



**Haringey and Enfield Churches Winter
Night Shelter.**

Volunteers' Handbook

v. 24.12.2014

Thank you for volunteering to be part of Haringey and Enfield Churches Winter Night Shelter. There are many different ways in which you can help. Please take some time to read this handbook carefully. We hope that your experience of volunteering this winter will be rewarding and we aim to ensure that all our shelters will be safe and welcoming for those who use them whether as guests or volunteers.

SHELTER DESCRIPTION

Haringey and Enfield Churches Winter Night Shelter began in January 2009 as Haringey Churches Winter Shelter and runs for 3 months during the winter. Haringey and Enfield Churches Night Shelter provides food, overnight accommodation, friendship and support for homeless guests. The scheme is a rolling shelter – one that is located at a different venue each night of the week. One of our key values at Haringey and Enfield Churches Night Shelter is hospitality. As human beings, God has shown us great hospitality in welcoming us into his family in Christ, and we extend hospitality to our homeless guests through our welcome to them at the night shelter.

We can accommodate 12 people per night, but over the course of the shelter the total number of people will be far more than that as people are housed and move on and new guests take their place.

Structure

Haringey and Enfield Churches Night Shelter is managed by All People All Places, a registered charity, number 1139885. The day to day work of Haringey and Enfield Churches Night Shelter is undertaken by: -

The Shelter Coordinators who liaises with the referral agencies and accepts referrals to the shelter. The Shelter Coordinators works with the referral agencies to help the guests to be housed, and with each church's Venue Coordinator to ensure the smooth daily running of the shelter. The Shelter Coordinators are responsible to the Board of Trustees of All People All Places.

Board of Trustees which is a small ecumenical group with overall responsibility for the running of the shelter. The members are Trustees of the charity.

Each host church's **Venue Coordinator** who is responsible for: -

- Ensuring the shelter runs smoothly and safely at their venue.
- Making sure there are enough volunteers to cover the sessions by drawing up a rota.
- Ensuring that the necessary meals will be provided for each evening and breakfast shift
- Ensuring that the venue is cleared after the session
- Being the main contact between the venue and Shelter Coordinators

Shift Leaders: the responsible person on site for each shift. This may be the Venue Coordinator, or another volunteer appointed by the Venue Coordinator.

Shift Leaders are responsible for: -

- Allotting tasks to volunteers.
- Taking key decisions when other volunteers are unsure of the best course of action.
- Supporting volunteers where necessary in responding to guests.
- Briefing the new Shift Leader at handover.
- Filling in the Daybook.

Referral Process

The Night Shelter is **not** an open access shelter to become guests of the Shelter clients must be referred from a recognised agency. We operate a referral process working closely with Crisis at Christmas, Thamesreach, and the Local Authorities of the areas in which the shelter operates. Risk assessments are carried out for each guest for the health and safety of all our guests and volunteers. We take clients with lower support needs. Referrals are be made through the Shelter Coordinators. Venue Coordinators are informed by text message of the identity of guests for each session by 12 noon on the day of the shelter, though sometimes last minute referrals will be added to the list after this if beds are free.

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

It is good to recognise at the outset that some of the guests who use the shelters have complex problems, which this scheme and its volunteers are not set up to deal with. Although we may want to, we cannot solve people's problems. We are here to provide basic facilities and, on top of this, the most valuable thing we can do is simply to listen to people.

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, so please do not try to take on too much.

If you begin to engage in a conversation that makes you feel uncomfortable, let the Shift Leader / Venue Coordinator or the Project Co-ordinator know. Under no circumstances should you feel obligated to do anything asked of you by a guest, nor should you put yourself in a situation where you are agreeing to keep secrets that you are not comfortable with. (See 'Respect and Confidentiality')

What is required of Volunteers?

- A heart for the marginalised, poor and needy and a willingness to be challenged and changed.
- Willingness to follow instructions from the shift leader, and work as part of a team.
- Ability to respond calmly but quickly in an emergency.
- Judgment of when to call for help.
- Familiarity and ability to work within Haringey and Enfield Churches Winter Night Shelter policies and guidelines, especially regarding Health & Safety procedures.
- Knowledge of basic first aid would be useful, but is not essential to volunteering.
- Sensitivity to issues relating to homelessness, including mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse
- Basic knowledge of the building, especially the location of fire exits. (Information provided by Venue coordinators)

Volunteers should

- Be reliable and arrive on time
- Make sure you know the church layout, especially the emergency exits, and any areas that are out of bounds to guests.
- Treat guests with respect.
- Be friendly and make guests feel welcome
- Work as a team and support your Shift Leader. Do not challenge their decisions in front of other volunteers or guests.

- Guests and volunteers should be known by first names.
- Arrangements should not be made to meet with guests outside the Shelter unless it is an activity arranged with Haringey and Enfield Churches Winter Night Shelter.
- When speaking to guests it is best not to make promises; people can feel very let down by a promise not kept. Haringey and Enfield Churches Night Shelter needs to build trust in order to be effective in finding appropriate help for guests. Broken promises can undermine this work. ('I will try...' not 'I will...')
- For your own safety do not wear or bring valuables to the shelter in case there is nowhere to store valuables safely.
- There should be a minimum of three volunteers in the Shelter at all times.
- Wear appropriate and sensible clothing

Golden Rules

- Check identities – know who people are
- Do not give personal information especially address, telephone number or e-mail address, and do not lend your mobile phone to any of the guests.
- Do not take guests to your home.
- Make sure neither you nor a colleague is left alone with a guest. This is not only for your own safety but so that if anyone alleges an impropriety against you there is a witness.
- Do not give or lend money to guests
- Do not touch guests unexpectedly
- No alcohol allowed
- Do not intervene physically in any fight
- Do not give any medication to guests, not even aspirin, Plasters or paracetamol etc.

Respect and Confidentiality

When talking to guests it is important not to push for information. Please acknowledge that some guests may feel hurt or let down by some experiences and may not wish to talk about them. Others will like nothing better than to tell you their story. Respect guests' confidentiality and don't allow your conversation to become common gossip especially with other guests or volunteers. It is also important to respect guests' individuality and personality and not attempt to enforce jollity or expect guests to engage in activities they are not comfortable with. Also importantly although we are Christian charity and based mainly in churches we do not use the shelter as a forum for proselytization. Our guests are frequently vulnerable and forcing beliefs of such individuals at a time when individuals are most vulnerable would be entirely unacceptable. If a guest asks you to pray with them, it is however perfectly acceptable to do this, or to engage in religious conversations if a guest initiates this. Most of our volunteers and venues are motivated by Christian values and it is also fine to talk about this when talking with guests.

Although confidentiality is important for building trust, it is not about keeping secrets and this should be made clear to guests.

If at any time you feel that the person poses a threat to themselves or another person or to the safety of the Shelter you should advise the guest that you will need to let your coordinator/ shift leader know immediately. Likewise, if you feel as though a conversation is getting too demanding, tell the guest that you may have to tell your coordinator what is being said in order to get appropriate help. It is then up to the guest as to whether they want to continue.

Gifts

From time to time guests may wish to give gifts to staff or volunteers. Small gifts may be accepted particularly if they can be shared. The general rule is that all gifts should be shared with the team, and the guest should be told that this is the policy. In any case all gifts should be reported to the Venue Coordinator/ Shift Leader and recorded in the Daybook. Any gift deemed to be too expensive or in some way inappropriate should be gently returned to the guest. Guests should not be encouraged to give gifts.

RULES FOR GUESTS

- No alcohol or controlled drugs are allowed in or around the premises. Guests on prescription medication
- No violent, threatening, racist or other anti-social behaviour/language.
- No offensive weapons.
- In accordance with the law, there is no smoking inside the building. Provision will be made outside close to the premises but this may be on the basis of periodic controlled sessions.
- No pets
- Place is forfeited if guests do not arrive each night by 8.30pm, unless by prior arrangement.
- The Shelter is for those aged 18 years and above.
- Once inside the shelter, there should be no 'coming and going' from the shelter.

TIMETABLE OF SHIFTS

7.00-10.00pm Evening Shift

1. Open up
2. Prepare and cook a hot meal (this might be ordered in or produced off site)
3. Set up tables and chairs, put up and make beds
4. Check toilets for cleanliness, soap and towels. (Remove bleach and bathroom cleaners)
5. Check the security of premises regarding doors to be locked or opened
6. **7.15pm** The whole team should get together for a briefing. This is a good time to introduce new volunteers. Check they have read the volunteers' guidelines and that everyone knows the fire drill. Shelter Coordinators/ Venue Coordinator will pass on any concerns from the previous night and any necessary information about new guests. Jobs to be allotted to volunteers.
7. **7.30pm** Doors open. Shelter Coordinators/ Venue Coordinator will book guests in for the night.
8. Show new guests round
9. Serve tea and coffee over the course of the evening
10. **8.30pm** No guests to come in from now unless with prior agreement.
11. Serve the meal. Volunteers eat with the guests.
12. Wash and tidy up after the meal
13. Organise social activities for the guests –e.g. draughts, jigsaws, dominoes, TV, Quiz Night etc
14. Record any incidents in the Daybook
15. **9.45pm** Volunteers meet again for debrief and prepare for handover to overnight volunteers at 10.00 pm

10.00pm – 7.00am Night Shift

1. Secure the building
2. Make sure everyone is comfortable and settled in for the night.
3. **11pm** Lights out.
4. All guests should adhere to lights out and quiet.
5. There should be two volunteers awake, in case of need.
6. Record any incidents in the day book. 6.30am Hand over to Morning shift and make them aware of any concerns.

6.30-8.30am Morning shift

1. Put on urn and make breakfast
2. Wake up guests
3. Serve breakfast
4. Clear beds and bedding away. Guests can be encouraged to clear up their own bedding. (It is advised that you wear gloves when handling used bedding and shake bedding carefully.)
5. Ensure guests leave premises by **8.30am**
6. Wash and tidy up.
7. Ensure the Daybook has been completed and a record made of any incidents.
8. Clean church premises (inc toilets).
9. Take bedding away for laundering (or pass on to laundry volunteers).
10. Secure the building.

GUIDELINES FOR VENUE COORDINATORS

Venue Coordinators have the responsibility for managing the human and physical resources of the shelter. You will be called upon to make decisions as to the most appropriate course of action, and you may wish to make these in consultation with the Shelter Coordinators who will be more familiar with the guests. However, no list of policies and procedures can possibly cover every situation, and sometimes you will have to think on your feet.

Building

- You must be familiar with building. In particular you must:
- Know where the fire exits and fire extinguishers are
- Know where the First aid box, telephone and list of emergency numbers are, and tell your volunteers where they are.
- Make sure that fire exits are unlocked and not blocked.
- Make volunteers and guests aware of the venue's Fire Instructions
- Know the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire
- Make sure that any areas where you do not want guests to go are secure.
- Tell volunteers where guests can and cannot go.
- Identify a safe area where volunteers can leave their belongings.

Volunteers

- Introduce volunteers to one another and ensure that everybody knows who is a volunteer. Ensure everyone has a name badge.
- "Buddy up" new volunteers with a more experienced volunteer.
- Allocate jobs for the evening: e.g. serving tea, serving meals, putting out tables and beds, showing guests round the shelter etc.

The Daybook

The Daybook is extremely important as it is:

- A quasi-legal document that might be used as a source of evidence in the event of a serious incident. Information entered into the book should therefore be purely factual and speculation should not be entered into when detailing incidents. Reporting the statements of others is permissible but it should be made clear that it is a statement and the source of the statement indicated.
- The means of communication between the different venues, and also the Shelter Coordinators, passing on details of who arrived, who didn't, and a record of any incidents.
- A way to collect statistics on volunteers and guests which will be used to write a report at the end of the shelter that is then used for fundraising. Please list all volunteers and their roles in the daybook as well as registering guests.
- The Daybook is our evidence of the shelter being properly run, please look after it. Entries must be signed legibly so that any queries regarding any incidents can be followed up.

Before you open

- You should have received the Daybook, and the list of guests for the evening.
- Go through the Daybook and discuss incidents with the Shelter Coordinators, if possible, and inform the volunteers of any incidents, problems or concerns.
- If you anticipate a problem, discuss it and agree what you will do; everybody should know how you will deal with it before you open.
- If you do not have enough volunteers and do not feel it is safe to open, delay your opening time – it is a good idea to go outside and talk to the people who are waiting and explain what is happening.

Opening Up

- Haringey and Enfield Churches Winter Night Shelter asks that venues do NOT serve tea or coffee to the guests when they are outside waiting to come in, as this encourages early arrival, and others who are not part of the shelter.
- Welcome each guest as they arrive.
- The age limit is 18 and above.
- If it's a guest's first night you will need to sit down with them and go through the Shelter rules in the 'Guest Agreement'. Please ask them to sign this. Remember that some guests may not be able to read, or may have poor English.
- Offer guests a copy of the map of the following night's venue.
- When you answer the door always ask guests to give you their names. Do not ask "Are you ..name?"
- Some people turn up on the door who are not booked in. Do not let them into the shelter as you will not know their background and will be putting other guests and your volunteers at risk.
- Advise them to go to one of the Referral Agencies the following day to complete a referral form. This is one of the hardest parts of volunteering at the night shelter, especially when we know that the likelihood is that the person will have to sleep on the streets when we turn them away. However, it is important that we keep to the agreed system so that everyone knows how things work.

- Once things have settled down you will be keeping an eye on things but you should have plenty of opportunity to chat to guests and volunteers.

Handover

If you are working in shifts with different leaders, make sure you talk to the person taking over about any incidents or problems.

HEALTH & SAFETY STATEMENT

Our policy is to provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for both volunteers taking part in and guests using the Winter Night Shelter, and to provide such information, training and supervision as is needed for this purpose.

Objectives

- To provide a working environment that is healthy and safe with satisfactory amenities.
- To ensure that health & safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice are observed.
- To provide and maintain safe premises and equipment including appropriate protective clothing.
- To ensure that the use, handling, storage and transportation of food, articles and substances are safe.
- To ensure that the systems of work are safe and to provide or locate appropriate training and advice for volunteers in these matters
- To promote effective communication between the Shelter steering committee, Church/Venue Coordinators, volunteers and guests on safety matters in each church
- To ensure that all volunteers and guests using the premises are safe and without risk to their health.
- To review and revise this policy annually or as new legislation requires.

FOOD HYGIENE & KITCHEN SAFETY

FOOD PREPARATION AND REHEATING GUIDELINES

These are general points for all volunteers to be aware of. Cooks and those storing, preparing and handling (including serving) any food should follow these guidelines or to the comprehensive Food Hygiene and Kitchen Safety guide which is available on request.

Preparation

Food should be thoroughly cooked to a core temperature of at least 75°C and kept at that temperature for at least 2 minutes. If you are cooking a casserole the core temperature should be taken from the centre of a piece of meat.)

Cooling

Cool food rapidly before putting in the refrigerator. Food should not stand around for more than 90 minutes at which time deterioration will begin. Food can be cooled quickly by standing in cold or iced water.

Reheating

The practice of reheating should be avoided. However, if this is unavoidable, the food should be heated until it has reached a core temperature of at least 75°C and held at that temperature for at least two minutes.

Microwaves

If food is being cooked or heated in a microwave oven be especially careful to ensure that every part of the food is thoroughly heated. Microwaves often heat food unevenly, so you may need to stir and move the food around to ensure temperature consistency.

Serving

Hot food must be served at a temperature of at least 63°C.
(Information from *The Food Safety Handbook* by Graham Aston)

All People All Places has funding to enable volunteers to achieve a Level 2 Food Safety certificate. We would recommend that individuals take advantage of this from each shelter location. In particular those who prepare food remotely and deliver into the shelters are strongly encouraged to do this course. It is a simple on line course which should not take more than a couple of hours at the very most.

FIRE INSTRUCTIONS

Volunteers need to be aware of the fire instructions for the venues they will be at. They must familiarize themselves with the procedure in case of fire. All venues must have fire instructions clearly displayed on the wall.

PROCEDURES FOR PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

We are grateful to Wycombe Homeless Connection whose advice in this area has been invaluable. Over the years the Wycombe churches have operated a Winter Night Shelter the shelter environment has generally been calm and welcoming and thankfully there have been no violent incidents. With that in mind however, it is important to recognise that actual or potential violence may be a problem in working with homeless guests.

The following guidelines were issued by the London Rough Sleepers Unit, are used by Shelter and Crisis and are intended to offer direction on the most effective ways of preventing violent behaviour and protection from its consequences.

The Health and Safety Statement included in this booklet acknowledges the responsibility to provide direction and support to volunteers; in addition, all volunteers have an individual responsibility never to put themselves, their colleagues, guests or members of the public at unnecessary risk. These procedures should be viewed within the context of that shared responsibility.

Defining violence and aggression

Although these guidelines focus on the extreme end of violent behaviour, this does not mean to imply that only physical assault is of concern. Threats and verbal abuse, for example, are also recognised for the intimidating and undermining impact and, where appropriate, these guidelines should apply to all forms of aggressive behaviour.

General guidelines for managing violence and aggression

It is natural to be frightened of violence, and this needs to be taken into account in the expectations of oneself or others when Haringey and Enfield with actual or potential violence or threatening behaviour.

In responding to violence or potential violence, one's own safety and that of colleagues and the client group must be seen as the first consideration.

Guidelines can never cover every eventuality. Volunteers must also draw on their experience, skills and common sense when faced with aggressive situations.

All volunteers should co-operate in taking a consistent approach to confronting guests about unacceptable behaviour and in banning or excluding clients from the building. As far as possible, one volunteer should not be identified as the instigator of a ban – these should be presented as team decisions, and all volunteers must actively support the decision even if they have a different opinion.

Managing a violent incident

- It is the responsibility of all volunteers to alert colleagues at the first sign of aggression and to act cooperatively to diffuse the situation.
- One or two volunteers should talk to the individual(s) concerned, remaining calm, but firm, and trying to create opportunities for the guest(s) to back down without feeling humiliated. Where possible, the guest(s) should be taken aside.
- Other volunteers should remain at a reasonable distance but pay attention in case the situation escalates. Volunteers who are not directly involved with the main protagonists should attempt to keep other guests calm, and prevent them from becoming involved unless they are friends who can assist positively.
- In particular, one volunteer should ensure that any vulnerable people are removed from the area and if possible, potential weapons such as plates, cutlery, etc should be removed from the area.
- Space should be created to ensure that people are not crowded into a confined area. All those present should be mindful of their own and others "escape routes" should it be necessary to get out of the way fast.
- One worker should be in a position to telephone for police assistance should this become necessary. It may be useful to identify in advance which volunteer on your shift would have this responsibility should a situation arise.
- If an incident escalates and the guest(s) cannot be calmed, then volunteers should be prepared to vacate the area. Personal safety must be put before the protection of property. The police should be summoned immediately.

After an incident has occurred

If an incident does occur, it is likely to be very unsettling for everyone involved in the project whether volunteer or guest. Some things that can be done include: -

- Promote first aid where necessary
- Providing reassurance and helping everyone to calm down.
- Recording details of the incident as quickly as possible in the Daybook. If another person has witnessed the incident, get them to write down their version of events as well.
- Arranging for any volunteer that has been scared or hurt to leave the shift.
- Arranging longer term support where necessary.
- Discuss the incident and try and draw out constructive lessons for avoiding a similar incident in the future.
- Consider providing other guests with brief details of what happened and how it was dealt with; this is to prevent rumours and provide reassurance that incidents are dealt with effectively.

******Personal Safety******

In order to promote safety in the night shelter sessions, always observe these rules: -

- Check the identity of each guest arriving at the door by asking for their name.
- Do not let any guest into the building whose name is not already in the Daybook
- Never give your home telephone number or home address to a guest, or invite a guest into your home.
- Make sure you are never alone with a guest
- Leave your valuables in the safekeeping of the Venue Coordinator, or if possible leave them at home.
- Do not give money to guests – if you are concerned about their situation, refer them to the Shelter Coordinators or Venue Coordinator.
- Do not touch any guest, even to wake them up.
- Wear gloves when handling used bedding.
- Never put your hand into a bag or pocket. Tip contents onto a flat surface so you can see what you are handling.
- Remember body language is the key to making people feel comfortable, standing above or invading personal space could be seen as a threat.

Volunteers should act safely and not put themselves or other volunteers or guests in any danger. If you feel intimidated at any time during the shift, inform the Venue Coordinator immediately. Please take directions at all times from them, especially with regard to matters of personal safety

DRUGS & ALCOHOL INFORMATION / PROCEDURES

Use of drugs and alcohol

- Drugs or Alcohol must not be consumed/used on the premises by any guest or volunteer.
- Drinking alcohol whilst on shift is not allowed.
- Volunteers should not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs when coming onto their shift.
- Guests not to be admitted if inebriated or under the influence of drugs

Action to be taken if policy is breached

- If guests are found drinking on the premises/ or if they are found to be drunk having gained entry to the shelter, they will be asked to leave the scheme. This can be done that evening by the Venue Coordinator or through the Shelter Coordinators the following morning. This is up to the Venue Coordinator's discretion. It may be more disruptive to remove the person from the premises that night depending on what kind of state they are in at that time.
- If guests are found taking drugs on the premises they will be asked to leave the scheme.
- Anyone found dealing drugs will be asked to leave the scheme.
- Volunteers who suspect that someone is violating these policies must make a note of this in the Day Book. This way volunteers the following night can be aware. Volunteers should not police a night shelter but should not be negligent.
- Any bans will be enforced by the Shelter Coordinators after consultation with the Venue Coordinator.
- We at APAP will run a three strike warning system, first warning for minor offences to be issued and noted by the venue co-ordinator/shift leader.
- Second warning will be a meeting in the APAP offices with a Shelter co-ordinator, guests will be issued with a written warning informing them of their second warning and why this has been issued.
- The third and final strike will result in the immediate banning of guest for a period of time that will range from 1 day to a permanent ban from the shelter.
- In the case of a serious breach of shelter rules All People All Places reserves the right to impose an immediate sanction such as permanent banning from the shelter if drug taking takes place on shelter premises.

Communication

Guests will be advised of this policy on entering the shelter when they sign the Guest Agreement.

If anyone is excluded from the shelter as a result of breaching the policy all Venue Coordinators should be informed. In particular the church responsible for the following night must be informed.