

NEWS

Community Awareness Programme moves to new, larger premises

New base to cope with three-fold demand

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When the Community Awareness Programme was set up 17 years ago, its founders never imagined they would need to give help to so many homeless and vulnerable people.

This week they signed the lease on a new city centre base which is three times the size of their current Wood Street office.

The move to a former amusement arcade on Market Street will enable them to cope with the growing numbers of people who have nowhere else to turn.

Kevin Dobson, project manager at CAP, said: "We have been put in a situation where we have to move so we can continue to help our clients.

"Demand for our services has more than doubled in the past 12 months. We are seeing up to 100 people a day which is unprecedented and those numbers are continuing to rise as the impact of cuts to benefits begin to bite.

"It's a ludicrous situation - a charity like ours shouldn't need to exist but the fact is we expect to help more people in the future and we need to be ready for that."

CAP moved into Wood Street in 2004 when they would help an average of 13 people a day.

Ernest Hibbert, who founded CAP with his wife Elisabeth, said: "Back then we never imagined we would be where we are today.

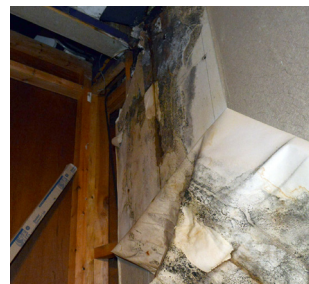
"We work very closely with food banks in the city and they are seeing the same increase.

"Now we are seeing less people who have been made homeless through addiction, more often they are just normal people who have fallen on hard times.

"Worryingly, we are seeing



Ernest Hibbert and Kevin Dobson of CAP, which has got planning permission for their new base on Market Street.



more and more middle aged dads who are leaving their families so that their wives and children can claim more in benefits because they have no other choice."

CAP provides homeless and vulnerable people with hot food, clean clothes, a shower and advice.

When the new centre opens there will be room for other charities and organisations to help people with issues such as including employment, addiction or healthcare.

It is hoped they will be able to move in by the end of May before their lease on Wood Street

expires. Mr Dobson said: "We will have to do this at the minimal cost possible.

"Our budget is £31,000 and we cannot afford to spend more.

"We have got an army of people willing to help paint but we need skilled volunteers - an electrician, a gas fitter and a joiner.

"The landlords Bradley and Ashley Crecraft have been very supportive."

They are also hoping for help from Wakefield and District Housing apprentices and people serving community service sentences.

But they need more support and donations. To help call 01924 381119.

Can you help CAP?

What CAP needs:
Stud walling and plasterboard
Rockwool wall insulation
Flooring
Decoration
Kitchen
Cold Store Unit

**Heating System
Toilets & Shower
Electrical system
Plastering and Joinery
Security System
Health & Safety Equipment
Window Blinds/Covering**

'If it wasn't for CAP I wouldn't be alive'

Eight years ago Craig Richardson hit rock bottom he had lost everything - his girlfriend, his children and his home.

And having nowhere else to turn he turned up at the door of CAP.

The help and support he was given meant he could turn his life around.

Now he volunteers five days a week helping people who are in a similar desperate situation that he was.

Mr Richardson, 41, now of Peterson Road, said: "To be honest, if it wasn't for CAP I wouldn't have survived.

"I was sleeping rough, I was on drugs, I was going through bins at night to find

something to eat.

"But now I've got my life back. I'm clean and I've got a flat thanks to CAP. Now I'm doing all the things that volunteers at CAP used to do for me."

Recognition

Man of Steel prize renamed in honour of Steve Prescott

THE most prestigious individual honour in rugby league is to be renamed in memory of former Wakefield Wildcat Steve Prescott.

The player of the season accolade will now be called the Steve Prescott Man of Steel Award to commemorate the ex-full back and charity campaigner, who lost his cancer battle aged 39 in November.

The RFL's proposal to rename the top prize received unanimous support from the 14 Super League clubs.

Super League chief operating officer Ralph Rimmer said: "Although he never won



The late Steve Prescott

the award himself, Steve really was a man of steel; a truly extraordinary individual."

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