City Council's Rough Sleeper Initiative and support from local businesses and charities. This revival complemented other awareness efforts, including the second edition of the Help Us Help newspaper and summer roadshows.

Objectives

- Educate the public about homelessness and available support services.
- Promote local charities and showcase collaborative working.
- Encourage donations and volunteering through clear guidance.
- Reassure the public that agencies work together to support vulnerable individuals.
- Improve help for people on the streets by directing resources where they are most needed.

Partnerships & Support

The campaign's success was built on strong partnerships:

- Percival Markets [Sheffield Christmas Market 2025](#) donated cabin space free of charge.

- Sheffield City Council Rough Sleeper Initiative provided essential funding.
- Cafeteria <https://thecafeteria.co.uk/projects/> supported design and sourcing of marketing materials at discounted rates.

Additional contributions included:

- 500 Together <https://500together.co.uk/> kickstarted the campaign with £500.
- Adira <https://www.adira.org.uk/> donated two extra-large bags of toiletries.
- Numerous local businesses acted as donation drop-off points, including
 1. The Moor Market – Customer Service Desk (centre of the market)
 2. Likewise Recovery Hub
 3. Banker's Draft
 4. McDonald's – High St, Archer Rd, Farm Rd, Darnall
 5. Children & Young People Performance and Analysis Service
 6. Manor Lane Depot
 7. Housing and Neighbourhood Services – Solpro
 8. SYHA – 152 Rockingham Street
 9. City Futures



Activities Delivered

The Christmas Cabin operated from 25th November to 1st December within Sheffield Christmas Market, Located on The Moor staffed by volunteers from organisations such as

- Project 6
- Likewise
- Shelter
- NatWest Bank
- Framework
- Soup Kitchen
- ARC – volunteers
- Sunday Centre – volunteers

- South Yorkshire Housing Association
- Ben's Centre

Sheffield City Council:

- Community Safety Team
- Rough Sleeping Initiative
- Private Rented Solutions
- Commissioning and Partnerships
- Housing Solutions & Rehousing
- Central Local Area Committee

Key activities included:

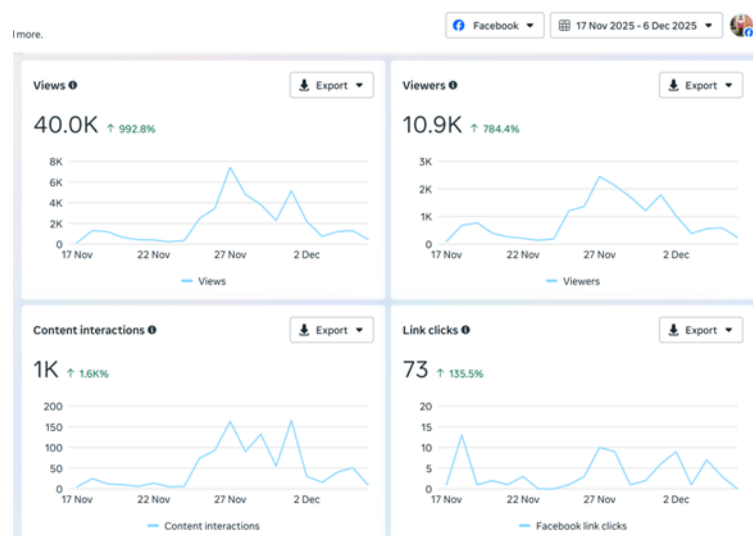
- Distributing Help Us Help newspapers, shopping lists, and information packs.
- Accepting donations of essential items and financial contributions.
- Engaging the public with stories of local charities and recovery services.
- Encouraging visits to www.helpushelpsheffield.uk for further information.

Public Engagement – Outcome/Impact

Over 1,500 newspapers distributed.

Social media campaign (17th Nov – 6th Dec) achieved:

- 40,000 views across platforms.
- 10,900 unique accounts reached.
- 1,000 interactions (likes, shares, comments).
- 73 link clicks, 1,600 page visits, and 522 website visitors.



Donations

- Hundreds of bags filled with essential items (coffee, sugar, biscuits, hats, socks, gloves).
- Miscellaneous items (40kg) donated to Burngreave Foodbank, equating to 95 meals.



Financial Contributions

- Cabin: £138.55
- Portland Works: £61.90
- SCC Children & Young People Service: £13.15
- GoFundMe: £710
- Total Raised: £923.60 (shared among local charities).



Public Engagement Feedback

Overview

The Homelessness Awareness Initiative aimed to raise awareness, provide information on services, and encourage donations. Staff engaged with the public through conversations, leaflets, and donation collection.

Key Themes

- **Positive Public Response:** “Amazing initiative”, “Happy you were there to answer questions.”
- **Increased Awareness:** Many were unaware of local services but appreciated receiving information.
- **Donations and Support:** Cash and item donations, including £61.90 raised at a Christmas market.
- **Community Engagement:** Offers to volunteer and distribute materials; a rough sleeper assisted staff.
- **Concerns and Advice:** Social workers raised issues around aggressive begging; staff provided guidance.

Notable Interactions

- Social worker expressed concerns and appreciated service information.
- Family visiting from Scotland returned with a bag of winter essentials.
- Gentleman donated 20+ pairs of gloves, praising community generosity.
- Woman reassured after donating to the cabin instead of giving to a beggar.



Volunteer & Staff Reflections

Key Themes:

- Networking opportunities across agencies.
- Supportive environment praised by volunteers.
- Increased knowledge of homelessness services.

Representative Comments:

- “A very good opportunity to find out more about other organisations.”
- “Tracey Ford was very supportive and welcoming.”

Impact on Public Perception:

- Campaign dispelled myths (homelessness is not a choice).
- Conversations fostered empathy and empowered responsible giving.

Reflections & Learning**What worked well:**

- Strong collaboration between agencies and businesses.
- High visibility through social media and physical presence.
- Community engagement through storytelling and volunteer involvement.

Challenges:

- Coordinating volunteers across multiple organisations.
- Managing logistics for donation collection and distribution.

Recommendations & Next Steps:

- Extend campaign duration for greater impact.
- Increase early promotion to boost awareness.
- Explore digital donation options alongside physical drop-offs.
- Strengthen partnerships with community groups and businesses.
- Develop volunteer pathways for those expressing interest.

Conclusion

The Cabin campaign successfully strengthened inter-agency networking, engaged the public in meaningful dialogue, improved understanding and empathy toward homelessness, and encouraged donations and proactive support. It demonstrated the power of partnership and community spirit in addressing homelessness.

Recommendation: Continue similar campaigns to sustain momentum, deepen partnerships, and expand public education.

Thank you to all partners, volunteers, and donors who made this year's return of the Help us help Christmas campaign a success.