

Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter Midterm Report

2018/2019



Introduction

The Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter (FCWS) has been operating for full six weeks now, which is the half-way point of the project. This report includes data recorded in the 42 days out of 84 days of the project.

Due to the number of people sleeping rough locally in Folkestone, local connection rule has been in place; this means that at the discretion of the Project Manager, referrals from areas outside Folkestone and Hythe have not been accepted into the shelter. This has helped to more effectively manage the demand seen in previous years, where guests were accepted from other towns and agencies in Kent - these referrals included Probation Services and the demand on the shelter as well as low possibility of rehousing our guests last year meant we could not meet the expectations of guests on our waiting list for the shelter previously.

Guests

This year, we have been registering guests directly at the Rainbow Centre (RC) only. We have accepted referrals from other agencies locally, but asked the guests to come to the Centre directly in order to complete registration with one of the RC staff members. Registrations are completed by the Homeless Support Service (HSS) staff and Winter Shelter (WS) Project Workers only.

We have had five women in the shelter at one point. This is the highest number of women in the history of the shelter. Three women have since been housed, whilst the other two stopped engaging with us unfortunately.

So far, we have registered 40 potential guests. We have been unable to offer potential bed space to four clients. On one occasion, the reason for the refusal was high support needs of the individual. Two guests were not accepted due high risk to themselves and others, mainly due to severe un-medicated mental health issues. One guest was not accepted due to local connection issue and sporadic engagement with the Rainbow centre throughout the year, as well as an inability to confirm the individual was actually street homeless at the time of registration. All four individuals were offered further support from the HSS and the manager has offered to review their circumstances at a later date, should the shelter be required still.

We operate a temporary offer of bed for those who are currently registered and accepted on the waiting list due to the shelter being full. So far, we have managed to offer temporary nights on the shelter on 15 separate occasions, where otherwise the bed would remain empty for the night.

Successes:

With the help of our partner agencies, we have managed to house nine guests into permanent accommodation so far. Most guests have moved into privately rented bedsits. One guest has been housed in supported accommodation project locally. We offer continuous support to those who have been housed. We also offer meals at the shelter for temporary period and allow previous guests to visit the Day Club, to ensure smooth transition for our guests. One of the guests has been voluntarily repatriated to another EU country.

As the demand on our services is currently higher than the 13 beds we can offer, we run a waiting list for accepted individuals. Currently, we have 3 guests on the waiting list. We decide the next guest we offer bed to depending on the individual's needs, rather than the time of registration.

We have a review policy of the guests in place. All guests accepted are only on a trial basis at first, which is reviewed after the first week. This proves particularly useful when we see individuals not previously involved with the Homeless Support Service. So far, we have had to ban one person and we issued four warning letters to individuals not turning up regularly as well as to those not adhering to the rules of the shelter.

Following to meeting with Forward Trust, we managed to have a keyworker present at the RC weekly for our guests. So far, three guests have been successfully enrolled into drug rehabilitation programme and one guest has been referred for residential alcohol detox. The keyworker focuses exclusively on guests in the shelter. We have referred five of our guests to work with Forward.

There has been a lot of media contact this year. We update our supporters via Newsletter monthly. We get offers of support from local agencies as well as individuals. We received over £ 1500 to date. The publicity is very positive and it should definitely be explored further for the future years of the shelter.

Guests and finances

40% of our guests are in receipt of Universal Credit (UC), whilst 30% of people are on sickness benefit.

Three guests have had no benefits in place. All three are now in receipt of UC.

Four guests have no recourse to public funds, due to being from another European country with no working history in the UK. One of the guests has been repatriated. The other guest has found live-in job.

We have had five guests from abroad, all of them from another European country. Four out of five have lived in the UK for over five years.

Two guests currently have irregular jobs whilst staying on the shelter.

Day to day involvement with our guests

This year, the use of the Day Club has been limited to clients staying in the shelter only. This allows building relationships with our guests and better atmosphere in the Day Club daily. The club has been used at 80% of its capacity.

We are focusing on active involvement with our guests whilst they are on the shelter. We are working closely with the HSS. We offer appointments with Drug and Alcohol Agency key worker. We also work closely with Porchlight Outreach Worker daily. Please see details of appointments attended by our guests as follows:

109	Total number of guest appointments
44	Guest appointments with Winter Shelter Project Workers
14	Guest appointments with Homeless Support Workers
28	Guest appointments by Porchlight/Sanctuary (
12	Guest appointments with Forward Trust
11	Missed appointments

18 registered individuals are current clients of the (HSS)

15 individuals work with Porchlight. Eight clients are working with both Porchlight and HSS

Referrals:

- Four GP registrations completed
- Four Porchlight referrals completed
- Five Forward referrals completed
- Three supported accommodation referrals completed

Multiple and complex needs:

Majority of our guests report multiple complex needs. This has been proved as difficult when housing the guests in the past number of years.

Out of 40 registered individuals, only two guests have no drug, alcohol, physical or mental health issues at present.

19 guests reported mental health issues. Only four individuals actively seek help from Mental Health Services. We are working with 13 guests via their GP, to get referral to Mental Health team for them.

The causes of homelessness:

Over 40% of guests have lost their last accommodation due to rent arrears. There is, however, not one single reason for the arrears. Most individuals suffer with mental health issues, many have gone through benefit changes and some are prison leavers.

Shelter in numbers – by day 38:

Total applications from individuals:	40
Total number of individuals accepted:	36
Total number of guests who stayed:	31
Total number of guests housed:	9
Total number of guests who left:	7
Total number of guests banned:	3

Out of 546 available bed spaces, 510 beds have been reserved by guests – almost 94% of potential. We have had, however, people not turning up on different occasions, bringing the number of people who actually stayed down to 81% (437 bed-nights) of the total potential. Whilst some individuals were staying away for a valid reason and agreed by staff – especially around Christmas time - some of the absences were not explained to staff. As we monitor absences of all individuals, we have now started issuing warning letters to limit bed blocking on the shelter.

Venues and Volunteers

Our previously used shelter venue – the Cornerstone Centre – has been added to our list of venues again. All the other venues remain the same.

The manager is in close contact with Venue Coordinators (VC's). We have introduced better organization of meals provided, menus are available to all VC's week in advance and local businesses offering food provisions are implemented and pre-planned, depending on the needs of VC's as well as provisions available at different churches. VC's meet with the WS staff on a monthly basis. This allows us to address any issues and it is useful for continuous feedback.

Number of volunteers initially interested this year:	220 people interested
Number of volunteer actually registered and cleared :	200 volunteers
Number of volunteers with church background	128 volunteers
Number of Volunteers via Social Media Campaigns	31 volunteers
Number of volunteers who are new this year	58 volunteers
Number of hours dedicated by volunteers:	2975 hours (Approx. £ 23294 saved so far, based on minimum wage of £ 7.83 / hour)
Average volunteer hours daily at each venue	66 hours