

# **Enfield Winter Night Shelter 2020/21**

**December 2020**

Peter Livermore and John Rhatigan  
Coordinators, *St Luke's Winter Night Shelter*  
[stlukesshelter@gmail.com](mailto:stlukesshelter@gmail.com)

## **Summary**

The night shelter will be vastly different this winter because the COVID-19 pandemic means it cannot be hosted in churches/church halls across Enfield and Haringey as it has in previous years. All People All Places (APAP) anticipated this, so there are alternative arrangements in place to accommodate homeless guests in two locations, one in each borough. As these are new arrangements, not everything is set out in detail, and there will be an element of trying things out, and adapting as the new shelter settles in.

The new shelter requires the help and support of churches and volunteers, but it will be different to what we have done before. The following pages gives information about what has been happening since the first lockdown started and details of the arrangements for the new night shelters this year, as well as news of new initiatives to help homeless people in the boroughs of Enfield and Haringey.

There is an article about the work of APAP in the December issue of Enfield Dispatch, a local community paper – see page 8.

## **How you can help**

There are various ways you can assist to make the night shelter a success, supporting the work of APAP, and help people get out of homelessness in Enfield. The Enfield night shelter will be in a 5/6-bedroom property in Edmonton N18, in the A10/North Circular Road area.

## ***Volunteering***

You can do shifts at the shelter in the evening and the morning on Friday nights/Saturday morning, or other days of the week if it is more convenient for you (see page 6). Please let us know if you are interested.

There will also be opportunities to volunteer during the daytime at the new homelessness resource centre that is being set up in Edmonton (see page 4). Further details on the resource centre and how volunteers can help will be available soon, but please let us know if you might be interested in being involved so we can let APAP know.

## **Food**

Help is needed to feed guests at the night shelter including an evening meal, breakfast and take-away lunch (see pages 6/7). As there are fewer guests at the shelter than in previous years, the scale of what is needed is much reduced. People providing or cooking food do not need to be at the shelter, so you can still be involved even if you are unable to get to the shelter.

## **Donations**

Funding is needed to keep services running and to help provide support to people who are homeless (see page 7). It would be great if you are able to make a donation to APAP using this link: <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/donate?&cid=99928>

If you prefer to donate with a bank transfer to APAP's account, or a cheque, let us know so we can provide the details.

The rest of this note explains what is happening and gives more details of how you can contribute with either volunteering, food, or donations.

Many thanks for taking time to read this. It would be great if you can help in some way to make a difference and give hope to people who are homeless this winter.

## **Last winter's night shelter**

What a year 2020 has been, with the COVID-19 pandemic having a massive impact on everyone across the world. It also had an immediate effect on night shelters in the UK last winter, including the APAP night shelter project in Enfield and Haringey.

Last winter was the sixth year we hosted the Enfield Winter Night Shelter at St Luke's on Friday evenings/Saturday mornings during the winter months. There were 26 guests supported in the Enfield Night shelter, including 8 women, but the hosting of the shelter in churches across the borough had to be curtailed a week before it was due to finish because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdown that started on 23 March.

Despite the devastation of the pandemic, the majority of APAP guests remained well. All were able to access temporary accommodation, including in hotel and bed-and-breakfast accommodation as well as in the APAP Cranwood Hub in Muswell Hill<sup>1</sup>. This was quickly converted from hostel-style dorms into single-occupancy rooms, with guests placed in 'family' units.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Cranwood hub is the Haringey Somewhere Safe To Stay project - an emergency shelter providing accommodation to 30 people experiencing rough sleeping in Haringey. On occasions there have been 32 guests for short periods. The project is commissioned by the Haringey Rough Sleeper Team and has been operating since August 2019. It started as a 20-bed, dormitory-style night shelter but because of the pandemic, capacity was increased to 30 beds in single units with 24-hour access to residents.

## **Homelessness, the pandemic and night shelters**

Recognising the severe risks posed by COVID-19 to those without access to safe and secure accommodation, the Government wrote to all local authorities in England on 26 March 2020 outlining its ambition to safeguard as many people as possible by “bringing everyone in” to appropriate accommodation.

There was unprecedented action from government departments, local authorities, support services, faith and community groups, and volunteers to make that ambition into a reality. As a result, according to government estimates, close to 15,000 people were supported into emergency accommodation in a matter of weeks.

At the beginning of the year, winter night shelters in England and Wales provided 2,600 beds to those experiencing homelessness with more than 9,000 people receiving hospitality within those projects during the winter months. Just a few weeks later, the entire winter night shelter network had been decanted into self-contained accommodation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This response undoubtedly saved lives.

As the country emerged from the first lockdown, many night shelter projects, churches and faith and community groups planned how they could respond to homelessness this winter. The public health position on night shelters remained that dormitory style night shelters are not safe to open and rotating shelters would not be able to open for the winter. Many projects, including APAP's, therefore had to plan to deliver their projects in a completely different setting for the winter.

## **The extent of homelessness**

The figures for homelessness in London reveal more than 10,700 people were found rough sleeping in the year to March 2020, a rise of 21% on the year before. This does not include homeless people in temporary accommodation or the hidden homeless such as those who are sofa surfing. This highlights how dire the situation had become in London even before the coronavirus outbreak.

With the winding down of the Everyone In scheme there has been a resurgence in rough sleeping, and there is a real prospect of more people becoming homeless from the economic and social effects of the pandemic.

There is a significant issue with homelessness in Enfield. Since 2011/12 the Borough has seen a 250% increase compared with a 35% rise in London.

## **APAP's strategy**

With the changing circumstances, APAP has been looking at how to provide services for homeless people in Enfield and Haringey, particularly for those whose needs are less likely to be met by the local authorities.

APAP had been staffing the emergency hotel provision that was set up at the Travelodge Hotel in Edmonton Green to house homeless people through lockdown<sup>2</sup>.

The demographics of the people staying at the hotel indicates:

- At least 40% of people had no recourse to public funds (including EEA nationals and non-EEA nationals) - a further 40% had no data held on this issue which suggests that the number is likely to be significantly higher.
- 26% had mental health needs
- 24% had substance misuse issues
- 21 % had physical health issues

Hence there is clearly a need for specialist advice and support services to support people out of homelessness. There are currently no dedicated day centres in Enfield, and primary service provision is scattered and inconsistent.

Research shows that there is a serious issue around the precarity of housing in Enfield (for example, lots of evictions from private rented accommodation). Conversations that APAP have had with the council indicate an additional need for homelessness prevention work (income maximisation, benefits and debt advice, negotiation with landlords, help managing tenancies, etc.)

It is not expected that the government's funding for homelessness during lockdown will continue to be provided to all homeless people (especially people with No Recourse to Public Funds) and there is likely to be a significant increase in the number of people who become newly homeless.

APAP's proposal to meet these needs is to:

- a) Set up a homelessness resource centre in Enfield delivering primary services in conjunction with homelessness advice and homelessness prevention work. They are actively seeking funds for the project and have just been informed of a grant being awarded by the Nationwide Community Fund, which will help get the project started in early 2021. There will be opportunities for volunteers to help at the resource centre.
- b) Deliver more services in partnership with other organisations to help homeless people access support with wider issues (for example, drug and alcohol issues, mental health, debt, immigration). This may be through outreach work, or through established partners delivering sessions at the resource centre, or both.

---

<sup>2</sup> The contract with Enfield Council to help run the Edmonton Green Travelodge finished at the end of August, and all the people staying at the hotel were accommodated by the Council. Over 170 people had passed through the hotel from March to August with most guests being offered accommodation. At the end of July most council staff who had been seconded to the hotel had returned to their substantive posts and APAP covered the 24-hour operation of the hotel for the last week of July and the month of August.

- c) Deliver night shelters in the area.

Considering COVID-19, APAP recognised the need to provide self-contained accommodation for guests if a night shelter project was to be delivered. APAP rightly predicted the government guidance would discourage accommodating people in dormitory-style shelters. The guidance arrived quite late in September, but APAP were anticipating it and had started plans for a new working model. There have been several variables that have forced a change to the Winter Night Shelter Model based in churches/synagogues for the foreseeable future, not least the risk of COVID-19 to volunteers, many of whom are post-career.

### **Winter night shelter venues**

APAP has been successful with a bid to the National Lottery Community Fund for money to deliver a night shelter project. This enables APAP to rent a couple of properties for 4 months, one in each borough, staffed by volunteers. A Shelter Project Coordinator has been appointed to manage the Enfield and Haringey Winter Night Shelter.

Holy Innocents Church in Hornsey has agreed for APAP to rent the Annex at the rear of the church as a venue for the night shelter in Haringey. The Annex has five rooms that are being used as bedrooms, and has a kitchen, laundry, and shower facilities. With some remedial work, the Annex opened in early December, taking guests for the Haringey Winter Night Shelter. Guests are be able to access primary services at the resource centre which has been created at the Cranwood hub.

A venue has also recently been found in Edmonton for the Enfield Winter Night Shelter. It is a 5/6-bedroom house on the edge of the N18 area near N13, and the shelter will start on 7 January. It is fully equipped, so provides an excellent setting for a shelter. During the daytime, guests will be able to access primary services at the new resource centre that will be set up in Edmonton. Prior to this being available, they can use the resource centre at the Cranwood hub, which is a direct bus route from the Enfield shelter.

### **Winter night shelter arrangements**

The arrangements are quite different this year with the shelter in a fixed venue, instead of it being hosted in different churches each night, and needing to ensure they are Covid-safe.

The night shelter venues have Covid-safe plans to protect everyone using the venues including guests, staff, and volunteers. It includes arrangements for setting up, when guests arrive, use of toilets and shower, laundry, PPE, and if someone has COVID-19 symptoms. APAP will provide PPE, hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies.

Guests will be expected to keep their own room clean and tidy, they will change their own bedding, wash their own laundry and serve their own food and refreshments.

The shelter will have a vastly different feel, being set in a house rather than churches and church halls. Consequently, the role of volunteers and the arrangements for providing food will be different.

### ***Volunteering***

Churches have been asked to provide volunteers and food on the same days as they did in previous years, so St Luke's will cover the Friday evenings/Saturday mornings. Given the ongoing pandemic, it is recognised that for many, volunteering at the shelter will not be possible, so there is no obligation on anybody to be at the shelter, even if they volunteered at the church shelter before.

This year the shelter will accommodate up to five guests, whereas previously up to 12 were in the church venues. There will only be two volunteers at the venue at any time. The tasks for volunteers will also be different. In the churches, there was the setting up and taking down of beds and dining area every time, which is not needed this year. The volunteer role will be less hands-on practical support and more about pastoral care to support the guests.

The shifts for volunteers will be in the evening and morning. APAP has just been awarded some funding to pay for a night concierge at the shelters so it is anticipated that volunteers will not be needed for the overnight shift. There is a volunteer handbook and there is a short on-line session on safeguarding to complete. With only 2 volunteers on site at any time they will need Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks. APAP can organise this quickly if you do not already have one.

### ***Food***

APAP has also asked the churches and their volunteers to help provide food for guests, including the evening meal, breakfast and lunch to take away. This will, of course, be quite different from previous years with fewer people to feed and the shelter being in a house in one location.

Guests will be encouraged to eat together with volunteers so there is conversation and interaction. That does not mean it is a set time for everyone to sit down at the table and eat, but as and when guests are ready and to eat in the same room.

For the evening meal, it is suggested to have two courses, rather than three as it has been in previous years. There is, however, scope to have tins of soup at the shelter as there is plenty of food storage, so it gives an option for guests.

For breakfast, it is suggested to keep it simple with continental-style rather than cooked breakfast.

The facilities in the house – fridge, freezer, oven, microwave, and storage space mean it's possible to prepare dishes any time, not necessarily just on the day, and be stored at the shelter. It would also be helpful if store-cupboard items, such as tins of food, coffee, tea, biscuits, breakfast cereals, and soft drinks could be donated.

When we know who wants to help with the food, we can discuss with you further the practical ways of doing this in the new set up.

### ***Donations***

The pandemic has had a massive impact and has been challenging for charities both in terms of the increased demand for their services and the funds that are available. APAP is seeing growing demand as homelessness increases. They have managed to get grants for some of the services they are providing or planning to provide but, of course, further funding is needed to keep services running and to help provide support to people who are homeless. If you can help, please donate whatever you are able to.

## Reaching out to rough sleepers

### A local homelessness charity is seeking both volunteers and donations

BY BASIL CLARKE

If you find yourself homeless or on the verge of becoming homeless and don't qualify for temporary accommodation with the council, who will come to your rescue?

In Enfield or Haringey boroughs, it will most likely be the homelessness prevention charity All People All Places (APAP). It will help you stay where you are, or, if you're already homeless, provide emergency accommodation and support you to find somewhere more permanent.

APAP began operation ten years ago in Haringey and four years later in Enfield, co-ordinating volunteer-run winter night shelters set up in places of worship, finding accommodation for guests to move on to, and working with them collaboratively to create a pathway plan for their future. Over the 2018/19 winter, these shelters provided 1,063 bed-nights, putting up 91 individual guests, and found somewhere to live for nearly half of them.

APAP support workers can help clients find accommodation without an upfront deposit, source missing documents, register with a GP, complete benefit claims, and much more. They build trust and provide a safe environment for clients to open up about their underlying problems and begin to deal with them.

In autumn last year, APAP's operations expanded. In addition to the night shelter



APAP provides temporary shelter for rough sleepers while trying to arrange permanent accommodation for them

model, where in each borough a different church or synagogue houses guests one night a week, APAP set up static shelters; in Haringey a former care home, in Enfield a disused industrial unit. They took on additional staff to run them, and APAP became a year-round professional operation with 18 staff.

The expansion came just in time, because the arrival of Covid-19 made it necessary to house rough sleepers for the duration of lockdown. But it also meant that the dormi-

tory model APAP used was unworkable – it would take only one person with the virus to infect everyone else breathing the same air. Single rooms became essential.

The former Haringey care home could be adapted without too much difficulty, but in Enfield the industrial unit could not. The solution was for Enfield Council to take over a hotel in Edmonton, which APAP helped run until it closed in August.

Currently, APAP has one shelter operat-

ing, in the former care home, with room for 30 guests. Instead of the guests moving between churches, a different church group or community group comes to the shelter each night, providing food and keeping guests safe and engaged. In January this will be joined by a six-bedroom house in Enfield, where guests can stay while APAP works with them to find somewhere to live. APAP could easily fill more such houses, but can't yet afford them.

To support clients, including people not yet homeless but at risk of becoming so, APAP has a day centre in Haringey and is planning to set up a resource centre in Enfield, providing access to support workers and laundry facilities.

Expansion and professionalisation have not diminished the importance of voluntary support, whether from individuals or community groups. Volunteers provide food and toiletries, take turns to run the shelter, maintain and clean the buildings, and help raise awareness of the charity – much of whose income comes from small individual donations.

In the face of growing unemployment and debt, likely leading to evictions, APAP needs every helping hand and every penny it can get. Could you or your community group step in to help at shelters or to raise money?

For more information and to offer support:

Email [info@allpeopleallplaces.org](mailto:info@allpeopleallplaces.org)

Visit [allpeopleallplaces.org](http://allpeopleallplaces.org)

Visit [everyclick.com/charity/apap](http://everyclick.com/charity/apap)