



NOAH ACADEMY OPENS IN BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE

The NOAH Academy has officially opened its doors in Bedford Town Centre, offering free training courses and employment services to help unemployed people get into work.

Located inside the SMART Prebend Centre, the NOAH Academy aims to address poverty in Bedford by helping people to realise their full potential, in a friendly and non-judgemental environment.

"We are thrilled to open our Bedford base which will undoubtedly help hundreds of people from the local area in the years ahead," said **NOAH CEO David Morris**.

"Unemployment rates in Bedford are **above the UK average**, so we are keen to focus on providing a package of support to guide local people towards and into work."

Open to anyone who is unemployed and living in Bedford, the Academy's employment service helps people break down barriers to employment through: CV and job application support, interview skills, IT and internet access, job searching, 1:1 careers advice, and confidence building.

A variety of training courses are available covering Wellbeing and IT, to help people develop key employability skills. **Continued on p.10.**



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO - **DAVID MORRIS**



“I am delighted to welcome you to our summer newsletter with the announcement of our new Academy premises in Bedford.

Poverty and unemployment is a significant factor in the cause of homelessness. The aim of our Academies is to eradicate this risk by training people in employability skills and provide tailored support for individuals to overcome barriers to employment.

We are looking forward to supporting more people from our new Bedford base, alongside our long-standing Academy in Luton.

Sometimes it can be a long-journey until a person is mentally and physically ready to get a job. That was the case with ex-client Claire's*. We supported Claire for decades before she was able to deal with her long-term traumas and improve her quality of life.

It was only then that she was able to live independently and responsibility enter the working world. After several years of no contact with Claire we were touched to hear about her new role helping others through her lived experience on a recent visit. Read her full story on p6-7.

All the best,
David Morris CEO

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ENTERPRISE LENDS A HELPING HAND



A big thank you to **Enterprise Car Rental** in Luton, who recently reached out to lend a hand of support at NOAH.

We first met the Enterprise team when they joined Community Fundraising & Events Manager Maggie, at an awareness stall in The Mall, Luton. These events are vital to helping to spread the word about the services we provide to the local community.

Impressively, almost £100 worth of donations were raised on the day, much to the success of a hamper competition, donated, and led by the Enterprise team.

In the same week, we welcomed Sirah, Tsunami and Charlotte into our Welfare Centre Kitchen. The team got the opportunity to help prepare and serve meals to our clients during the busy lunch hour.

The very same night, the Enterprise team even attended a quiz night in aid of NOAH at The Market Cross!

If that wasn't enough, Enterprise went onto support our Academy youth clients by attending our mock interviews session as a local employer to help local young people build confidence and interviews skills to help them find employment in the real world.

MARKET CROSS GETS QUIZZICAL

IN AID OF NOAH

An excellent job from the Market Cross Pub & Restaurant in Dunstable who raised £200 for NOAH in their mid-week Quiz Night in May!

A big thank you to Dan and the team for organising this fantastic event in aid of our services. Dan also kindly agreed to host one of our donation pots on his till point too! If you have room for a collection pot in your business or workplace, please drop us an email at maggie.felmingham@noahenterprise.org.



AFTERNOON TEA TRIUMPH!



Thank you to those who recently attended our Afternoon Tea event at The Old Palace Lodge. We are delighted to announce that over £1600 was raised to support NOAH services!

As a sell-out event, we were thrilled to see so many familiar faces and meet plenty of new supporters as well! Guests enjoyed a relaxing afternoon of tea and coffee, delicious scones, a scrumptious selection of finger sandwiches, and a trio of cakes, plus live music from the fantastic David Mills.

We must also say a huge thank you to our hosts The Old Palace Lodge, Dunstable and to everyone who kindly donated a prize to our successful raffle.

Do keep your eyes peeled for more fundraising events this year!



Sign Up

If you would like to be one of the first to know about our exciting new fundraising events, sign-up to our mailing list by visiting www.noahenterprise.org/news/newsletter.

NOAH WELCOMES STUDENT PRIESTS



Pictured: Pierre and Rishi.

NOAH recently had the privilege of welcoming three Vincentian student priests who came to volunteer at the NOAH Welfare Centre in Park Street, Luton.

The first year students (**Pierre from Sweden, Lucas from Denmark and Rishi from Canada**), spent two weeks at NOAH in order to develop a better understanding of poverty. It was also a chance for them to encourage a mindset of being caring and passionate, and improving their humility.

During their time with us, they also had the opportunity to join our outreach teams in Luton, assist appointments, serve meals in the kitchen, distribute food parcels, and organise clothing for vulnerable client groups.

Pierre said: "It was a real eye-opener listening to clients and realising how complex their situations are. Seeing what NOAH does has given me a new sense of gratefulness and a bigger depth of appreciation of everyday things, like food and housing."

Donate Your Car
Fast | Free | For Charity

Free Collection | Any Car | Nationwide

Scrap or sell your car for charity!

If you want a hassle free and no cost way of getting rid of your old car, visit giveacar.co.uk and help raise funds for NOAH.



The Big Sleep Out

COMING SOON!

Sign-up at www.noahenterprise.org/the-big-sleep-out

7th
OCT

A TRIBUTE TO THE SISTERS OF ST. CLARE

Many of you will know of the long-standing patrons of NOAH, the Sisters of St. Clare. Both Sister Antoinette and Sister Kathleen are both retiring from religious life and moving back to Ireland this summer. Sister Antoinette was a huge part of the NOAH foundation, alongside our founder Sister Eileen.

In 1987, Sister Eileen O'Mahoney founded The Luton and Dunstable Irish Care and Advice Association, having witnessed the poverty and deprivation that the Irish community were experiencing. Sister Eileen soon joined forces with Sister Antoinette McGrath, and the two sisters co-managed the centre until Sr Eileen retired in 2000. Sister Antoinette continued to manage the centre, and after eventually stepping down, continued as a patron of the organization under its new name of NOAH Enterprise.

Sister Antoinette was always known for her care and compassion towards NOAH's clientele. During Sr Antoinette's time at NOAH, she supported an estimated 7,500 people. Sister Antoinette knew all of the clients by name, and to this day enjoys greeting people formerly in her care as she travels around Luton.

We recently had the pleasure of attending the Sisters leaving mass, which was filled with hundreds of adoring well-wishers. It's clear that they are both very treasured in Luton and will be sorely missed.

They have both left an indelible mark of kindness within Luton and we will miss them dearly. **From all of us at NOAH, we wish them a very happy retirement.**



TREK MADAGASCAR 2023

Fancy an exciting challenge for 2023?

Get your hiking boots on and join us for this **once-in-a-lifetime** experience in Madagascar!

This 12-day trip will challenge you to 5 days trekking through the spectacular Andringitra National Park, before helping at a community project. You'll experience towering mountains, natural swimming pools and exotic rainforests with baby lemurs. Contact lisa.seccombe@noahenterprise.org for more information.

To find out more visit:
www.noahenterprise.org



SCAN ME

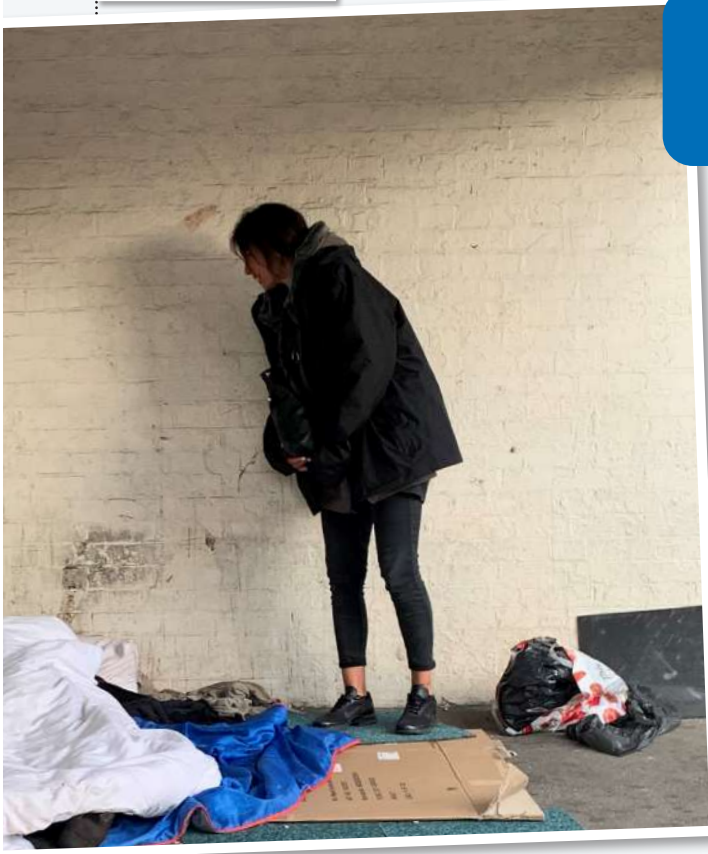


18 - 29 NOVEMBER 2023

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A STREET OUTREACH WORKER



Kylie is the Luton Outreach Team Leader at NOAH. Her job is to help people sleeping rough access the support they need to move away from the streets of Luton. Read more about her role below:



"I manage the team of NOAH Outreach workers and we walk along the streets of Luton searching for people who are homeless. We also search parks, graveyards, car parks, high rise buildings, and talk to people and offer them our support services. Often, we go out as early as 5am.

Every day is different and each person we meet has their own problems and story to tell. Some might have mental health problems and others may have fallen into homelessness through a relationship breakdown.

We are there to provide help, if the person wants it. Sometimes it can be a long wait until a person accepts the help, which can be frustrating, but we have to be patient and we never give up on someone. We'll go back every day and offer support.

Every week, we receive reports of potential homeless sightings through Streetlink, and we'll go and see if we can find them. If we can't, we keep trying at different times of the day. If we do find someone sleeping

rough and they are willing to receive help, we will take them back to the welfare centre, register them, give them food, shower, clothing, find accommodation and help them with other problems like mental health and addiction issues.

I really love working with our clients and walking alongside them on their journey. Sometimes it can be a long time before they are able to stand on their own two feet. My team are privileged to be able to provide that initial contact. We're here to tell them that they are not alone and we can get them to help they need.

As soon as we get someone off the streets, sadly, there's always another person starting their homeless journey. I recently found 5 homeless people in one day and sourced them accommodation. That was a busy day for us but certainly a rewarding one to know that they did not have to sleep on the street again that night.

We often hear that homelessness is self-inflicted, but in my own experience, the reality is far more complex.

Yesterday, we found a client rough sleeping and was told how he had been taken advantage of and got pushed out his council property by 'friends'. He was very vulnerable mentally, so we found him alternative accommodation and referred him to our mental health nurse.

I am motivated to go to work every day because if we can help even a single person off the streets, then it is a job worth doing."



If you're concerned about someone sleeping rough, please send an alert on streetlink.org.uk, or call 0300 500 0914



CLAIRE'S STORY

After decades of support from NOAH, Claire finally confronted her deepest traumas and long-term chaotic lifestyle by entering a rehabilitation centre. Over 5 years later, Claire returned to NOAH to tell us about her remarkable new life. A truly extraordinary story of why we will never give up on anyone...

Claire was born in Luton during the 60's, after her parents emigrated to England from Dublin. She experienced a difficult childhood and a number of other significant traumas which resulted in her using NOAH services from the 1990's onwards.

In 2013, her partner was violently attacked and suffered severe head injuries which put him on life support. Claire became very angry and began drinking more heavily, as well as taking heroin again.

She was eventually admitted to the mental health ward at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital. NOAH hosted a multi-agency meeting with a range of partner agencies including the GP, Police, Safeguarding, ASB, Housing and Drug and Alcohol team to see what support could be offered, including the provision of some respite accommodation.

Due to drinking heavily and refusing to access any help, Claire's heating was turned off as the engineers had been unable to access her home to complete gas safety checks. Annette from NOAH negotiated with her to let them in so this could be restored.

The next week Claire was offered time in a hotel so maintenance could be carried out in her flat. She was abusive to hotel staff and smashed bottles of vodka in the reception.

In May 2014, she went to prison for several months due to assaults on emergency workers. On her release date NOAH staff went to help her get back to her home but she said that she wanted to smoke crack and sleep out that night.

In the September of the same year, NOAH staff helped Claire manage to get her benefits reinstated so that her rent would be paid and so she had money for food, it was at this time when her partner sadly passed away.

During the winter, Claire came to the NOAH Welfare Centre for lunch. She was upset, angry and intoxicated. She was reminded that lunch service was closing in 5 minutes and became threatening to staff.

The following week she got into an altercation with another client and threw a cup of hot coffee in their face. The police arrived to remove her and she was spitting at them and swearing, she then received a 2 week exclusion from the NOAH Welfare Centre due to the risks to staff and clients being too high.

In January 2015, NOAH staff attended her court hearing to support her, she came and had a good conversation with the NOAH management and re-engaged with help.

In summer of 2016, Claire was taken to court again and this time the judge offered her the chance of rehabilitation or prison, she decided to go to a rehabilitation centre.

From this point onwards NOAH staff received fleeting information from the Luton drug and alcohol team to let us know that Claire was doing well and had stayed in rehabilitation and was engaged with the treatment.

We didn't hear from her until 2021 when she got in touch to ask to come and visit. She came to NOAH and sat down in front of the NOAH staff team.

She told us that she had not taken any drugs or alcohol for 5 years. She had been on a painful journey of recovery.

She explained about the difficulty she had at home and the abuse she suffered as a child. We talked about what life had been like in Luton as an adult and the chaos and pain that she had lived through.

She had reflected on the devastation and damage that she had caused on other people's lives, this had made her very sad to have been estranged from her own children for such a long time.

The challenge for her to recover had been hard, the temptation to always blame others and avoid responsibility had been tough. She explained that it was in moments such as her exclusion from NOAH for violence and abuse which forced her to confront reality and take big decisions.

She asked for forgiveness and explained that she was now at peace. It was an incredible meeting and one that changed the perspective and hope of all NOAH staff for supporting other clients in future who are currently leading long-term chaotic lifestyles.

In December 2021, on Boxing Day Claire and her friend came to Luton to volunteer and serve food in the NOAH kitchen to our clients.

She updated us that she was working as a Support Worker at the Rehabilitation Centre and had just been promoted to Team Leader, helping people on their own journeys of recovery."

***Names have been changed and a stock image has been used for confidentiality.**



"It is a joy to see Claire* realising her own potential and helping others through

her own lived experience. At NOAH, we never give up on anyone and Claire is a prime example of why we continue to do what we do."

- PAUL PROSSER, HEAD OF WELFARE SERVICES

CUSTOMER Spotlight

WE LOVE OUR SHOP SUPPORTERS!



Lewsey Farm

This pup at our Lewsey Farm shop looks paw-fect in her new knitted jumper!

Our amazing volunteer Sonia knitted dog jumpers to sell the shop and this pup was her very first canine customer!

High Town

"J'adore NOAH!"

This lovely lady lives in France and always makes sure she visits our High Town shop every time she comes back to the UK! She told us it's her favourite charity shop to visit and absolutely loves the team.



**VOLUNTEERS
URGENTLY NEEDED!**



**Van Drivers
Delivery Assistants
Stock Sorters**

To apply, visit
noahenterprise.org/volunteer-form



WE NEED YOUR PRE-LOVED GOODS!

Donate your pre-loved goods to NOAH Enterprise and make a huge difference to homeless people in your community!

Please drop your donations at one of our Luton-based charity shops:

HIGH TOWN SHOP
01582 736 751
20-22 Hightown Rd.
Luton
LU2 0DD

LEWSEY FARM SHOP
01582 662 773
St Dominics Sq,
Tomlinson Ave.
Luton LU4 0UN



MOST NEEDED: **MENSWEAR | SHOES | WOMENSWEAR | BRIC-A-BRAC | TOYS**

JOB CLUB SUCCESS

A NEW START FOR SHAPY



I was referred to the NOAH Academy Job Club from the Job Centre and was very nervous and shy when I first started. This didn't last long because the people in job club were friendly and I soon felt at ease.

At Job Club, we applied for many roles and Nicky helped me to fill in long application forms, making things easier. I was applying for a midday supervisor role but there was a lot of competition. I got a couple of interviews and we worked hard on interview practice.

For one interview I had to sing a song or read a book so Nicky taught me "Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes"....it was fun, I definitely smiled that day although I didn't get the job.

At the same time as attending Job Club, I also joined NOAH's Sewing Club and ESOL Course. It helped me be creative, as well as practice my English speaking with other learners.

I decided to switch job search directions and immediately got an interview to be a passenger assistant the day after I applied. I went to the interview and the very next day they offered me the job. I was so happy as I had begun to think no-one wanted me.

Job Club and Sewing Club both improved my confidence, self-esteem and motivation. Without NOAH I would still be at home wondering what to do next and worrying about how I could help myself.

My English has improved so much, I am now a different person.

I am happier now than I have been in a very long time and that is down to help from NOAH. Thank you!"

COURSE TIMETABLE AVAILABLE NOW

View our latest Course Timetable for May - July [here](http://noahenterprise.org/academy) or visit our website at noahenterprise.org/academy





Continued from front page.

Eligible adults can also access a range of ESOL courses, providing non-native English speakers with essential language skills to better integrate in the community.

The grand opening welcomed attendees from NOAH Enterprise and SMART CJS, as well as representatives from Luton Borough Council, who enjoyed a tour of the new premises and refreshments.

The official opening was marked with a ribbon cutting from SMART CEO Anita McCallum.

Find the NOAH Academy Bedford, at **12 Prebend Street, Bedford, MK40 1QW.**

To book an appointment call **01234 863123**, or email academy@noahenterprise.org.



Follow us!

@thenoahacademy

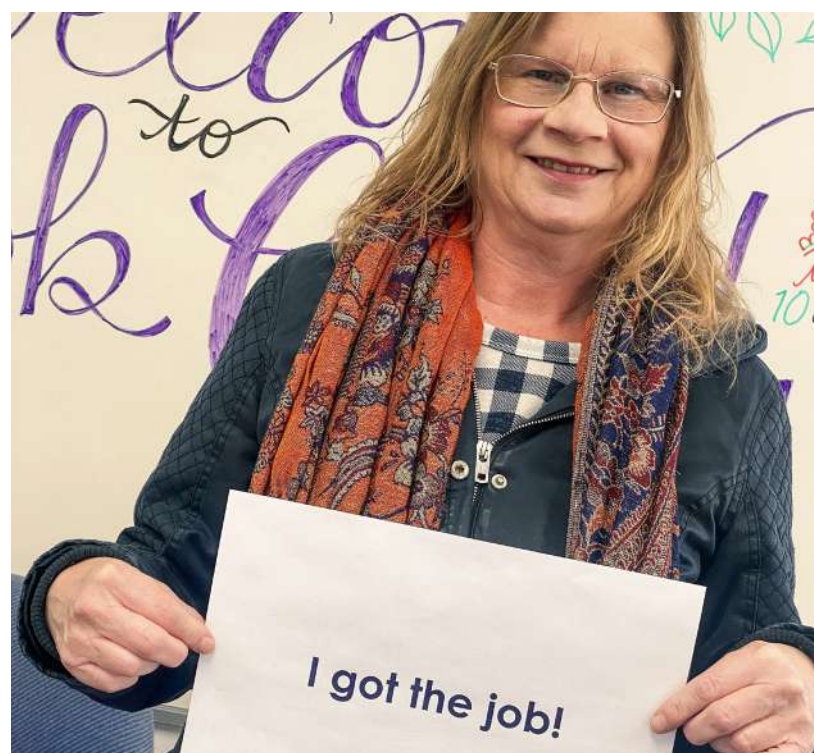
@thenoahacademy

JOB CLUBS

Are you unemployed?

The right job for you is out there and we can help you find it! Our job clubs are open to anyone who is unemployed and living in Luton & Bedfordshire.

For more information, call 01582 319777.



Job Club helped Tracy find a new job in a bakery! Wishing you all the best in your new role!

40%

of our Job Club clients leave us having found permanent employment!

WHAT'S ON!

COURSES AT THE ACADEMY

LUTON



SEW MINDFUL

Learn or practice hand-sewing and other crafts, to enhance your mindfulness through creativity.

DIY SKILLS

Delve into basic electrical, plumbing and carpentry skills, experiment with a range of maintenance techniques with the support from a highly experienced multi trades tutor.

DIGITAL LEARNING FOR BEGINNERS

Learn how to create documents using Microsoft Word, as well as how to use the internet and send/receive emails.

SEW CONFIDENT WITH ESOL

Create a range of hand-sewn and machine-sewn crafts whilst building on your confidence and basic English skills in a supportive and creative environment.

GROW CONFIDENT WITH ESOL

Spend time outside in the fresh air and engage with nature to improve your mental health and wellbeing, whilst practising your English speaking.

BEDFORD & CENTRAL BEDS

STAYING WELL (ONLINE)

Discover new strategies and techniques via Zoom, helping to build resilience to stress, and fight symptoms of anxiety and depression.

COMPUTER SKILLS FOR BEGINNERS

Learn how to create documents using Microsoft Word, as well as how to use the internet and send/receive emails.

ENGLISH FOR BEGINNERS

A face to face class for Entry level ESOL students. Ideal for those who need a classroom environment as opposed to online.

ESOL (ONLINE)

This pre-entry/entry level 1 course will help you to develop your use of English in a range of everyday situations.

For more information or to book, call 01582 756152.

HELPING LUTON'S YOUNG PEOPLE BUILD A BETTER FUTURE



The NOAH Academy in Luton held it's biggest ever mock-interviews session for young people last month.

To complete their 'Routes to Employment' course, our young learners had the opportunity to practice typical interview questions in a non-pressurised environment with local volunteer professionals and employers.

We especially loved hearing the passion from our learners about their ambitions for their future employment, as well as the volunteers tailored guidance and advice for each learner.

We couldn't have asked for a more caring and inspiring group of volunteers.

At the end of the interviews, each learner had the opportunity to share their learnings with the group. It was fantastic to see how their self-belief had grown throughout the day.

This was our largest session yet and it would not have been possible if it wasn't for kindness of our volunteer professionals.

Huge thanks to: Tannith (Savills), Steven (Urban & Rural MK), Matt (Money & Pensions Service), Sirah & James (Enterprise), Broadcaster Amy Nickell, Luke (Swift Swimmers), Neya (Luton Sixth Form College), Oladele (Careers You Love), Peter (Careers in Export), Nasrin and Ibrar (Nationwide Building Society), Jo, and Ian (Digital Execs).

Want to volunteer at our next mock-interview session? Email academy@noahenterprise.org.



ABOUT OUR CHARITY

NOAH is a Bedfordshire-based charity which works with people experiencing homelessness, poverty and other disadvantages. We encourage our clients to make positive changes in their life by providing care and advice services, employment and wellbeing workshops, and opportunities for employment.

We are truly driven by our values of **Care, Compassion, and Commitment**, which have their roots in Saint Vincent de Paul, whose life was the inspiration behind the founding of NOAH.



Photography by Mike Stone

OUR SERVICES

STREET OUTREACH

NOAH Outreach Team supports individuals who are sleeping rough throughout Luton and Central Bedfordshire. The aim is to help people off the street, to engage with the wider range of NOAH's services, and to get them into safe accommodation.

WELFARE CENTRE

Our Luton-based Welfare Centre supports the most vulnerable people with space and reassurance to talk through their problems, when there is no where else to turn. Facilities include: daily meals, showers, laundry service, provision of clothing, a GP or nurse surgery, a mobile dentistry, accommodation search, and linkage to specialist agencies e.g. addiction counselling.

TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT ACADEMY

NOAH Academies seek to address poverty by helping people to realise their full potential. We provide **free** skills training courses and employment support across Luton, Bedford and Central Bedfordshire, for people who are unemployed or on a low income.



WAYS TO HELP

DONATE

To make a financial donation please visit:
www.justgiving.com/noahenterprise.

FUNDRAISE

If you'd like to organise a fundraiser in aid of NOAH, please contact
lisa.seccombe@noahenterprise.org.

VOLUNTEER

Can you, as an individual, group or company, spare a few hours a month? Visit noahenterprise.org/volunteer-form for a full list of opportunities.



CONTACT NOAH

WELFARE CENTRE

01582 728 416
141 Park St
Luton
LU1 3HG

ACADEMY (LUTON)

01582 726 152
20-22 Hightown Rd
Luton
LU2 0DD

ACADEMY (BEDFORD)

01234 863 123
12 Prebend St
Bedford
MK40 1QW

HIGH TOWN SHOP

01582 736 751
20-22 Hightown Rd
Luton
LU2 0DD

LEWSEY FARM SHOP

01582 662 773
St Dominics Sq
Tomlinson Ave
Luton LU4 0UN