

# Southampton Churches Winter Shelter Handbook 2020

(13.9.2019 version)

## **Overall Objective:**

- To open 7 church buildings to accommodate homeless adults sleeping rough for one night a week for 4 weeks on a rolling night by night program for January 2020. This scheme is a response to the increased number of homeless adults sleeping rough in the city of Southampton within an overarching vision of 'A city where no-one needs to sleep rough or beg' and is our practical outworking of God's love.

## **Context:**

- This visionary initiative came about following increased concerns for the safety of those sleeping on the streets in the harshest weather conditions in our locality. Southampton Churches Winter Shelter proposes to contribute to the work of other relevant agencies by the provision of overnight accommodation and support to those who find themselves in this situation during the coldest winter months.

## **Proposal:**

- Southampton Churches Winter Shelter requires venues to provide accommodation for up to 12 homeless adults (guests) for 4 weeks in January 2020.
- Each of the homeless adults will have been assessed and referred by The Homeless Prevention Team to previously agreed criteria.
- The venue opens at 7:30pm (for registration) until 8am the following morning (leave the venue).
- Each venue will be run by a team of their own volunteers and/or predominantly from other Southampton churches.

- The service will include a cooked evening meal and light breakfast, usually prepared on site.
- Daily laundering of bedding by each venue hosts.
- Arrangements will be made to transport the beds and associated bedding etc. daily between venues so that each venue does not need to provide storage.
- Training of volunteers will be provided by Society of Saint James (SSJ) and criminal records checks may be required for key personnel.
- Adopt a risk managed approach to the delivery of the project.
- Monitor, evaluate and report our effectiveness in achieving our goals.
- (Define and ensure transparency about the roles, functions, responsibilities and accountabilities between the various agencies involved in the delivery of this project to ensure that objectives can be realistically met, and risk managed).

#### **Request to churches in respect of each participating venue:**

- Be willing to offer your building for 4 nights from Monday 6th January 2020 to Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020.
- Be willing to recruit a volunteer team to host guests at their venue.
- To meet or fund (or access suitable alternative provision) the cost of the meals for those 4 nights, estimated to not exceed £350.00 (2019 costs) in total. This has been estimated on the basis of approximately 18 covers per evening meal (including 6 volunteers) and a minimum 12 covers for breakfast.
- Promote and encourage discussion about this scheme in the wider church family, with a view to growing an interest in volunteering and long-term commitment.

#### **Aims:**

- Provide safe accommodation and food to the referred guests in each night shelter during an agreed winter period.
- To assist in improving our guests' long-term situation in terms of their physical and spiritual needs.
- To offer generous hospitality which includes no less than a warm welcome, a hot meal, comfortable and warm bedding.

## Values:

- **Provision of a safe place and environment for vulnerable adults**
- **Respect and dignity**- for all people involved including guests, volunteers, staff, and any other visitors, at all times and at all places.
- **Equality** – there is to be no discriminatory behaviour from either guests or volunteers. Discriminatory behaviour and attitude will result in individuals being asked to leave.
- **Authenticity** – in what we do by upholding Christian values.
- **Generosity** – of spirit and actions.
- **Hospitality** – given with love and a generous heart.
- **Accountability** – making sure we are accountable and transparent in our actions at all times.

## 1. Practical implementation:

- The Shelter will provide free accommodation for up to 12 homeless adults for 4 weeks.
- The accommodation will be provided in a different church each night of the week.
- Each venue will be run by a team of volunteers sourced by churches in Southampton.
- Each venue will be overseen by a Venue Co-ordinator who will run their particular teams.
- Guests will receive an evening meal and light breakfast, usually prepared on site by volunteers.
- Volunteers will eat with the guests and spend time with them after the evening meal, offering opportunity to socialise.
- Volunteer teams may consist of members from the individual church's congregation and/or community members of any faith and none.

## **2. Referrals:**

- Referrals will be exclusively managed by the Referral Agency, namely Homeless Prevention Team, which continues to offer a range of services all year round to rough sleepers in the city of Southampton.
- All guests will be exclusively risk assessed by the Referral Agency and then where suitable allocated access into Southampton Churches Winter Shelter.
- Each day a guest list will be sent via email to the Venue Co-ordinator by 4pm, from the Referral Agency.
- The Referral Agency will also be actively helping the guests with longer term accommodation solutions.

## **3. Safeguarding and other terms of reference:**

Safeguarding and risk assessment training will be provided by SSJ prior to the opening of the night shelter.

Additionally, SSJ will provide support with an initial venue inspection and work alongside the Venue Co-ordinators to ensure comparable standards in all venues. SSJ will also provide ongoing support and advice for Venue Co-ordinators and Shift leaders regarding Safeguarding procedures.

The procedures and guidelines for Southampton Churches Winter Shelter will be agreed with SSJ to ensure that the objectives of the project will be met.

Guests who are unable to meet the set criteria of Southampton Churches Winter Shelter guidelines will be denied further accommodation and any volunteers failing to comply with the policies and procedures will be asked not to remain in the program. (See pages 9-14 below).

The initiative reserves the right to exclude any guest, volunteer or visitor from participation in the project. Written reasons will be provided in each case. A complaints and grievance procedure will be developed to allow any individual to access a transparent process.

Overall responsibility for the initiative will lie with the Steering Team. All communications regarding the smooth running of the initiative should be directed to the Steering Team.

In addition to coordinating the Shift Leaders and other volunteers and managing the daily issues which arise, the Venue Co-ordinators will maintain weekly records on actions, progress, concerns and performance and report to the Steering Team within one month of the completion of the project in each year the project is run. The Steering Team will review the report with a mind to the improvement of the future performance of the project.

An Incident Logbook will be maintained and passed on to each new shift leader and onto the next venue.

#### **4. Volunteers:**

Volunteers should have a heart for the marginalised, poor and needy and a willingness to be challenged and changed. Volunteers should also have a sensitivity to issues relating to homelessness, including mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse. Be friendly and make guests feel warmly welcomed.

Volunteers will agree with and abide by all guidelines and policy of the project and to carry out the tasks they are asked to do by the Venue co-ordinator or Shift leaders. It is important that they work well as a team. Decisions made by the Venue co-ordinator and Shift Leaders must not be questioned in front of the guests; any questions should be raised with the appropriate person in private and recorded in the Incident Logbook provided.

All volunteers should be reminded under Health & Safety regulations of their responsibilities for the safety of themselves as well as others.

#### **5. Shift Leaders:**

Shift Leaders will be responsible for:

1. The running of the shelter on a shift-by-shift basis.

2. Briefing volunteers during the shift.
3. Making critical decisions during the shift or contacting the Venue Co-ordinator for support.
4. Emergency calls must always be authorised by the Shift Leader.

## **6. Shift outline and tasks:**

### **Arrivals & Supper Shift - 6:30-10pm (Minimum 4 volunteers excluding chef)**

- Arrive at the venue by 6:30pm.
- Attend briefing and prayers with Shift Leader.
- Help set up beds and sleeping area.
- Greet guests as they are registered for the night.
- Help settle guests into the venue, showing new guests around.
- Serve food and beverages, and to eat with guests.
- Clear the meal away (Chef(s) may leave at this point – Minimum Volunteers 4 at all times).
- Cigarette breaks are not limited but smoking is not allowed in publicly accessible buildings including church premises and therefore smoking must only take place in a designated safe area and where volunteers can maintain a visual on guests.
- Enjoy building relationships with guests throughout the evening

### **Kitchen Shift – times vary depending on meal(s)**

- Prepare and serve the food
- Clear away and leave once duties are completed

### **Overnight Shift - 9:45pm-6:45am (2 Male: 2 Female)**

- Arrive at the venue for 9:45pm.
- Attending briefing with Shift Leader prior to hand over.
- Smoking restrictions as above, furthermore no smoking after 11pm.
- Prepare to sleep.
- Lights out 11pm.

### **Breakfast Shift - 6:30-8:30am**

- Arrive at the venue by 6:30am.
- Attend briefing with Shift Leader.
- Help get the refreshments ready.
- Wake guests 7am.
- Light refreshments will be served, and the guests encouraged to attend SSJ Day Services.
- Smoking restrictions as above.
- Ensure guests leave the venue promptly by 8am.
- Clear and tidy up venue for regular use.

### **7. Leaving the night shelter:**

There is a strict 1-metre rule to Southampton Churches Winter Shelter. If a guest leaves the church after check-in they are not re-admitted to the venue that night with the exception of smoking in the designated safe area.

A guest must be allowed to leave if they wish to do so. It must be explained though that they will not be allowed back in that night and will need to return to their referrer if they wish to come back the following night.

Bedding must not be taken out of the Shelter.

### **8. Working with guests:**

It is necessary to establish a framework of boundaries, for the safety of both guests and volunteers. It is important that we respect the wishes of our guests regarding the care we give them. It is highly important that we resist the temptation to step in and try to resolve their problems.

Showing kindness, love and compassion is exactly what we should do. We should aim to model how life could and should be.

## **9. Listening:**

One of the most important things we can offer our guests is a listening ear. Keep it simple and try to avoid controversial topics. You are allowed to talk about your faith particularly when initiated by our guests but please be respectful of other people's beliefs at all times.

We must be aware of our own attitudes and use of language. We must not be abusive, contemptuous, flippant, authoritarian, or judgemental. Where possible, do not argue with guests. It is important that our manner towards them is not critical and must always be respectful. This helps our guests to feel that they are in a safe place. When we are respectful of them, they are more likely to pay attention to what we say and be respectful in turn.

All serious misconduct will not be tolerated and shall be reported to and recorded by the Shift Leader or Venue Co-ordinator in the Incident Logbook. In a situation where there is a suspicion that a guest has done anything illegal or is in breach of these guidelines, the Venue Co-ordinator or Shift Leader will take a decision as to whether it is appropriate to make a report to the police or to simply record the incident in the Incident Logbook.

Volunteers must not make promises to guests. It is unhelpful in managing the expectations of the overall guest group and at worst broken promises undermine trust.

Where possible, guests will be helped to get in touch with the relevant support agencies and organisations that can help them sort out their problems on a longer-term basis.

Volunteers are strongly advised not to share any personal details with the guests.

## **10. Confidentiality:**

We must respect confidentiality at all times within the confines of the initiative. Information given to a volunteer by a guest can be shared with other volunteers where appropriate and relevant to the delivery of a safe service. However, outside agencies may

only become privy to confidences with the agreement of the guest or where the safety of volunteers and other guests is compromised or at risk. This is to be recorded in the Incident Logbook and gone through the appropriate channels of Venue Coordinator and Shift Leader.

## **11. Rules – For Guests**

- Guests will abide by rules for guests which will be managed by the Referral Agency as part of their assessment.
- Anyone arriving showing signs of aggressive, or antisocial behaviour, regardless of whether they are under an influence, will not be allowed to enter the Shelter.

### **11.1 Timings:**

- Guests will not be admitted before 7:30pm. Guests arriving after 8pm or leaving early will require prior arrangement with the Referral Agency and the Venue Coordinator or Shift Leader.
- Shift Leaders must be informed of any such decisions in advance.
- Lights out is at 11pm.
- Disruptive behaviour in the night will be recorded in the Incident Logbook.

### **11.2 Warning Cards:**

#### **General Principles**

Every effort will be made to defuse potentially violent situation, but physical or implied violence and threatening behaviour will not be tolerated amongst guests or volunteers. In addition, the possession, use or threatened use of any weapon will not be tolerated.

Southampton Churches Winter Shelter will seek to ensure that there is no discrimination in service provision and delivery. All guests will be treated with dignity. Moreover, we do not accept our guests encountering any such discrimination while in our care, whether from our staff, from other guests, from visitors, or from the staff of any of the external services we use. We therefore commit ourselves to investigating any allegations made, using our established complaints and grievance procedures. Wherever possible, we will

work for reconciliation between the people involved, but our first concern will be for the welfare of our guests. We will tolerate neither the humiliation of discrimination nor the injustice of false allegations.

We will endeavour to ensure that our service responds appropriately to the needs of all our guests. We recognise that this will involve careful monitoring of the use made of our service and may result in the development of positive action programmes to target the needs of specific groups within those that access our shelter.

Warning cards can be issued by the Venue Coordinator and/or shift leader. A shift leader may decide to ban a guest from the shelter at the time of offence or the following morning depending on how settled into the premises the guests in question is and at what stage of the evening the offence occurs. It may also be deemed more disruptive and potentially irresponsible to remove the person from the church that night, depending on the state they are in at that time and the weather conditions outside (see below \*).

For each infringement of the rules a yellow card warning will be issued, which will result in exclusion from the shelter for a minimum of one night. A further incident will result in a red card, which will mean a permanent ban from the shelter for the rest of the season.

A serious infringement of the rules will result in an immediate red card and a permanent ban for the rest of the season.

Venue Coordinator and/or Shift leaders may issue red or yellow cards to guests when infringements of rules occur, and this will result in exclusion.

**Yellow Card** - exclusion for one night (minimum).

**Red Card** - A further incident or a serious incident will be a red card offence and result in permanent exclusion from the shelter for the season.

It is discretionary to the Shift leader as to whether the ban starts there and then, or the following morning (see above \*).

Issuing of yellow/red card must be recorded in the Incident Logbook.

### **11.3 No illegal Drugs:**

No drugs are allowed. Guests carrying will be asked to take them out and dispose of them appropriately and then return to the shelter. Alternatively, drugs may be handed over, although this is done with the understanding that we are not permitted to return them. The drugs will then be disposed of.

If a guest is found with illegal drugs on them the Shift leader must be notified, as this is a red card offence.

### **11.4 No alcohol on site:**

Alcohol can be checked in and stored overnight and returned to the guest in the morning.

If it is thought that a guest may be trying to smuggle something in, they can be asked to empty their pockets, or any baggage. If something not permissible is found the Shift Leader should be notified, as this is a yellow card offence.

**\*\*Under no circumstances is it allowable to frisk a guest or search their bags\*\*.**

### **11.5 No offensive weapons:**

Weapons must be handed over to the Venue Coordinator/Shift leaders. It is a red card offence to possess an illegal weapon in the shelter. Anyone found with an illegal weapon will be reported to the Shift leader who in turn must report this to the police immediately and the offending item handed over to the police.

For example, a knife with a blade that does not fold or is longer than 3-inches, is an illegal weapon.

### **11.6 No smoking in the shelter buildings:**

Smoking in premises with public access is prohibited by law. Therefore, smoking in any of the venues outside of the designated safe area is an offence under Health and Safety regulations, and is a yellow card offence.

Smoking is allowed only in pre-designated safe areas at each venue. Guests requesting to smoke must be accompanied when leaving the building to the designated safe area.

### **11.7 No anti-social behaviour:**

The shelter is to be maintained as a place of safety and comfort for all.

When facing with a challenging and difficult situation arises and/or becomes violent or aggressive, volunteers are to back off and step away.

To help diffuse the situation, stay calm, speak gently and clearly, and all attempts must be made to avoid being drawn into it further. All incidences must be reported to the Venue Coordinator/Shift Leader.

Never respond aggressively at any time nor underestimate potential threat/violence. For the safety of all at the venue, the Venue Coordinator/Shift Leader must decide whether to inform the police

A yellow card may be issued by the Shift Leader when infringement occurs.

All physical violence is a red card offence and the Venue Coordinator/Shift Leader must be informed and recorded in the Incident Logbook.

### **11.8 Guests are not allowed in Prohibited areas of all venues**

All kitchens are prohibited area

Other areas in venues may also exclude guests. If a guest attempts to enter the kitchen, they are to be encouraged to return to a room that is in use for that specific shelter.

Shift Leader should be made aware of any attempts to enter other prohibited areas and a careful eye kept over the individual.

Any attempt to enter prohibited areas must be recorded in the Incident Logbook.

### **11.9 Privacy of Guests**

#### **Sleeping quarters are strictly gender segregated.**

The shelter must remain to be a place of safety for guests. To ensure safety of all guests no guest is permitted to enter the sleeping quarters of the opposite gender.

Guests must be given suitable privacy for undressing and changing.

### **11.10 Vacating the Shelter**

Guests must leave by 8am with as little disturbance as possible.

All good effort must be made so that neighbours are not disturbed from their usual routines.

### **11.11 Storing Personal Items**

Guests must not leave personal items with bedding. The shelter cannot be responsible for any personal belongings left by individuals.

All items of the bedding remain property of the Southampton Churches Winter Shelter and not to be taken away from the venue by guests.

Any personal item left with or in bedding will be removed by the Venue Co-ordinator/ Shift Leader. All items left and removed must be recorded in the Incident Logbook.

## **12. Rules - For Volunteers**

- A female volunteer is required at each shift where there is a female guest.
- Where possible 2 men and 2 women volunteers need to be on a rota overnight when there are both male and female guests.
- Volunteers must not give money to guests. Volunteers who break this rule will be asked to stand down from their duties immediately.
- Entertainment can be provided by the shelter e.g. Board games, puzzles. However, these must not be the guests own possession. Entertainment should reduce the risk of disputes between guests, where this is not the case consult Venue Co-ordinator and/or Shift Leader.
- Volunteers are not permitted to take any guests possessions for any reason, including laundering.
- Volunteers cannot offer lifts or pay for taxi fares.
- Volunteers have signed up only to take on responsibility for roles within the shelter.

## **13. Health and Safety:**

It is a legal requirement that those providing food are able to give notification of all potential allergens. A well-displayed notice of information can also be made available as notification for guests.

The kitchen and toilet must be kept clean and disinfected as necessary.

## **14. Sharps**

Never put your hands in bags, bins or sleeping bags, as this may expose you to harm from hidden sharps, such as razors and needles. Rubber gloves are inadequate protection for the intentional or unintentional handling of sharps.

When dealing with all injuries rubber gloves must be worn. However, if possible, please encourage guests to deal with minor injuries themselves.

Each venue must carry a first-aid kit; this is a Health and Safety requirement. All volunteers should know where this is kept.

A record must be kept in the Incident Logbook of all accidents, injuries, discovery of needles and drugs.