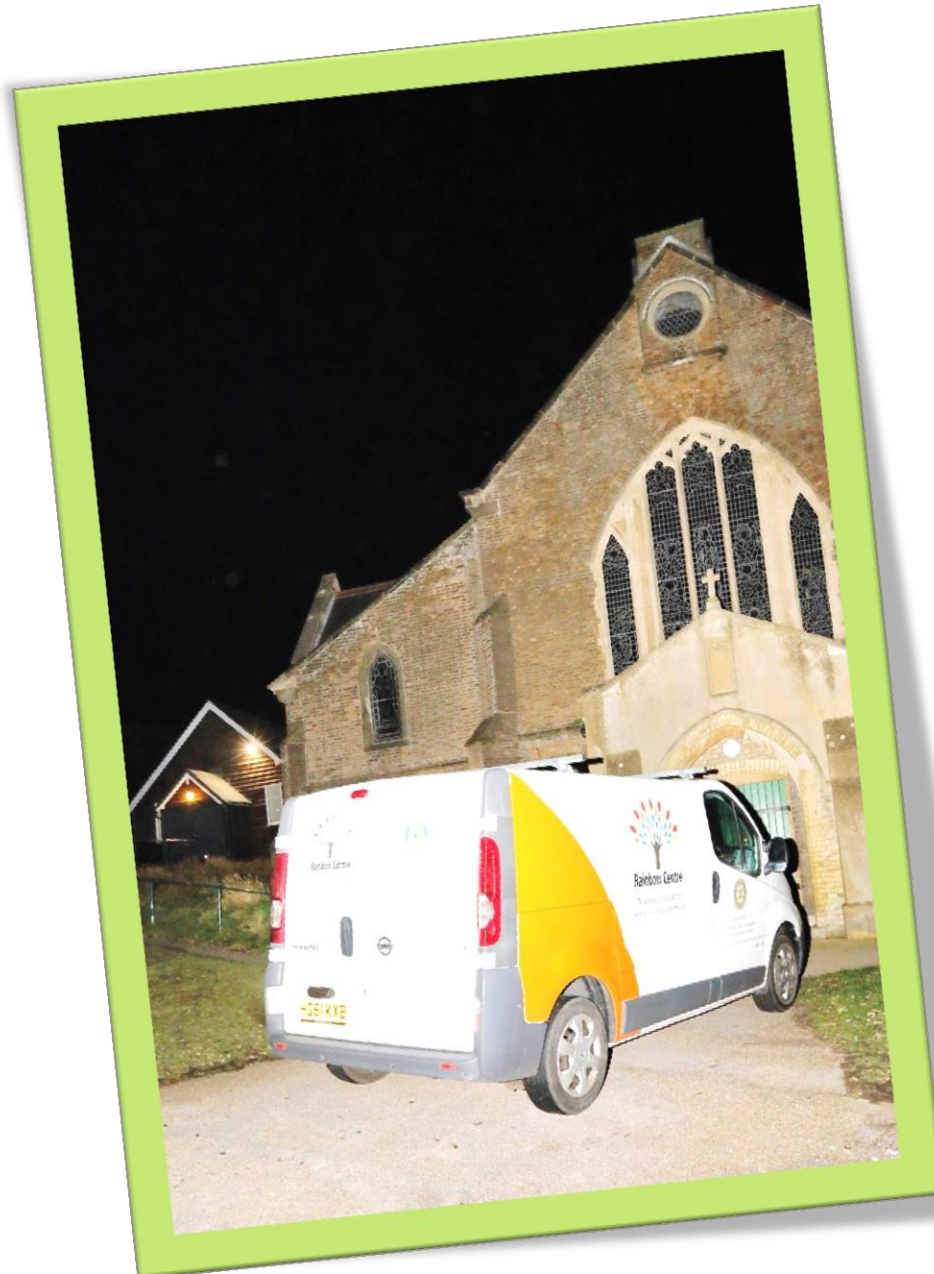


Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter

Project Report 2018 – 19



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INTRODUCTION

The Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter has now provided ten years of emergency night provision to adult vulnerable rough sleepers. The Shelter was initially set up in 2009 by Richard Fitzgerald and Captain Matt Clifton, of the Salvation Army, following the tragic death of a local homeless man. The evidence both locally and nationally shows that there is, unfortunately, a greater need than ever to provide this life saving service to the most vulnerable members of our society.

I felt humbled to be able to run our Winter Shelter this year. My own experience of working for the Winter Shelter began in winter 2015, when I joined the Shelter team as Project Worker for the first time. I have loved working on the Shelter every year since.

Sarah Elliott was, once again, working alongside me this winter, as she was appointed to be the Administrator for the shelter. Sarah previously worked in this role last year and her experience and enthusiasm, as well as knowledge of many of our volunteers proved to be an invaluable asset to the running of the Winter Shelter.

Alexandra Havova came on board as our main Project Worker. Alexandra has had previous experience working in the charity sector back in the Czech Republic. Alexandra became an invaluable part of the team very early on. Her sense of humour and amazing interaction with our guests was appreciated by many and it was a delight to work alongside her.

Jon Heintz was new to the Winter Shelter team, but not new to the Rainbow Centre. Previously Jon worked for Porchlight as an Outreach Worker and as such he was based in the Centre working alongside the Homeless Support Team. He has certainly brought knowledge and experience to the role and it was a real comfort and reassurance to some of our guests who knew Jon from his previous job in Folkestone.

We welcomed Alison Lynd as part of our team for the second time this year as a Project Worker. Alison worked as volunteer for the Winter Shelter in previous years and so brought a gift set of experience into the role. She also worked in the Day Centre with the support of our Day Centre volunteers.

I'd like to say a big thank you to all the staff and volunteers at the Rainbow Centre. Ali Chambers (CEO), John Burgess (Homeless Support Service Project Manager), Sara Heffernan and Charlie Oakes (Homeless Support Service Project Workers), Sir William Fittall (Chair of Trustees) have been thoroughly supportive of the Project and we were grateful for their backing and support time and time again.

A special thank you also goes out to the Steering Committee, working closely with the team of the Winter Shelter to provide support and guidance and ensure the improvement of the Winter Shelter every year.

To all who have supported us through another year of the Winter Shelter, thank you!

Jana Ernest

Winter Shelter Project Manager

SUMMARY

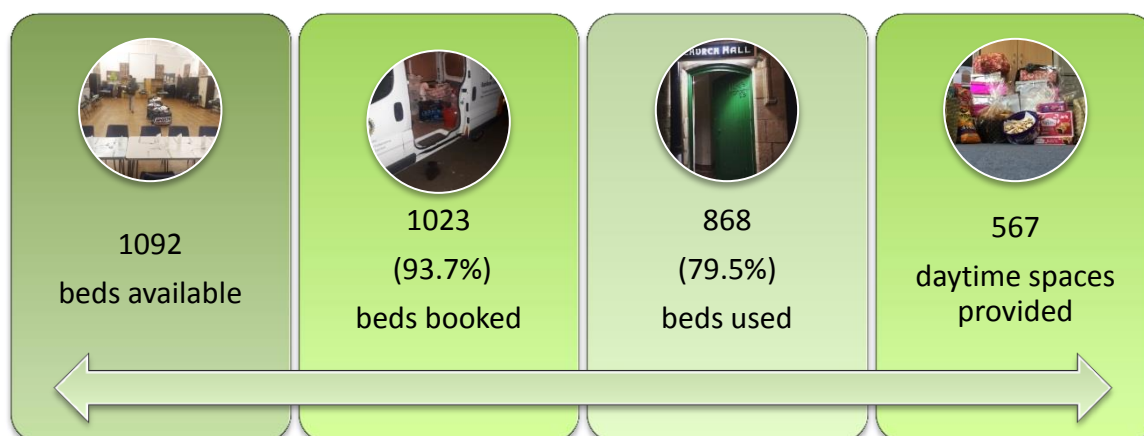
We have welcomed 184 active volunteers taking over our seven venues as well as daily in the Day Club at the Rainbow Centre. Our volunteers gave a total of 5895 hours to us, all free, to provide life-saving service to our guests. Our volunteers put together a total of 1023 army style camp beds during the duration of the Winter Shelter. We have been operating for 84 days and 84 nights this winter. We stopped counting the cups of teas and coffees after the first few days (the amount of sugar used by our guests was also staggering!).

As well as an alarming shortage of affordable accommodation in Folkestone and Hythe, within both social and private sector, we are witnessing an increasing number of vulnerable people locally who are presenting at the Rainbow Centre with multiple complex needs. This is not a good combination and the effect on homelessness in Folkestone and Hythe is clearly demonstrated in this report.

The street count is undertaken yearly by Folkestone and Hythe District Council. On the day of the count in autumn 2018, there were 18 people found sleeping rough on the streets of Folkestone. The Homeless Support Team at the Rainbow Centre, together with other agencies locally, also conducts outreach mornings on regular basis. The number of people sleeping rough, based on data from our list of reported rough sleepers accessing the Rainbow Centre services, as well as general awareness of people sleeping rough, was estimated to be over 25 individuals in autumn 2018.

At the Rainbow Centre, our daily work with people who potentially access the Winter Shelter during the winter months is continuously affected by the lack of affordable housing, as well as increasing number of guests with multiple needs, not always directly connected with their housing situation. We see people with addictions, those with limited access to benefits and increasingly in the recent years a higher number of people with mental health issues.

Whilst twelve weeks of intensive daily work with clients on the shelter has definitely proved as the best approach when tackling homelessness, many of our guests simply needed a rest. The main aim of the Winter Shelter is to provide an evening and night shelter for homeless people in Folkestone using church buildings and volunteers through the coldest period of the winter. We have offered exactly this to people with deep rooted problems and poor engagement with other services locally.



SHELTER CULTURE

The Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter operates under the umbrella of the Folkestone Rainbow Centre, a Christian Charity supporting people in crisis. Its aims are:

- To provide an evening and night shelter for homeless people in Folkestone using church buildings and volunteers through the coldest period of the winter
- To engage church members and the wider community with some of the most vulnerable people in Folkestone without discrimination, expressing Christian compassion in building supportive relationships that help homeless guests towards independent living.
- To work in partnership with the Rainbow Centre's Homeless Support Service and other key agencies, who will assist and empower homeless people to make positive changes in their lives.

FOLKESTONE CHURCHES WINTER SHELTER STEERING COMMITTEE

The Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter Steering Committee meets regularly before, during and after the Winter Shelter.

The role of the Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter Steering Committee is as follows:

- Ensure the project is aligned with the aims of the shelter.
- Ensure the project operates in a way consistent with the values and policies of the Folkestone Rainbow Centre.
- Ensure the project makes good use of assets.
- Assist with resolving strategic level issues and risks.
- Approve or reject changes to the project with a high impact on timelines and budget.
- Provide advice and guidance on business issues facing the project.
- Use influence and authority to assist the project in achieving its outcomes.
- Review and approve final project deliverables

Quote from our volunteer:

...Seems to be improving every year!

*Excellent team, hardworking, pleasant,
approachable...*

CHRISTIAN ETHOS

The Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter is a community project of the Folkestone Rainbow Centre.

“Whenever you possibly can, do good to those who need it.

Never tell your neighbours to wait until tomorrow if you can help them now”.

Proverbs 3:27 Good News Translation



“It was important to use my time, opportunity and ability to support others.”

“One guest told me how important being in the night shelter was to him and how he hated being homeless and really wanted to change things.”

FUNDING & COSTS



FCWS Project Income & Expenditure 2018-2019

Income

Church & Community	£2,000.00
Don Hanson Charitable Foundation	£5,000.00
Folkestone Town Council	£2,000.00
Kent Police	£3,000.00
Awards for All	£10,000.00
Shepway District Council	£10,000.00
Unite	£100.00
Church Donations	£4,187.00
Donations from Individuals	£9,182.78

Total Income

£45,469.78

Expenditure

Recruitment Costs for Staff	£958.80
Project Staff Salaries	£29,984.76
CRB's and Training	£1,350.15
Contributions to Rainbow Centre (insurance ,gas+el., rent)	£9,650.00
Contribution to Venue Costs & Catering	£233.75
Vehicle Costs	£1,663.16
Transport	£118.10
Printing	£7.88
Postage and Carriage	£280.73
Beds and Bedding	£846.96
Fundraising Expenditure	£456.60
Sundry Expenses not listed	£1,020.14

Total Expenditure for year

£46,571.03

Hidden Funding

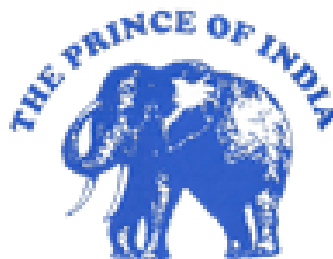
A vast amount of toiletries, socks and other items were directly given to the staff at the Rainbow Centre in support of the shelter and were incredibly useful for guests who arrived with virtually the 'shirts' on their backs.

Most of the food and refreshments were provided by churches and their volunteers during the Winter Shelter weeks. We received amazing amounts of toiletries, clothes, and other items used by our guests. The items were also available directly from the Rainbow Centre offices, with limited stock travelling on the van from venue to venue for emergencies. This proved particularly useful on the occasions where new guests came with nothing spare to wear and during wet days and nights.

We have been blessed with other donated services coming from local organizations and individuals:



Folkestone Podiatry Practice



CHURCHES

Seven churches offered us the essential space by opening the doors of their church halls this year, once again. We are extremely grateful to our local churches for their hospitality and warm welcome during the 12 weeks of running of the Winter Shelter.

We welcomed an old-new venue building on board this year, the South Kent Community Church at the Cornerstone Centre. This building was previously used as one of our venues, so it wasn't all that unfamiliar and we are glad we could use this centrally located venue once again.

Special thanks to all the hosting churches and other local churches supporting us in many different ways.



Folkestone
Methodist Church

*

South Kent Community
Church

*

Our Lady Help of Christians
Catholic Church

*

St. Paul's Church

*

St John's Church

*

Hill Rd. Baptist Church

*

Holy Trinity Church

VENUE COORDINATORS

Venue Coordinators (VCs) are the backbone of the Winter Shelter Project. We cannot emphasise enough the importance of our VCs. Smooth running at each venue is all thanks to our amazing VCs. From planning the rotas, to looking after the venues, the VCs are the first point of contact for the Winter Shelter office and an important link between the Winter Shelter office and its volunteers as well as the venues.

This year, we welcomed Francoise Lloyd back as a Venue Coordinator. Francoise has been involved in running of the shelter for many years and we appreciate her enthusiasm and great knowledge of different aspects of the Winter Shelter.

Two of our previous years' volunteers joined us this year in a Venue Coordinator role. John Philpott and Liz Willis – thank you for stepping in and offering to coordinate one of our venues this winter. Your support during the Shelter has been invaluable!

We welcomed a new Venue Coordinator this year at our Saturday venue after a sad passing of Tony Barr, who did so much for us as VC in previous years. Kevin Hodge, the Facilities Manager at Hill Road Baptist Church took up the role. This was a brand new experience for Kevin, not only as a VC, but also first time involvement in the Winter Shelter in general. And he did a brilliant job!

We were grateful to welcome back Chrissie Forrest, Bill Mills, Linda and Richard Wilsher and Peter Truss. These experienced VCs come back year after year, offering the expertise, energy and passion we could not do without.



VOLUNTEERS



When it comes to the recruitment of volunteers, we have been very lucky again this winter. We have welcomed 184 actively involved volunteers. From hairdressing to cooking, each of our volunteers has brought something unique to the running of the Winter Shelter. As we keep repeating year after year, our volunteers are the reason this project works so well. Day after day, an amazing bunch of people ensures our guests are treated with respect and dignity at all times.

Our volunteers chat to guests, play board games, set up the venues, drive our van, cook, serve, offer Reiki sessions, physiotherapy, hairdressing and barbering services, look after our guests during the night and spend time with them in our Day Centre at the Rainbow Centre day by day, for twelve weeks. There are so many elements of volunteers in a successful Winter Shelter, all equally important to our guests.

Thank you to all those who we have had the chance to work with, from church leaders to caretakers, and everyone directly or indirectly involved in the shelter. You have all been amazing in making sure the Winter Shelter ran as smoothly as it could.

The hours that volunteers were able to offer and give us varied from one to 352 hours during the 12 weeks of running of the Winter Shelter. The total number of volunteer hours this year was 5896. When calculating these hours on minimum wage, this equates to £ 46,138!



The Rainbow Centre has achieved the 'Investing in Volunteers' accreditation, this was the results of a year's worth of work looking at everything with a fine tooth comb, including our values, policies, communication, support, training, and much more, right down to how we thank people. Achieving the accreditation was important to us as an organisation, because this award means we can be confident that we are supporting our volunteers in the way they deserve.



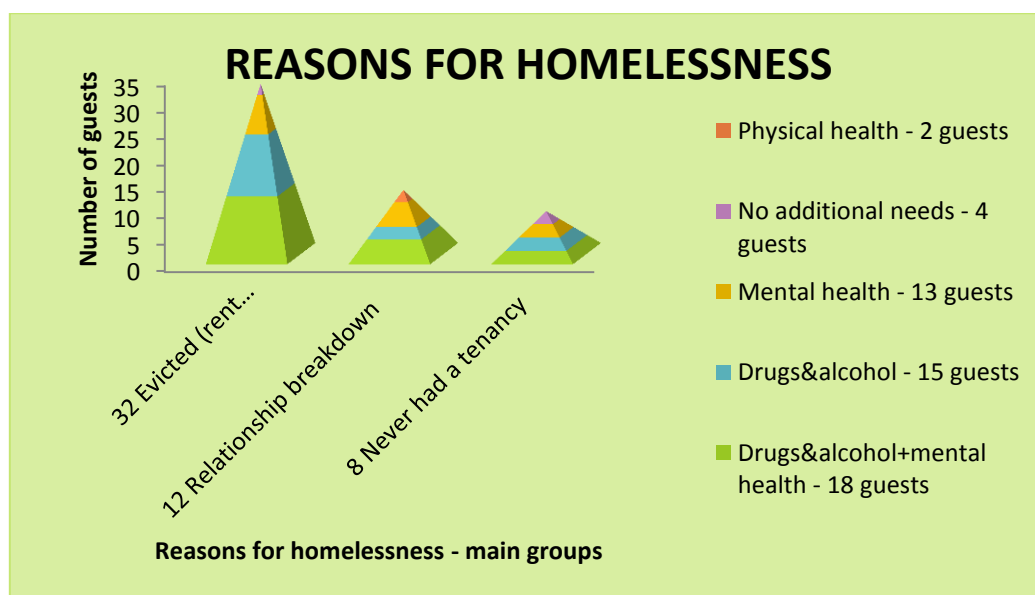
GUESTS

The majority of our guests this year were men and women who currently access the Homeless Support Service at the Rainbow Centre and those who work closely with Porchlight Outreach Worker in Folkestone. It is worth mentioning that many (72%) of these individuals have local connection to Folkestone and they are engaging with the housing services of the Folkestone and Hythe District Council.

Before the shelter opened this year, we were aware of about 24 rough sleepers in Folkestone. Due to this high number, 'local connection' was a system implemented again this year. This meant that under the discretion of the Project Manager, only people with connection and/or ties to Folkestone were considered when registering individuals for the Winter Shelter. Our criteria were slightly different from the ones the Council uses and more individual approach was still offered. The registrations were only accepted in person and they were conducted by the staff of the Rainbow Centre. There were only two occasions where we had to implement this rule. On both occasions the reasons were high risk due to lack of information submitted by the individual in order to complete the risk assessment responsibly. Both individuals were offered support by the Rainbow Centre.

We saw similar pattern of reasons behind our clients' homelessness situation, with the majority of clients seeking our help due to loss of tenancy after being evicted due to rent arrears. Relationship breakdown was another reason often given as reason why individuals became homeless.

Please see graph showing the complexity of the needs of majority of our clients. Please note many of our guests stated a combination of reasons.



This year, we have seen an increase in number of guests with major multiple needs alongside their homelessness situation. Out of 52 registered individuals, only four clients didn't have any further needs other than homelessness (less than 8% of all individuals). 23% of all our guests were women this year, which was the highest percentage of homeless women in our area to date. We managed to help house all women who engaged with our services this winter.

Whilst most of our clients have reported multiple and complex needs during the registration, only a minority was engaging with appropriate services when they initially came to us to register for the Winter Shelter.

We put great emphasis on closer engagement with agencies and services our guests most likely needed the support from in order to deal with their complex needs. For the first time this year, we managed to secure a Recovery Worker from Forward Trust's Drug & Alcohol services to work directly with Winter Shelter clients at the Rainbow Centre on weekly basis. Porchlight Outreach Worker was also available and worked closely with our existing clients. Some of the new guests were referred to Porchlight. Many guests were referred to access GP services and our Project Workers accompanied them to their appointments. We contacted rental agencies and offered advocacy work for those who were ready to be privately housed. We helped complete Homelessness Applications with FHDC for those who needed it. We assisted with contacts with DWP for clients who needed help with benefit queries and applications over the phone, online and in person. We offered care of address to those who needed address in order to access local services or open a bank account for example. We helped secure appropriate forms of ID for those whose lack of ID proved to be an obstacle when looking for accommodation. We helped register eligible clients with Homechoice, and helped them when bidding for appropriate accommodation via the council. We successfully referred two clients into supported accommodation projects locally. With the help of the Home Office, we managed to repatriate one of our clients back to their country of origin, which was what the guest wished to do.

The use of the Day Centre played a vital role in achieving these successes. Over the twelve weeks, the Day Centre was used at 77% of total capacity, with nine guests visiting the centre on average daily.

Please refer to table below, recording the number of appointments our guests attended during the twelve weeks of the shelter (we recorded only eleven missed appointments during that time):

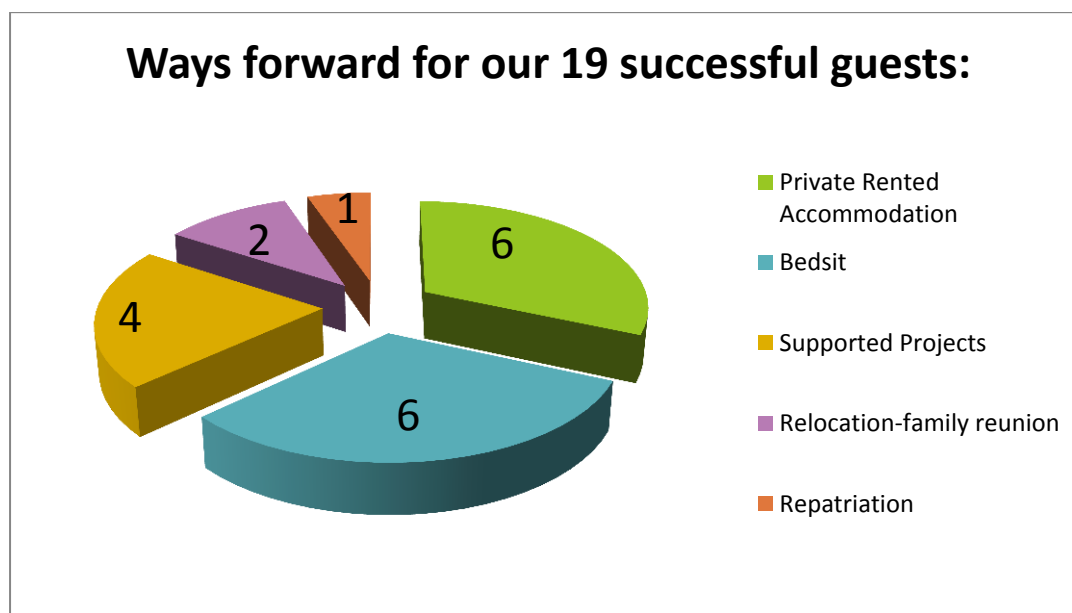
Number of appointments booked for our guests during shelter	172
Appointments with Winter Shelter	79
Appointments with Homeless Support Service	36
Appointments with Porchlight – not including Thursday Drop-Ins	31
Appointments with Forward	15

For those who were lucky to find accommodation whilst staying in the shelter, we helped with getting household essentials and offered continuous support of the Winter Shelter and the Rainbow Centre. Our guests were welcome to come and join us for dinners after they were housed. We made contact with newly housed clients regularly, in order to ensure longer term sustainment in accommodation through welfare checks. We work with many of our newly housed guests currently, in order to address their other issues, i.e. physical and mental health, debts or relationship issues for example.

Number of clients registered to stay in the shelter	52
Number of clients accepted to stay in the shelter	48
Number of clients who actually stayed in the shelter	36
Number of clients moved on (housed, relocated, repatriated, reunited)	19
Number of clients who never stayed- current whereabouts unknown	12

One of the most suitable solutions for many of our guests is supported accommodation. We managed to refer three guests into supported accommodation projects locally this year. Two of the guests are in the projects already. One guest was accepted into a project in Dover and will be moving before the end of March. The average waiting time following to acceptance into such project is three to twelve months; therefore the above number is a great success for the team this year.

We managed to help a total of 19 guests move out of the streets. Despite this, we still had 13 guests on the last night of the shelter. The Day Centre, multi-agency approach and hard work of our guests proved to be the best combination when moving people away from sleep rough on our streets. The Rainbow Centre Homeless Support Service is determined to work with our Winter Shelter guests beyond the shelter ending date, and we will do all we can to support more people into stable accommodation and away from homelessness in the near future.



CASE STUDY

During the 12 weeks of the Winter Shelter, things can move on pretty fast for our guests. The average number of days it took us to support people away from the street and into accommodation was 20 days.

However sometimes we meet people who simply aren't ready to make that leap forward. We work with people who come back to use the shelter year after year before they themselves are ready to be moved on. Due to the instability of some accommodation options available to our guests, some guests are quickly housed, only to come to us the next year again. Greater emphasis needs to be put on active engagement and offering a helping hand to those who get housed, in order to ensure long sustainment in their new situation. Going into accommodation can be very intimidating and unfamiliar, especially after years of sleeping rough.

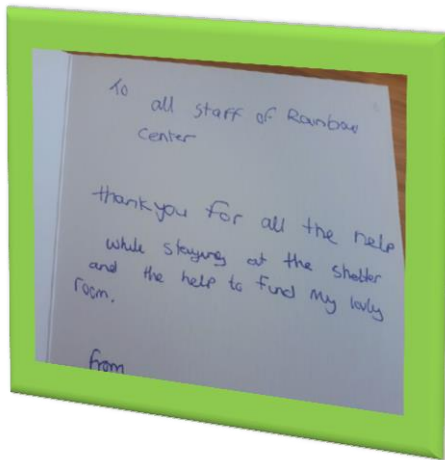
This year, we welcomed people who never accessed the services of the Rainbow Centre prior to the Winter Shelter opening. We worked with a young woman (AB – initials changed) who had recently separated from her partner. As the tenancy was in her partner's name, she has had to leave the property. This guest has never had a tenancy in her name.

AB was sleeping rough since August 2018, and had some options to sofa surf on an irregular basis. AB has not worked and she was in receipt of incapacity benefit - she reported having mental health issues and she was seen regularly by the local mental health team. The guest was taking regular medication for her mental health issues. AB reported historical and current suicide ideations and numerous suicide attempts. She reported that last suicide attempt happened about a week before the shelter registration. Since becoming homeless, AB reported occasional drugs and alcohol use as a form of self-medication and way of coping with the complexity of her difficult situation. She made a homeless application with the local council prior to contacting us for help, and was deemed as not in being in priority need.

The team quickly recognised the pressing need for this young woman was to access a supported project, where her current needs could be met and her overall wellbeing monitored. We referred this woman into a supported accommodation project locally, and our project worker accompanied the guest to an interview. AB was accepted and moved into her new accommodation with on-site support soon after. We worked closely with the supporting team after she moved, and helped with essentials for her new property.

This example highlights the recently increasing number of people with complex needs seeking our help and demonstrated the need for a more multi layered approach when helping our guests. Whilst our first aim is to keep people safe and warm in the coldest months of the year, for many, the shelter environment is not a suitable place, although better than sleeping rough on the streets. AB is an example of someone who needed to be moved on into supported project quickly, to avoid further mental health deterioration.

FEEDBACK



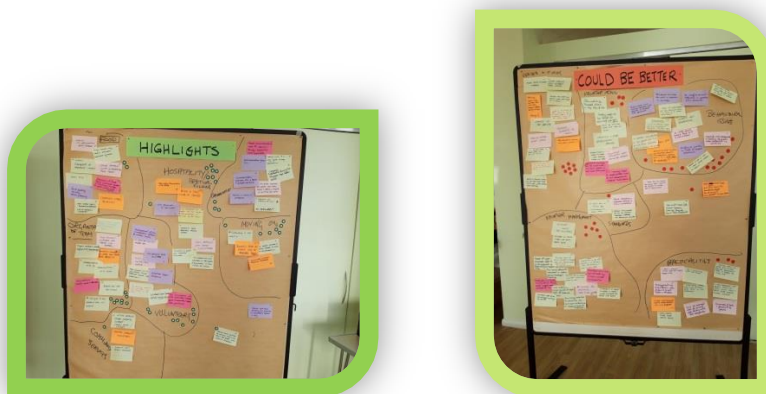
...She still came for dinners, after she had moved into her place. She was saying she was so grateful to Rainbow Centre and the Shelter that she wanted to become a volunteer herself

The Post-Implementation Review was attended by a cross section of people including: guests, Rainbow Centre and Winter Shelter staff, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Porchlight, church leaders, venue coordinators and volunteers. The meeting consisted of attendees putting 'Highlights' and 'Could be better' notes on post-it notes and sticking them on the corresponding board.

This year, we also did a separate Review for members of staff only. This meeting focused more around strategic, planning and logistics of the running of the Shelter from an internal perspective.

We distributed feedback forms for volunteers to complete. Thank you to everyone who returned the forms to us.

"I enjoyed a really nice chat with her. She is feeling positive and looking forward to moving into her own place. She told me about her anxiety and how she feels it will really calm down when she is settled into her own



HIGHLIGHTS:

- Safe, dry space for 36 people across the twelve weeks
- Moving guests on to more stable accommodation
- Great outcomes and on-going support
- Structured and organised approach
- Wider community engagement
- Positive partnerships with key local agencies & businesses
- Hospitality and food provision
- Generosity of the general public
- Clear communication and regular meetings

AREAS FOR REVIEW:

- Review responsibilities of venues and their coordinators
- Look at venue suitability
- Shifts handovers process
- Management of guests' behaviour / application of guests' access policy
- Engagement of volunteers between themselves and with our guests
- Managing expectations of all concerned, including the guests
- Volunteer management and administration process review



OUR THANKS

The Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter is extremely grateful for the help and support it receives from a wide variety of organisations and individuals for all manner of things including: volunteering, advice, support, funding, fundraising, promotion & publicizing, hairdressing, podiatry, leadership, fire & safety, risk assessment and the list goes on!

Special Thanks

We would like to acknowledge that our heartfelt thanks go to all the supporters already mentioned in our report and also to the following people and organisations:

- Churches Together Folkestone
- Trustees of the Folkestone Rainbow Centre
- St Andrews Methodist Church & Anya Goldsack
- The Police and PCSOs
- The Ambulance Service and local Paramedics
- Sam Humberstone and her team at Shepway Foodbank
- Rainbow Centre Foodstop
- Rainbow Centre's Homeless Support Service & Volunteers
- Rainbow Shop Cheriton
- Action on Homelessness in Folkestone
- Salvation Army Folkestone Charity shop
- Helping the Homeless and Vulnerable – Salvation Army
- Folkestone and Hythe District Council
- Steep Street Coffee House – for the Rainbow Centre edition of “Steep Street Journal”
- Jaroslav Ernest (Ernie) & Porchlight
- David Ashogbon & TNA Solicitors
- Terry Cooke-Davies – for guiding us through the evaluation process
- Theresa Fowler - for all the media attention
- Bill Regan - for his Fire safety knowledge, advice and expertise
- Dawn Kellers – for keeping us in the black!
- Terry Cooke-Davies – for guiding us through the evaluation process
- Bill Regan - for his Fire safety knowledge, advice and expertise
- Jan Staines & Barbara Barnes (Jarbara) & volunteers from “Thursday Rainbow Club”
- Coach & Horses Pub in Lyminge
- Anthony Round Hog Roasts
- Steve Pospisil from Brabourne Leas Spar shop
- Erica Gallagher & Lyn Osbourne for their hairdressing and barbering skills
- Tunde Danmole for his physiotherapy skills offered to our guests
- Janet Edwards for her Reiki & Irlen screening opportunities donated to our guests
- Eric Brooks - for stepping up when we needed you the most!

Everyone who has fundraised for us or donated to us this year, from socks to mince pies!



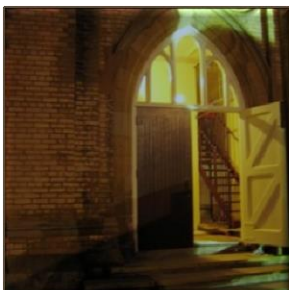
184 Volunteers

**WINTER
SHELTER**



5895 Volunteer
Hours

7 Venues



1092 Bed
Spaces