

# #WorldHomelessDay Equfund launches 'Sanctuary Bond' to house the UK's hidden homeless

Today, on World Homeless Day, British Community Benefit Society, Equfund is launching the Sanctuary Bond, a Loanstock offer designed to raise emergency funds to combat the UK's escalating homelessness problem by providing emergency accommodation to those in urgent need.

Equfund has set out to raise up to £5 million from the British public with the Sanctuary Bond. The funds raised will be used to purchase and renovate properties to let to the hidden homeless, those who aren't necessarily sleeping rough but do not have a permanent residence, often families unexpectedly evicted from their rented properties, and single people, many with young children fleeing domestic violence.

## Compelled to act

Equfund was compelled to act on the problem of homelessness because of the growing failure within the housing market to supply decent, affordable homes for people who have insufficient financial resources to meet rental obligations. Equfund upends the traditional and financially punitive model of finding accommodation in the following ways:

- No referencing/application fee and references carried out in-house to speed up the process
- Accepting tenants with no deposit (Equfund will work with local charities to obtain a tenancy deposit or with the local council to get a bond)
- Working with the local council to assist the tenant in applying for housing benefit or universal credit
- Foregoing credit referencing on tenants (often used by some landlords as a reason to reject tenants)
- Endeavouring to complete referencing in under 48 hours
- Showing leniency to tenants whose housing benefit or universal credit claim is suspended

Andrew Mahon, Director of Equfund said:

*“A home to call your own has untold benefits to a person’s mental health, dignity and general wellbeing. Far too many people in the UK are stuck in a cycle of homelessness for reasons they have little control over and finding a new place to rent usually proves unduly expensive. High rents and years of austerity have worsened the housing crisis and increased the number of the homeless, especially the hidden homeless who are often outside the public consciousness of the crisis.*

*We have many tenants who have come to us having been rejected by other landlords, including victims of domestic violence and a mother who was living on her grandmother’s sofa for weeks while she found suitable accommodation for her and her child.*

*At Equfund, we are there for those down on their luck, those who just need a little help, those who need a safe place to rebuild their lives, those who through no fault of theirs found themselves evicted, without a roof over their heads. We believe in decent, affordable housing for all, and with this Sanctuary Bond, we call on everyone similarly minded to join us in stopping the scourge of homelessness.”*

## Proven track record

Equfund has a proven track record of helping the UK’s homeless get back on their feet. Since being founded in 2002 it has found homes for thousands of people through investments of over £33 million. Previously Equfund’s focus has been buying and refurbishing long-term empty properties to provide affordable rental accommodation for those in need, however the Sanctuary Bond signals a new priority to help those with a more urgent need for accommodation.

## A widespread issue

In a survey commissioned to mark World Homeless Day, Equfund found that most Brits underestimate the scale and seriousness of homelessness in the UK and many of us are quite vulnerable to becoming homeless.

- Over 30% of Brits feared becoming homeless
- Over 58% of women in the UK felt they would not have the necessary financial resources to move into a new place if they lost their home unexpectedly with obvious ramifications for victims of domestic violence
- Only 32.2% of Brits were confident that they wouldn’t ever be homeless
- 1 in 10 of us has experienced homelessness at some point in our lives
- Less than 2% (1.47%) correctly answered that the UK’s homeless population is over 300,000

# Ethical investing

The minimum investment in the Sanctuary Bond is £1,000 with a maximum of £250,000. Married couples are able to invest £500,000. Investment in the Sanctuary Bond will be over a three to fifteen year period with two interest rate options available:

**Zero Interest:** Where no interest will be paid during the selected term. Monies raised via the Sanctuary Bond in this way, will help Equfund acquire houses or flats in all areas of the country and lease them to provide emergency accommodation to families and individuals who are struggling to access decent housing in their area.

**Inflation Linked:** This will enable Equfund to continue to provide affordable housing and is aimed at investors who want to invest for societal good, but still need their money to work for them and not be diminished by inflation. Interest paid will be equal to The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) 12-month rate, determined by the Office for National Statistics for the period ending on or around each anniversary of the term. The maximum interest on this option is capped at 5% p.a.

To invest in the Sanctuary Bond, visit: <https://www.equfund.com/>

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