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**DIY SOS BBC Children in Need special comes to Blackburn with Darwen**

*The BBC One show will feature a Blackburn with Darwen-based charity, supported by BBC Children in Need, which offers help to vulnerable young people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless*

DIY SOS, BBC One’s popular property renovation show, will head to Blackburn with Darwen later this year to take on an ambitious build to benefit a local charity. DIY SOS: The Big Build BBC Children in Need Special (working title) will see Nick Knowles and his team, with interior designer Gabrielle Blackman, complete the conversion of a rundown church hall, originally built in the early 1800’s, into accommodation and a support centre for Nightsafe: a Blackburn charity which provides support to young people aged 16 to 24 who are homeless or vulnerably housed. The show will air this November during BBC Children in Need Appeal week.

Nightsafe was established in 1990 to meet the growing needs of homeless young people and was set up by a group of local people. The current Nightsafe accommodation centre offers immediate access for young people who have nowhere else to go but the centre is no longer big enough to cater for the growing demand in the area.

The current building is bursting at the seams; they have an emergency shelter but they need more space to support vulnerable young people in the area and help to get them back on their feet. The infamous Purple Shirts have big plans to renovate St Silas’s Parish Room, which is being leased to Nightsafe by St Silas Church, and turn it into a space that will benefit Blackburn’s young homeless, this September. The DIY SOS team along with the support of hundreds of volunteers and tradespeople will have nine days to transform the interior of the building into a purpose-built support centre and short-term accommodation for vulnerable young people in the community who are homeless, which will be specifically for those aged 16 – 18.

**Nick Knowles**, Presenter of BBC One’s DIY SOS, said: “The team and I are delighted to join forces with the community of Blackburn with Darwen for this special build for local charity Nightsafe, who are at the forefront of helping young homeless. Our ambitious and innovative build will see us with local volunteers transform an old church hall, into a much needed emergency accommodation centre for young homeless.

“As ever it’s an ambitious build but with lots of help from the people of Blackburn with Darwen and beyond, together, with a few laughs along the way, we’ll be able to achieve something truly special. Please get involved.”

Speaking of the announcement, **Julie Thomas**, Chair of Trustees at Nightsafe said: “We are amazed and delighted that DIY SOS: The Big Build for BBC Children in Need are coming to Blackburn with Darwen and even more thrilled that they chose to work with Nightsafe. The organisation has, for the last 30 years, supported those most on the margins of society, seeking to alleviate the plight of homelessness and working with those most vulnerable and in need of support.

“The upcoming show will give the young people a place to call home whilst they develop independent living skills; and a home that is safe and secure and in the heart of the local community.  Somewhere more than just a place to thrive, a place to build new friendships, confidence and have fun as they meet life’s challenges.”

**Tommy Nagra**, Director of Content at BBC Children in Need added: “We’re delighted that Nick Knowles and the DIY SOS team are heading to Blackburn with Darwen, to create another spectacular Big Build for BBC Children in Need. It's a show that changes lives and will leave a lasting legacy for the vulnerable young people in the town.”

**Mohammed Khan**, Leader of Blackburn with Darwen Council, added: “We are looking forward to welcoming DIY SOS to Blackburn. I’m sure that they will get a very warm welcome with plenty of offers of help. It fits perfectly with what we are about as a Council, helping us with one of our big priorities which is to look after vulnerable people. Our planners are already working closely with the team and are getting fully behind what is a really important project.

“Nightsafe do a brilliant job and this is going to give the charity a much needed boost and make sure that even more young people’s lives can be changed for the better.”

**Reverend Sheelagh Aston** at St Silas’ Church, said: "St Silas' Parish Rooms were built in the late 19th century to nurture the young people of the community, first as a day school and then as a Sunday school. We are delighted Nightsafe’s innovative project is continuing the legacy of the Parish Rooms and we look forward to supporting them as they work to create a safe environment for the young people of this century."

Nightsafe has been funded by BBC Children in Need for a number of years. Currently, Nightsafe uses a grant of £106,481 to deliver the LEAP project which supports homeless and vulnerable young people under the age of 18, by helping to increase their life skills and engaging them in education, training and employment to encourage stability in their lives. BBC Children in Need currently funds 14 projects across Blackburn, with more than £906,000 hard at work to benefit young lives in the region.

**DIY SOS is currently appealing for tradespeople including; electricians, plumbers, carpenters, plasterers and decorators to offer support with the transformation in September. There will be a ‘volunteer trades day’ on Tuesday 13 August, those interested in attending or helping the build, must email ahead of  the trades day to:** **diysosblackburn@bbc.co.uk****. The build will then be:  Tuesday 3 – Thursday 12 September 2019 with  the episode broadcasting in November 2019.**

**-ENDS-**

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**Notes to Editors**

**BBC Children in Need**

BBC Children in Need’s vision is that every child in the UK has a safe, happy and secure childhood and the chance to reach their potential. The charity will realise this vision by supporting, promoting and publicising work that addresses the challenges that children and young people face and work that builds their skills and resilience.

BBC Children in Need is currently supporting over 2,800 projects in communities across the UK that are helping children and young people facing a range of disadvantages such as living in poverty, being disabled or ill, or experiencing distress, neglect or trauma.

**About DIY SOS**

DIY SOS: The Big Build, presented by Nick Knowles, has been running for 20 years. Nick and the team of Purple Shirts galvanise the local community to help one of their own in need, transforming homes and lives, usually in just nine days. The series has helped more than 70 families in need with Big Builds as well as regenerating a run-down street in Manchester for veterans. For BBC Children in Need, the award winning DIY SOS and an amazing army of volunteers have built a youth centre in Liverpool, a children’s centre in Edinburgh, a parent-led centre for disabled children in Peterborough, a respite centre for young carers in Blackpool and a support and accommodation centre for young people leaving care in Swansea. The show regularly gets over 5 million viewers on BBC One.

**Additional Info**

Additional Quote from **Julie Thomas,** Chair of Trustees at Nightsafe said:

“The church hall at St Silas’s has, for well over 100 years, been a place of learning and community.  The partnership between Nightsafe and St Silas provides the opportunity to continue this sense of community and learning for vulnerable young people.”