

Minister visit

Government Minister Iain Wright visited St Basils Edmonds Court Foyer and nursery on 11 July 2007 see

[Photo gallery.](#)



The following article appeared in BIRMINGHAM POST - 12 JULY 2007.

Birmingham hostel 'should be model for rest of

UK'

Reporter Emma Brady Health Correspondent.

A Government Minister has called for a Birmingham hostel to become a model for homeless centres across Britain after being "impressed and inspired" by its work.

Iain Wright, Communities and Local Government minister, spoke out during a visit to Edmond Court Foyer, run by city charity St Basils, while Prime Minister Gordon Brown pledged to make housing a top priority.

He also announced a new £450,000 fund to develop training schemes and educational facilities at homeless shelters, which would offer grants between £2,000 & £20,000 to centres across the country.

Mr Wright, who also spoke at a homelessness conference at Aston University, insisted on seeing what was being done locally to help rough sleepers.

"as my first ministerial visit this had been absolutely unbelievable, I've been really impressed and inspired by what I've seen and heard at St Basils today," he said.

"the young people I've spoken to have got aspirations and they want to better themselves. One girl told me she wants to be a midwife, and one 16 yr-old said he wants a career in IT. They don't see themselves as being at a dead end because they are in a hostel."

Mr Wright added: "I'm so impressed by what I've seen at St Basils, the commitment of the staff to help these people, its amazing. In fact it could be used as a model for hostels elsewhere in the UK as the challenge of tackling homelessness still remains a national issue and we have to tackle that head on."

Charities and shelters can bid for grants from the new fund, to provide trainers and tutors to help homeless people gain vital skills and qualifications.

The scheme is part of a £90 million initiative set to transform hostels into "modern places of change."

Earlier Mr Wright told delegates at the homeless link forum that the number of people sleeping rough had been slashed by two-thirds since 1977, from 1850 to about 500 on any given night.

He said: "ten years ago it was common to see large numbers of people sleeping on the streets in all our towns and cities.

"Today those numbers have been dramatically reduced. This has been achieved through the hard work and commitment of the voluntary sector and statutory agencies. But we need to do more to help people in hostels access routes into education, employment and ultimately sustained independent living.

"St Basils Foyer is a good example of a project which is improving life chances of vulnerable young people. Its training facilities give young people the chance to learn skills which will help them move on with their lives."

THANK YOU HEART FM!

The 100.7 Heart fm charity, First Steps has just donated an amazing £16,500 to enable us to build a wonderful children's play centre in the garden at Trentham House, Acocks Green. Steve Denyer, Breakfast presenter at Heart officially opened the centre - [click here](#) to watch it on YouTube!

LAND ROVER DRIVE TO THE RESCUE

The workforce at the Solihull plant of Land Rover have been long time supporters of charities, and for 2007 and 2008 they have chosen to support St Basils. More details of their support will be reported in future newsletters.

LLOYDS LEAP TO THE 3 PEAKS CHALLENGE

A group of intrepid workers from the head office of Lloyds TSB Bank on Colmore Row are attempting to do the 3 Peaks Challenge. The challenge is well established and few have managed it. Basically you have 24 hours to climb to the top of Ben Nevis in Scotland, and down again, then drive to the Lake District in England and climb up Scarfell Pike, and down again, and then drive to Snowdon in Wales and climb up, and of course down again; IN 24 HOURS!!!

The Lloyds employees have pledged to raise as much as they can from this, and donate half to St Basils. Good luck to them...and so say all of us!

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