

We are Life



Creating a world where no one
faces pregnancy or pregnancy loss alone

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Life 2009 Ltd a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, No. 06786752. It is a Registered Charity in England, Wales and Scotland. It is a Registered Provider of social housing No. 4734.

lifecharity.org.uk

We are Life

Life is a national charity that is creating a world where no one faces pregnancy or pregnancy loss alone by providing:

- Emotional help and support, BACP accredited counselling, and skilled listening via phone, text, email, or in person.
- Housing and community support around the country for mums and their babies, with practical help from our support workers, equipment, life skills training and help to move on to independent living if needs be.
- Free pregnancy tests, baby items including buggies or cots, and supplies.
- Educating the public about pregnancy, pregnancy loss, and our work.

From a simple text or getting a free pregnancy test to moving into supported accommodation in a Life House, we are there.

Our impact is real

Life provides a range of services that help more than 60,000 people each year meet pregnancy or pregnancy loss with courage and dignity so they can flourish.

200 people
reach out to **Life** for
*emotional and
practical help*
about pregnancy
or pregnancy loss
every day

12,000 mums
and babies have found a
*home in Life's
supported housing.*
At any one time, we're
looking after at least
200 mums and babies
in our network of
22 houses

Looking to a bright future

Unexpected pregnancies happen, but so does feeling judged, being rejected or fearing the future. That's why it is so important that Life affirms, values and accepts the woman as she is. We do that by coming alongside and supporting her emotionally and practically wherever she is on her journey.

We are so encouraged by the good news we hear from the women we help, stories of hope, of reconciliation and acceptance, of new lives and bright futures previously unimagined.

We don't want anyone to face pregnancy or pregnancy loss alone. Here's some of their stories.



1.25 million students have

heard presentations by Life about

life before birth, relationships
and **our work**

5,500 people ask Life for a **free pregnancy test** every month

Every month Life **provides skilled listening support and counselling** to **400 people** affected by pregnancy or pregnancy loss

Katie – facing a stark choice at Christmas

Kicked out of their home by her boyfriend. Rejected by her parents. Told she was ruining her life. Then thrown out on the street by her new landlord. All because she was pregnant... Katie's story is typical of many of the women we help every day.



With nowhere to go and no one to turn to Katie rented a small room, but that didn't last long when the landlord found out she was expecting a baby. That's when she was introduced to Life. Katie didn't really want an abortion but the way things were, she saw no other option. Yet thanks to our skilled listening sessions and parenting lessons, she began to feel she could manage her life with a baby. Life journeyed with her, supporting her and recognising her vulnerability.

Our support doesn't end with the birth

Katie had her baby, Jack, three weeks before Christmas. When she returned home from hospital she found all her belongings outside the house and the locks had been changed. In a panic Katie called us. Being Christmas, Council offices were closed and the Police wanted her new baby to be taken into care. Once again she was not only facing life on the streets but also having her baby taken into care.

Not alone at Christmas

Life was able to give her emergency accommodation and together we made it welcoming for her and Jack, everything from baby supplies or donations of food to a Christmas hamper and presents for her and Jack. Her room was even decorated for Christmas. We made sure Katie and Jack didn't spend their first Christmas alone.

A new start

With the New Year came a new start. We helped Katie to find more permanent accommodation and a job training at a reputable hairdresser. Through our support, she now had the confidence and life skills to be able to look to a better future with her and baby Jack – and Katie still calls us every so often simply to say 'hi' ...

Sam – experiencing love and support



Choosing to have your baby is just the beginning. Life is alongside, doing whatever it takes for as long as it takes to help you be a family.

Little Alexander is five months old. He's growing fast and full of life. His mother, Sam, is delighted with him, but things might have been very different for both of them was it not for Life.

When his mum found she was pregnant it was devastating. Without a partner or supportive parents Sam felt completely alone. She saw nothing but problem after problem that, to her mind, having the baby might cause. Urged on by friends, she was thinking seriously about having an abortion.

Offering hope and a future

Then she found Life. Searching for help on her phone, she discovered our National Helpline number and contacted us. For the first time in a very long time, Sam found someone who would listen – really listen – to her, who didn't judge her, who showed nothing but love. It took a while and a lot of tears, but through the care and concern for her shown by our trained Helpliners Sam realised that at heart she wanted to continue her pregnancy. But that was only the beginning of her journey. Having made that choice for herself, we then did all we could to make it possible for her to be a great mum.

Real, practical support in action

We put her in touch with one of our Pregnancy Matters™ Centres near her home. The Centre immediately put a support plan in place, arranged for a member of the team to attend hospital appointments and scans with her, and helped her emotionally through skilled listening services. We were able to provide the practical help she needed too, everything from nappies to a baby buggy, finding accommodation and getting her life with Alexander on track for a bright future.

Three years on, Sam and Alexander are still receiving support from time to time by Life. Our journey with them didn't simply stop when Alexander was born.

"He's my little miracle, I so easily mightn't have had him," Sam said recently. "Yes, if I hadn't found Life I would have been looking for somewhere to have an abortion. Thank you, everyone in Life, for making it possible for me to have my little boy."

Esther – support for her chosen route

Esther was 17 weeks pregnant when she first contacted Life's Pregnancy Matters™ Helpline. Neither her nor the father wanted to have a baby.

"I know these little flutters I can feel now in my stomach are the baby moving" she shared tearfully, "but as much as I don't want to be a parent I don't think I could now go through with a termination."

Esther didn't want to discuss anything other than adoption, but she needed to get away from where she lived "before anyone finds out I am pregnant."

We made a place for her in one of our houses and supported her with the choice she had made. We helped her with her relationship with the local adoption team. During a session she said "I know this is right for me and my partner but it has been more emotional than I thought possible... I would not have got through this without Life alongside me, never felt judged or treated any differently to any of the other mums-to-be in the house."

With the father, Esther wrote a letter for the baby, which she gave to the social worker explaining why this journey had to happen. She also wrote a very moving letter to our Support Worker that ended, simply, "thank you for helping my baby to be born".



Zoe – help to succeed in life

Zoey Price writes in her own words about her time at the Bath Life House:

“I was referred to Life after fleeing domestic violence and found a safe loving home for me and my son to live at the Bath Life House. I was lucky to have a place in the Bath Life House. It was beautiful.



“My Support Worker turned out to be more of a mum than a Support Worker! She wanted the best for all of us at the house and was encouraging of my achievements, such as passing my driving test. Compared to how I’d been treated before I came to the house, I gained enough confidence to return to university.

“There were rough times, especially when my son was new-born. I had to spend a lot of time at the hospital with him. Life’s support worker would often contact me to see how we were both getting on. While we were in hospital, a friend I had made living at the Life house turned out to be a star – she even did my washing for me. A Life volunteer, Rachel, spent time visiting us too. I loved her company and appreciated her giving up her time.

“The Life House is a home that I dearly miss. I have taken many good memories with me, those of chilling in the front room watching TV, talking with the other residents making great friends, eating take away, playing on the Wii and decorating the house for Christmas. This year the residents at Bath Life House will not have the pleasure of my annoying elf shoes!

“Life really does support young mums to live independently – I know from first hand experience. When I moved onto my own flat with my son I felt it was daunting process, but my support worker was there for me. She even helped me to get funding to furnish my new property. In the Bath Life house I was loved, valued, cared for and supported and given a wonderful new start.”

Postscript to her transformed life - Zoe has since gained a Masters degree with Distinction!

Shelly - escaping abuse

No matter the circumstances, Life is on the side of the pregnant woman, sometimes we are all that she has.

Shelly arrived at one of our Life Houses when she was pregnant and escaping domestic abuse. She had lost her first baby through Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and the abuse by her partner began soon after. With support of a domestic abuse team worker, she took her first step towards safety in one of our Life Houses.



Building in confidence

Whilst living at the Life House her confidence grew through befriending with other women in the house, through our life skills programme to help her parenting skills and, through our encouragement, built a good relationship with the Domestic Violence Adviser and local social worker. Shelly began to feel empowered and able to become the mum she had always wanted to be.

Getting her life back on track

As Shelly's confidence continued to grow she visited play-groups with other young parents, slowly beginning to trust and build friendships. We were alongside her as she obtained court protection for herself and her baby son. We helped her to manage her debt leftover from the abusive relationship. Together, we built on her self worth to such an extent that she began a course in Business Management at college.

Give to Life

You can visit our website lifecharity.org.uk/donate, call us on **01926 312272**, email **ceo@lifecharity.org.uk**

Thank you for your support

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