

Open Church Project

In conjunction with

The Society of St James

Overall Objective:

To open 7 Church Buildings to accommodate rough sleepers for 4 weeks on a rolling night by night program for winter 2017. This is a pilot scheme in response to the increased number of rough sleepers in Portsmouth City, and is our practical outworking of the love of God.

Context:

The church is concerned about the safety of those sleeping on the streets in the harshest weather conditions. Therefore, the leadership of both St. Simon's and St. Jude's church have explored the possibility of running a 7 church model of winter accommodation for rough sleepers.

After an encouraging conversation with city councillors and the Society of St James (SSJ), who run 'Homeless Day Services' on Kingston Road (formerly Central Point), the leadership of this proposal visited an up-and-running project in Horsham, which for a number of years have facilitated a similar and sustainable model.

Proposal:

- An open Church building will provide free accommodation for up to 10 homeless people for 4 weeks (28 days) over the winter of 2017/18, as a pilot scheme with the potential for further expansion in following years.
- The accommodation will be provided in a different church each night of the week from 7:30pm (for registration) to 8am (leave Church building).
- Each venue is therefore only involved for 4 nights (during the pilot scheme).
- Each venue will be run by a team of their own volunteers and/ or from other Portsmouth churches.

- The venue will be open for Guests who will receive an evening meal, usually cooked on site by volunteers, and light refreshments for breakfast (e.g. Cup of Tea or coffee, slice of toast).

Church Leadership:

- Be willing to offer your building for 4 nights during on the same night of the week during: *Monday 29th January 2018 to Sunday 25th February 2018.*
- Be willing to recruit a team to host guests at their venue.
- Underwrite the cost of the meals for those 4 nights estimated to be less than £400.00 (£4.00 per head – per night) this figure includes catering costs for the volunteers serving in the project.
- St Jude's and St Simons Church have underwritten the cost of providing 10 portable beds for the scheme. Each venues in the project is to provide clean bedding for their guests at their own expense.
- Encourage the conversation about this scheme to flourish in the wider church family, in a hope to create interest and entice volunteers to sign up for training and then commitment.

Aims:

- Affect permanent changes in the lives of many people.
- Provide safe, emergency accommodation and food to the rough sleepers in each night shelter.
- To assist in improving our guests' long-term situation in view of their physical and spiritual needs.
- To offer a warm welcome, a hot meal, comfortable and warm bedding.

Values:

- Respect for all people, 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 to our guests and each other at all times.

1. Practical implementation:

- The Shelter will provide free accommodation for up to 10 homeless people for 4 weeks (28 days), as a pilot scheme initially in 2017.
- The accommodation will be provided in a different church each night of the week.
- Each venue will be required to have access to a kitchen for food preparation, facilitate separate sleeping areas for male and female, and at least two toilets. (Washing facilities such as a shower are desirable but not essential)
- Each venue will be run by a team of volunteers and/ or other churches in Portsmouth.
- Each venue will be overseen by a co-ordinator, who will run their own team of volunteers.
- Guests will receive an evening meal, usually cooked on site by volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to eat with the guests and spend time with them after the meal, when a variety of activities may be offered.
- Volunteer teams may consist of members from the individual churches congregation and/or community members of any faith and none.

2. Referrals:

- Referrals will be managed by the Hampshire and Portsmouth based charity The Society of St James' (SSJ). SSJ continues to work with the rough sleepers in the Portsmouth Diocese.
- Guests will be offered accommodation where they are considered not to pose a risk to volunteers or other guests.
- All referrals will be via the outreach worker for SSJ, who will also help guests to move on towards more permanent accommodation.

3. Safeguarding and other terms of reference:

The procedures and guidelines will be overseen by SSJ. Guests who are unable to meet the set criteria of these guidelines will be denied further accommodation and any volunteers not following them will be asked not to remain in the program.

Overall responsibility for the Shelter will lie with Rev Adam Denley.

All communications regarding the running of the Shelter, should be directed to:
Adam Denley and Lorna Sandland.

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 all guidelines and policy of the Shelter and to carry out the tasks you are asked to do by the Team Leader or Church Co-ordinator. It is important that we work well as a team. Decisions made by the Team Leader, Church Co-ordinator or Overall Co-ordinator must not be questioned in front of the guests; any questions should be raised with the appropriate person in private and noted in the log book.

5. Team Leaders:

Team 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 Overall persons in charge for support.
4. Emergency calls must always be authorised by the Team Leader.

6. Shift outline and tasks:

Evening shift 6:15-10pm – (Minimum 5)

- Arrive at the venue by 6:15pm.
- Attend briefing and prayers with Team 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 a meal, including some food preparation, and eat with guests.
- Clear the meal away (Chef(s) may leave at this point – Minimum Volunteers 4 at all times).
- Accompany guests outside to smoke as necessary.
- Play games, do jigsaws, or be in conversation with guests.

Overnight 9:30pm-6:45am (2 Male: 2 Female)

- Arrive at the venue for 9:30pm.
- Attending briefing with Team Leader.
- Accompany guests outside to smoke as necessary, before lights out at 11pm.
- Prepare to sleep.
- Lights out 11pm.

Breakfast Shift 6:30-8:30am

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

7. Leaving the shelter:

There is a strict 1-meter rule to this shelter. If a guest leaves the Shelter after check in they are not re-admitted to the Shelter that night.

**This includes going out for a cigarette after lights out.*

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 but please be respectful of other people's beliefs.

We must be aware of our own attitudes and use of language. We seek to 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.

We must avoid lecturing guests on morals as well. However, nor should we turn a blind eye to misconduct in every case all such incidents need to be reported to the Team Leader and recorded in the log book. We may suspect that a guest has done something illegal, or that we disapprove of in some way. It is not necessarily the case that we need to call the police every time this happens, this is to be recorded and discussed with team leader and if necessary reported to the overall leader.

It is best not to make promises; people can feel very let down by promises not kept. Broken promises can undermine trust.

Please do not make arrangements with a guest outside the Shelter.

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 must try not to take on too much nor give away any personal details.

10. Confidentiality:

We must respect confidentiality at all times in the Shelter. Information given to a volunteer by a guest can be shared with other volunteers. However, outside agencies may only become privy to confidences with the agreement of the guest. Unless the safety of volunteers and other guests is compromised or at risk. This is to be noted in the log book and gone through the appropriate channels of team leader and overall leader.

11. Rules - For Guests:

- Guests will agree to the terms of a 'Guest Agreement'. They are admitted on the understanding that they agree with the agreement that they have signed.
- If someone is believed to be intoxicated, they are admitted at the discretion of the Team Leader.
- 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 allowed to arrive before 7pm, or after 7:30pm without prior arrangement with SSJ and the overall persons in charge.
- Team leaders must be informed of any such decisions in advance.
- Volunteers are not expected to let guests come and go through the night, except in situations where employment might be affected.
- Lights out is at 11pm.
- Restlessness in the night should be recorded in the log file.

11.2 Warning Cards:

Team Leaders along with Overall leader 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 of the shelter.

It is discretionary to the Team Leader as to whether the ban starts there and then, or the following morning.

11.3 No illegal Drugs:

No drugs are allowed. People carrying will be asked to take them out and deal with 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 Team 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. Under no circumstances is it allowable to frisk a guest, or search their bags. 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 Team Leader should be notified, as this is a yellow card offence.

11.5 No offensive weapons:

Weapons must be given in. This request can be made of a guest who is thought to be carrying a weapon.

If it is a knife with a blade that does not fold or is longer than 3 inches we are unable to return it because it is an illegal weapon and it will be given to the police. If someone is found with an illegal weapon the Team Leader must be informed and the police called immediately. This is a red card offence.

11.6 No smoking in the shelter buildings:

Smoking is not allowed by law in any of the venues and is a yellow card offence. Guests must be accompanied when leaving the building to smoke.

11.7 No anti-social behaviour:

The Shelter is to be maintained as a place of safety and comfort for all guests. A yellow card may be issued when needed, by the Team Leader and the overall person in charge notified. Physical abuse is a red card offence and the Team leader must be informed.

11.8 Guests are not allowed in the kitchen areas:

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. Team Leader should be made aware, so that it can be noted and a more careful eye kept over the individual. A record should be kept in the log file.

Male guests may not go into the female sleeping quarters.

As the Shelter needs to be a place of safety and some women may feel vulnerable around men. Sleeping quarters will be divided between men and women.

11.9 Vacating the Shelter:

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

11.10 Storing Personal Items:

Guests must not leave personal items with bedding. The Shelter cannot be responsible for any personal belongings left by individuals. The bedding remains the property of the Shelter and guests are not permitted to take it with them.

Should items be left in sleeping bags the Church Co-ordinator has the authority to remove the items. This should then be noted in the log file and the overall persons in charge notified.

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 at the Shelter.
- Entertainment will be provided by the Shelter e.g. Board games, puzzles, DVD's may also be shown. 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 team leader and/or overall leader.
- Volunteers are not permitted to take a 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 any potential allergens. Guests must be notified of the availability of such information via a well-displayed notice.

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

14. Sharps:

Do not put your hands in bags, bins and sleeping bags as this may expose you to harm from hidden sharps e.g. razors and needles. Rubber gloves are not adequate protection for handling sharps.

Rubber gloves must always be worn when dealing with an injury. Where possible encourage the guest to deal with minor injuries themselves. Each venue must carry a first aid kit and everyone should know where it is kept. A record should be kept of all accidents, injuries, discovery of needles and drugs.

If at any time you are in a situation you cannot handle, or that is becoming violent or aggressive – back off. Stay calm and speak gently and clearly avoiding being drawn into further argument refer back to training as provided. Do not underestimate the threat or respond aggressively at any time.