

## Emergency Homeless Housing Project - Cornwall's rapid response to COVID



This project of high social value was devised and constructed as part of an emergency response plan to offer protection and stability to homeless and vulnerable people following the COVID-19 outbreak. The scheme had to be deployed extremely quickly, requiring collaboration with local sub-contractors and suppliers, particularly with the stress on the supply chain during the construction period.

- **Date of completion: May 2020**
- **Cost: £175,000**
- **Location: Truro and Penzance**

### Challenges and solutions

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cornwall Council responded to the Government's pledge and offered accommodation to all those sleeping rough in Cornwall. Single homeless presentations soared as those who had been 'sofa-surfing' or in other temporary housing were asked to leave. In order to manage this unprecedented rise in cases, the council proposed Temporary Emergency Accommodation (TEA) schemes, managed by Cornwall Housing Ltd.

Two schemes were delivered involving the installation of 22 temporary dwellings. In Penzance and in Truro, the scheme has created two 'mini-village' communities, with the sites carefully selected in the towns for privacy and security. Emergency modular cabins were used and set up with mains drainage and power. The sites included seating, landscaping and planters for tenants to grow their own vegetables.

All works to the site were completed within three weeks from the start of construction. However, due to the nature of the project, the scope changed several times over the construction period due to changes in client need.



## Benefits and achievements

The projects have made an extremely positive impact on two Cornish towns by reducing rough sleeping and creating social communities that have enabled vulnerable people a chance in life.

The benefits to the users have been profound, offering stability and safety during a national emergency. The quality of the accommodation and the design has provided a real alternative to the 'traditional' emergency accommodation offer of B&B or hostels. Residents have space, quiet and their own front door, which after months, sometimes years on the streets, has given them a real chance to recover and thrive.

Managing health and safety on a scheme that has a challenging programme is already difficult, but this was exacerbated by the pandemic. All site personnel were each provided with a COVID kit bag, containing masks, gloves, hand spray etc.

The schemes have been supported by local partners and the community with neighbouring residents providing vegetable planters for the residents. The response has shown that when civil engineers lead a project in an emergency situation, great things can happen.



## Fascinating facts

- The two sites were set up with all utility connections and landscaping in just three weeks.
- Twenty-two homeless people have each been given somewhere to live and a chance in life.
- The 'Bunkabin' cabins used in the schemes are single berth, fully self-contained with showers and cooking facilities.

## People who made it happen:

- Client: Cornwall Council and Cornwall Housing Ltd
- Contractor and Project Management: Cormac Solutions Ltd
- Contractor: RBS and EG Fencing

**More about this project:** [www.corservltd.co.uk/corserv-news/carrick-cabins-project/](http://www.corservltd.co.uk/corserv-news/carrick-cabins-project/)