



**FOLKESTONE CHURCHES WINTER SHELTER 2011-12**  
**PROJECT REPORT**



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION BY PROJECT MANAGER

The Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter has now completed its third year of operation, continuing to offer shelter in Folkestone for the homeless over the coldest months of the year. This winter it ran for a total of 84 nights from 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2011, until the morning of 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2012. During this period the Winter Shelter has been supported by 224 volunteers providing 5420 volunteer hours which enabled the running of the shelter for 33 guests. Guests and volunteers sat down together and enjoyed over 1000 hot meals. Aside from those who accessed shelter beds, project staff engaged with a further 36 homeless or vulnerably housed people.

The measure of success of a Winter Shelter Project should be judged by its ability to meet a real need and for it to be a positive sustainable experience for guests. It can also be a worthwhile and life-changing experience for volunteers and staff involved. With the Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter having just completed another year, I am confident it has achieved this. If we have taken steps in making positive differences to those who have accessed the shelter and made the experience for those involved in their well-being rewarding, then we have reached these ambitions.

On appointment as the new Project Manager for 2011-2012, I became acutely aware from the start that I was in the privileged position of being able to build on the experiences and successes of the two preceding years. I am, and remain, deeply indebted to the stewardship of previous managers, namely Richard Fitzgerald in the first year and Colin Bridgland in the second year. An army of volunteers, many volunteering for the third time, and new recruits who came forward to offer their services continue to be the real force behind the shelter. The overwhelming generosity given by the churches, their leaders and volunteer coordinators have ensured once again that guests have been welcomed into their halls and offered shelter, warmth, food and most importantly given a voice and a non-judgemental, listening ear. Jon Wilson, CEO, and Richard Bellamy, Centre Manager, of the Folkestone Rainbow Centre were invaluable in their day-to-day support. Along with the Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter Steering Group, they have continued to offer leadership, administration and governance. The goodwill of the people of Folkestone has remained apparent and constant. I have, also, been fortunate in having such a dedicated team in Karen, John and Luke. Their compassion and professionalism have been outstanding.

Each year the Winter shelter operates we can not only learn from the experience but also through dialogue and action improve the service and continue to help those most in need.

On a personal note my tenure as this year's Winter Shelter Project Manager has been a very happy one indeed and it remains an experience that will stay with me always.

Thank you all.

*Charles Oakes*

Charlie Oakes

**Project Manager**

### **WHAT IS THE FOLKESTONE CHURCHES WINTER SHELTER**

Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter (FCWS) is a temporary night shelter that provides homeless guests with the following:

A warm bed

Shelter from the winter weather

Hot drinks and meals

Support in accessing relevant longer term solutions

Activities to facilitate wellbeing and positive self esteem



The Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter project was established in 2009 by Churches Together Folkestone and other local interests and has just completed its third winter of operation. It runs for 12 weeks between early December and late February. This year the first night was 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2011, closing on the morning of 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2012.

Four staff are employed full-time for the course of the project; a Project Manager, an Administrative Assistant and two Project Workers.

It's primarily goal is to provide temporary shelter for the three "coldest" months of the year. The project manager and workers oversee the running of the shelter whilst also engaging in advocacy on behalf of the guests and others who do not access the shelter.

The shelter relies on six local churches to provide the nightly venues and is staffed by over 200 volunteers. Each night volunteers come together to prepare the venue, cook meals and socialise with our guests.

The Folkestone Rainbow Centre provides the shelter with its management, whilst financial support comes from various funders, local churches and the people of Folkestone and further afield.

### **AIMS**

The Four aims of the Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter are;

- To provide an evening and night shelter for homeless people in Folkestone using church buildings and members through the coldest period of winter.
- To engage church members with some of the most vulnerable people in Folkestone without discrimination, expressing Christian compassion in building supportive relationships.
- To help homeless people move on to appropriate accommodation, resisting dependency on the shelter.
- To establish the funding and administrative support necessary to enable the provision of such a shelter to continue in future years.



## **CHRISTIAN ETHOS**

'Defend the rights of the poor and  
the orphans;  
be fair to the needy and the helpless.  
Rescue them from the power of the wicked'

Psalm 82:3-4

Through Christian compassion, we seek to provide a comfortable environment for our guests. We come together to show that faith, love, forgiveness and prayer can bring about a transformation in the lives of the homeless in Folkestone.

"Help to carry one another's burdens, and in  
this way you will obey the law of Christ."

Galatians 6:2

We seek to follow Christ and embrace the dis-enfranchised in society. Often little compassion is shown to those that need it but, following Jesus' example with Bartimaeus (Mark 10: 46-52), we need to step out and bring our skills to benefit others.

Further reading: Matthew 25: 31-46 / Psalm 49 / Proverbs 19:17 / Proverbs 14:31 /  
Isaiah 58: 6-9 / 61:1-2.

## Governance

The FCWS operated this year under the umbrella of the Folkestone Rainbow Centre (FRC), with oversight of its Trustees and the Rainbow Centre's Chief Executive acting as Project Director for the winter shelter. FCWS is not an independent charity. The project staff (the Project Manager, two Project Workers and an Administrator) and the CEO operate under the guidance and support of a Steering Group. This group is made up of members from the Shepway Homelessness Forum, existing local Christian ministries, and representatives from participating Churches. The current Steering Group is:

Jon Wilson - CEO The Folkestone Rainbow Centre (Chair)  
Rupert Bristow - Chair of the Trustees of the Folkestone Rainbow Centre  
Lynne Beaumont – Champion of the Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter  
Rev. Rosemary Siebert – Folkestone Rainbow Centre Trustee, St. Mary's & St.  
Eanswythe's, St Saviours  
Rev. Hilary Nabarro - Folkestone United Reformed Church & CTF  
Debbie Fletcher – Foodstop  
Kimba Smith – Shepway District Council  
Vikki Woodall – Representing Hosting Churches

## 2. THE SHELTER

### BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE WINTER SHELTER



- Daytime      Advocacy work with guests regarding housing, healthcare, benefits etc. based at FRC
- 5.45 to  
7pm          Pick up van, load shelter and travel to venue and unload.
- 7.15pm      Brief venue co-ordinator and volunteer staff
- 7.30pm to  
7.45am      The night shelter is open, providing a hot meal and a bed for the night and a light breakfast before closing at 7.45am

The Winter Shelter took place in 6 different church venues across Folkestone, one each night of the week. The United Reform Church hosting two nights

Mondays: Sandgate Road Methodist Church

Tuesdays: South Kent Community Church

Wednesdays: St Saviour's Church



Harbour Community Church (Saturdays)

Thursdays: Salvation Army

Fridays: United Reformed Church

Saturdays: Harbour Community Church

Sundays: United Reformed Church

## **GUESTS**

Our guests have presented with the full gamut of issues that lead to homelessness. Addiction issues very much to the fore often coupled with mental health problems. Others presented as a result of financial difficulties, immigration status and personal relationship breakdowns.

It became evident from the experience of previous years that there appeared to be grey areas concerning the admission of intoxicated guests to the shelter. A decision was made to tighten these rules. The safety of guests, volunteers and staff is of paramount importance to any shelter. If the parameters are wishy-washy and inconsistent this can not only lead to potential dangerous situations but, also adversely affect the dynamics of a winter shelter, leading to conflict among guests and safety concerns for volunteers. Each guest was made aware of the rules and regulations before admission to the shelter. Guests who presented at the shelter intoxicated would not be admitted and no alcohol or drugs to enter the venue. Alcohol would, also, no longer be stored overnight.

Each guest was read the rules at the assessment interview and after checking that they were understood each guest was asked to sign to that effect. All guests who presented at the Shelter were assessed each night by two staff members at the door. Those guests who appeared over intoxicated on arrival were challenged as to their presentation and if considered too intoxicated were refused admission, offered a sleeping bag or blankets and asked to speak to a member of the shelter staff the following day.

There appeared to be more opposition from volunteers than guests to this tightening of rules. Some volunteers verbalising their concerns at the training days that it was harsh and difficult to apply. It is however the team's belief that a shelter should be a safe haven for guests and volunteers and if we let in clearly over intoxicated guests there is no incentive for them and others to change their lives around.



The guests have been a joy to be around. We have shared many a sad and happy moment. We have tried to create an atmosphere in the shelter where they are not judged but listened to and heard. We would like to thank our guests as they have played their part in ensuring that the shelter has, barring a couple of incidents, been a safe environment. All who come to the shelter; guests, staff and volunteers have been able

to share each other's company in a peaceful environment that aids the removal of the preconceptions and stigma around homelessness. Games of chess, art and craft evenings, singalongs by the piano would leave any stranger wondering who there is homeless. In a spirit of Christian compassion we have been able to share laughter and tears and hopefully brought a bit of "normality" to some chaotic lives.



## VOLUNTEERS

Over the course of the 12 weeks, 224 volunteers provided 5420 staffing hours in ensuring the shelter could run its course. In addition many people gave up their time in cooking off site and delivering food to the shelter venues.

The roles volunteers undertook included setting up the venue, helping with the cooking at the church, engaging and chatting with the guests in the evening, staying overnight and clearing up the next morning.

Volunteers came principally from the churches that have acted as venues over the three years the project has been running so far. In addition, parishioners from many other churches in and around Folkestone came forward in support, as did a number of people of no faith. Our thanks go to you all.



Every volunteer was asked to complete a volunteer form so FCWS could centrally hold details of their availability, experience, special skills (e.g. first aid), contact details etc. Volunteers had to provide referees to provide suitable references and The Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter also carried out enhanced CRB checks this year.

Volunteer numbers were slightly down on last year being roughly half-way between the first and second years. Some people expressed to John (Administrative Assistant) that the reason they weren't volunteering was because of CRBs having to be put in place. It must be said that, on the whole, volunteers understood the need for CRBs or, at least, were appreciative of the reasons why they have been undertaken.

The continued willingness of the people of Folkestone to come forward as volunteers is remarkable. Some of our volunteers have come forward for the third year, whilst others have, hopefully, displayed the sustainability of the shelter project by coming forward for the first time. It is appreciated that coming forward is a major commitment and great determination is often shown in stepping out of one's comfort zone. One volunteer explained how she, "...felt nervous at first but has found it (shelter) an amazing experience."

The volunteers have brought their skills with them into the project. They have spent time with our guests, listened to them and given good, practical advice. Our guests are thankful of the listening ear that awaits them and to meet with people who engage with them rather than pretend they're not there.

The warm, welcoming environment has been maintained consistently by the volunteers. The volunteers are what make the shelter work, forming the backbone and holding the project together.

They help to bring welcome relief to some and achieve lasting change in others. We hope all the volunteers are rightfully proud of what they have achieved over the last three years of the winter shelter.

The shelter staff are hopeful that volunteers also hear the heartfelt thanks that are, time and again, expressed by the guests about how thankful they are for all that the volunteers do.

### **VENUE CO-ORDINATORS**

The shelter is again indebted to its volunteer venue co-ordinators (VCs). Each night of the week had a separate venue co-ordinator, charged with the responsibility of ensuring the venue was "ready to go" for that evening.

The venue co-ordinators were provided with lists of volunteers from the administrative assistant and contacted the volunteers to ensure that the shelter was staffed with enough cooks, listening ears and insomniacs.



The VCs ensured that each venue ran smoothly and helped to ensure that volunteers throughout the evening, night and next morning had all they needed to provide shelter for our guests. They helped the catering staff ensure that meals were provided. They disseminated important information such as that related to Fire and Health and Safety to volunteers throughout the shelter. They also brought Christians from different denominations and non-Christians together in helping the town's homeless.



The shelter staff appreciate that the VCs ideally needed more lead-in time, but time ahead of the start date had to be traded off against numbers of volunteers processed.

As much as is possible, the time and effort put in by the VCs is recognised and our sincerest thanks go to all those that came forward. The Project Manager felt that the staff's work each night was made easier because of the hard-work and determination of the VCs.

### **3. AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS**

#### **THE SALVATION ARMY**

The Salvation Army (SA) was a significant organisation in setting up the FCWS and remains an integral part of the Winter Shelter. Amongst the services the Salvation Army provides are breakfast for our guests from Monday to Friday during the shelter and allowing the project team to use their washing machine and dryer to process the not inconsiderable amount of bedding that the shelter generated.

The project team also had use of the Salvation Army Luton van to deliver the shelter 'equipment' (bedding, mattresses etc.) to the venue in the evening and collect it in the morning to stow in our garage, before returning the van to the Salvation Army prior to 9am. The shelter recognises the 'hidden' costs incurred by the Salvation Army over the 12 weeks of the shelter and that the Salvation Army has been an essential part of the running of the shelter to date, both financially and in terms of buildings and staff. The Salvation Army was able to refer guests to us who often came to their premises when at their lowest ebb.

The Salvation Army building is heavily used by many other groups and organisations (including a pre-school, Mums and Toddlers, health clinics...) with a virtually constant flow of comings and goings. With this in mind it was important that the shelter agreed and kept to arrangements about how we and the guests were going to use the building. All the shelter staff are grateful to the constant and friendly support given by Neil, the captain; Julie, the manager and all the Salvation Army team and are proud of the good working relationship formed between the Salvation Army and the shelter.

#### **OTHER CHURCHES:**

The Project Manager would like to thank the United Reformed Church for stepping in and supplying two venue nights for the course of the shelter, at such short notice.

The shelter is reliant on the various venue churches finding free evenings amongst all the services they provide to fit us into their schedules. This year it proved difficult to have the same venues on the same nights as the previous two years. After some

moving of churches to other days of the week, the United Reformed Church's second night meant that St. John's was not a venue church this year. We would like to thank St. John's for being a venue in the first two years and hope that they might be able to return to the fold next year. Thanks also for their continued support for the shelter in the number of volunteers that came forward from their congregation.

Our thanks go to all the churches that continue to act as venues and hopefully this allowed people to experience each of the churches and what they bring to the shelter. We appreciate that the churches carry out a lot of work on our behalf to ensure that the shelter can operate as it does. The shelter will continue to monitor this and ensure that we impact the churches as little as possible. We also acknowledge their support in publicity, fundraising, supplying food and meeting a lot of the costs that would have to be met by the shelter's limited resources.

It should be remembered that a number of churches in and around Folkestone, who do not act as venues, make an enormous effort on our behalf by providing volunteers, publicising the shelter and making it a part of their charitable works. It is a great tribute to the Christian community that 25 churches, which we know of, in and around Folkestone have played a part in the shelter this winter. Our sincerest thanks go to these churches as well as to all those of no faith who have played a part.

### **THE FOLKESTONE RAINBOW CENTRE**

The Folkestone Rainbow Centre has for the second year headed up the project, in terms of providing governance, office space, office services (printing, telephones, accounting, bookkeeping, stationery) and payroll.

Our guests were allowed access to The Rainbow Centre, primarily for access to the shelter staff. Guests were permitted some access to the Rainbow Centre Drop-in but, it was feared that they might put significant extra demands on the space, volunteers and resources. This could have potentially caused some tensions between the shelter and Rainbow Centre, especially if guests had spent many hours in the drop-in rather than just using it as an access route to shelter staff.

Good communication between the Winter Shelter team and the Rainbow Centre was established from the start of this winter's project in order to minimise the impact that the operation of the shelter had on the centre. Regular meetings were held to try and

envisage any potential problems ahead and to share information essential to the running of both services.

The winter shelter brings an extra dynamic to the normal running of the drop in, with a noticeable increase in numbers attending the Rainbow Centre. Although it should be noted that there is a certain amount of cross-over in client base. The workload on volunteers increases as extra demands are placed for teas, coffees, clothes and blankets etc. The length of stay of Winter Shelter guests needed to be managed and guests encouraged in finding other daytime activities. Use of washing facilities increased as regards to personal hygiene and laundry which inevitably put pressure on the resources of the Rainbow Centre.

Potentially divisive issues were addressed by good communication between managers and a communal will to support those who need us. The Rainbow Centre's extensive general experience and local knowledge of homeless and vulnerable people has been invaluable to the winter shelter staff, both in the day-to-day running of the shelter and in gaining information about local guests with whom we have been working.

The weather, being on the whole mild, ensured that lack of daytime provision did not become more of an issue. It is recognised that, ideally, re-instatement of afternoon provision next year would be beneficial. Practically, this is likely to mean the shelter moving its office space and any drop-in it runs away from the Rainbow Centre site. The cost implication of this has not gone un-noticed but it should also be noted that the Folkestone Rainbow Centre has been extremely kind in allowing the shelter to "sofa-surf". The potential cost of a stand-alone shelter office site needs to be off-set from the costs incurred by the Rainbow Centre.

The shelter staff, also, looked to keep in touch with "Foodstop", an outreach service run by the Rainbow Centre and looked to share information where the guest/client base over-lapped.

### **SHEPWAY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

S.D.C. referred several clients to us, though some were not considered suitable to access the shelter. We, in turn, referred clients to the Housing Department for housing assessments and rent deposit bonds were offered to some guests to secure private landlord accommodation.

S.D.C. allowed regular use of a meeting room at the Civic Centre, in order that the shelter staff could provide a weekly guest review meeting for the various agencies involved. These meetings were well attended by the council representative and Porchlight and were extremely useful in keeping up-to-date with other advocacy being carried out on guests' behalf. These meetings provided the project workers with a good insight into the housing and benefits system.

### **KCA / CRI**

Several guests were already working with KCA when they accessed the shelter. The shelter referred some guests to CRI and we await to hear from them with further progress.

KCA staff have proven to be very helpful. The shelter staff, whenever necessary, sought to refer guests to KCA to help deal with drug and alcohol issues as they believe it to be of great benefit, especially as they continue to provide on-going support after the shelter has closed.

### **PORCHLIGHT**

The shelter staff worked closely with Porchlight, who had a "drop-in" surgery in the Folkestone Rainbow Centre, and have found their advice to be invaluable.

Guests were often referred to us from Porchlight at the Rainbow Centre, from out-reach workers or via the Porchlight emergency help-line.

Several guests were referred to various Porchlight supported housing projects but the shelter staff have found that housing options have often been full and with long waiting lists.

Several guests have been assigned Porchlight case workers and will continue to receive help and support with housing options. The team would like to thank Maggie Haines and Hayley Ells of Porchlight for their dedication, and support for the shelter. Maintaining a close link to the Porchlight staff at the Rainbow Centre has been of benefit providing advice to the guests and shelter staff and in providing links to local landlords. Porchlight also provided training for the shelter staff prior to the shelter starting in December.

### **C.M.H.T.**

We have referred a couple of guests to C.M.H.T., with one guest already accessing their services. The shelter staff have regularly liaised with Steve Conway, a social worker based with C.M.H.T. Steve has been helpful in referring one guest to Willow Lodge, a housing project specialising in clients with mental health issues. C.M.H.T. also proved helpful in risk assessment strategy.

### **BARKA.**

BARKA provided assistance in giving advice to a guest who needed advice on immigration and repatriation.

### **MIGRANT HELPLINE**

Migrant helpline referred one “no-show” client, but proved useful in providing advice in regard to asylum seekers.

### **CAB**

The Citizens Advice Bureau referred one guest to us but contact has otherwise been limited.

### **ASPIRATIONS**

ASPIRATIONS provided training on Mental Health before the shelter started and this was found to be very useful by the shelter staff. One client was already accessing their services when they came on to the shelter.

### **CARR-GOMM**

CARR-GOMM provides sheltered accommodation for people with mental health issues. Though none of our guests were considered suitable for referrals this year, we believe CARR-GOMM to be a useful contact for future shelters.

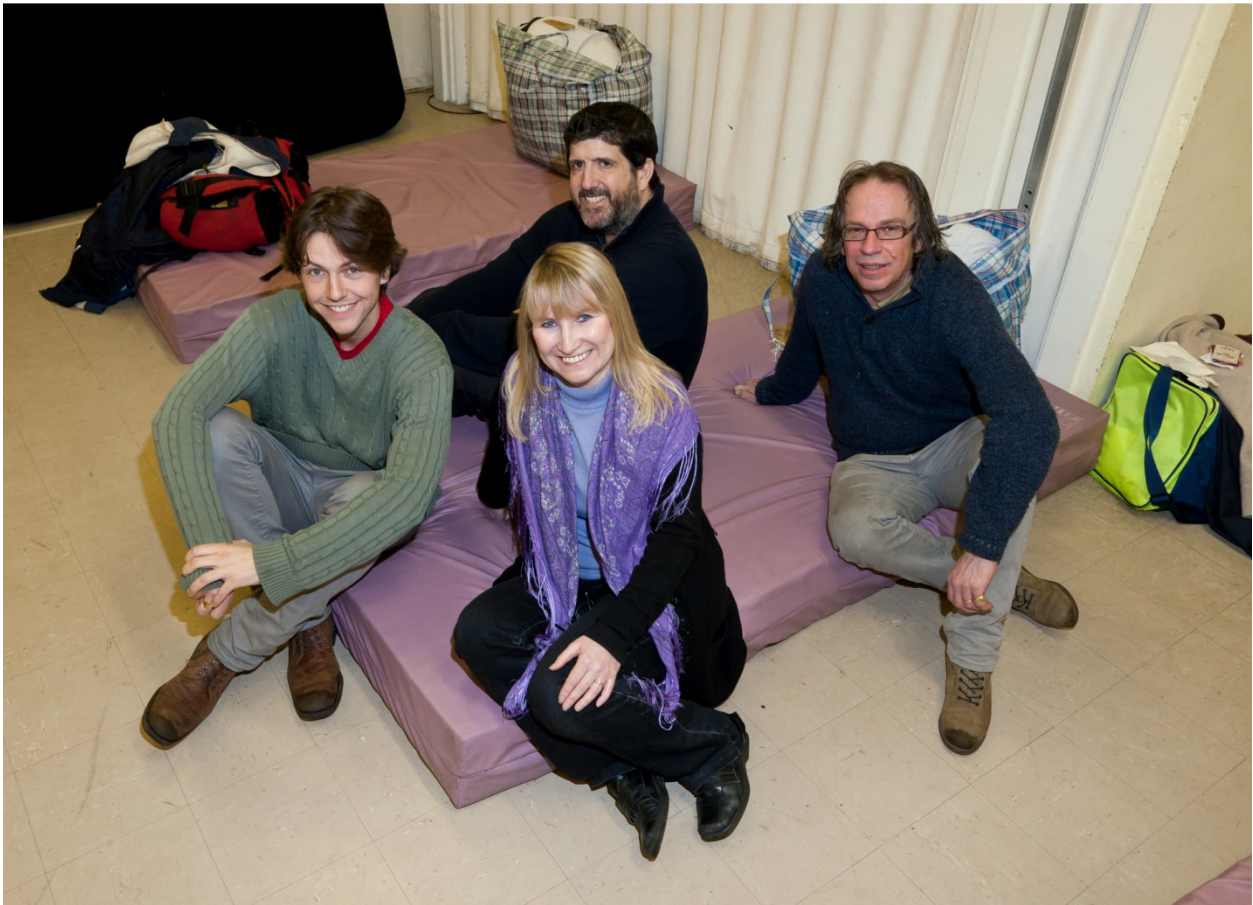
## **POLICE**

Before the shelter commenced, the Project Manager met with the local police and community safety officers at Shepway District Council, to inform them that the shelter would be taking place again and of the various policies that were to be put in place.

We were made aware of issues that arose last year. Guests congregating at the Rainbow Centre and outside venues together with the influence of alcohol were the main issues the Police felt worthy of note.

Having met with the Project Manager after the shelter, the Police feel that there were very few problems this winter but that since the shelter closure, issues have arisen. They feel that the tightening of entry rules and on alcohol in general have been effective as set boundary rules resulted in better behaviour from the guests with alcohol issues.

#### 4. THE EMPLOYED STAFF



The lead time to the beginning of the opening of The Winter Shelter meant that the team had a great deal of work to do in the month before the shelter opened its doors on December 5th. The logistics of setting up and running a rolling winter shelter are huge, so teamwork played a major part in ensuring the project was fit to go. This involved making a full inventory, checking equipment from last year as regards to condition and replacing the like when necessary and adding other necessary essentials. All church venues were visited by the team so that they became aware of both its geography and layout. The two project workers were given a crash course (not literally!) in driving the Salvation Army van. An experience not for the faint-hearted! Donations of clothes, sleeping bags and toiletries were sorted through and stored. The team attended a training day in London with Housing Justice and attended mental health awareness training delivered by Aspirations, a local mental health charity, and risk assessment training from Porchlight. The Team delivered three days of training to volunteers, both inexperienced and experienced. Three late nights later the consensus of the team and



the feedback from the volunteers appeared to indicate that the training met the needs of our volunteers. The Project Manager delivered some presentations to Churches, spoke to the press to publicise the Shelter and was filmed for a presentation of the Winter Shelter currently on YouTube.

### **PROJECT MANAGER**

Charlie Oakes joined the team as Project Manager the third week of October, a late appointment as a Project Manager had been appointed in early October who then found alternative employment. Charlie, a qualified counselor and graduate in Substance Misuse Management had been previously employed by the NHS East Kent Alcohol Service and prior to that with The Scrine Foundation in Canterbury as a Drug and Alcohol Specialist since 2003.

Charlie was involved in the Canterbury Community Winter Shelter run by Catching Lives and the Churches of Canterbury last year after the success of the Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter the previous year.

Charlie has a passion for the work and the guests welcome his appreciation of their needs. Charlie has not shied away from difficult decisions and has made the guests aware that inappropriate behaviour will not pass unchallenged.

Charlie is very aware that a Project manager can only succeed in his role if he has an exceptional team behind him and this particular team manager was blessed with one.

### **PROJECT WORKERS**

The two project Workers were employed in the first and second week of November.

Karen Griggs joined the team first. Karen had previously managed the Rainbow Centre Drop-in during the summer and came highly recommended. It was apparent from the start that Karen would be a true asset to any team. Karen's organisational skills were exceptional and she had a great ability to make things happen without having to ask. Her work ethic was astounding. She has embraced the Winter Shelter with all her being. She was passionate about the work she did and this is reflected in her work with our guests, volunteers and referral agencies and statutory organisations.

Karen put all her energy into creating an environment for our vulnerable guests where they received the best possible care and ability to change their lives around.

Karen was professional in all that she did, nothing seemed to faze her. Karen worked extremely hard in all aspects of her role and often beyond and enabled our guests to receive advocacy, care and compassion and without judgement.

Luke Moran joined the team mid-November. Luke had previously worked with adults with severe autism and was therefore well versed in dealing with people who present with challenging behaviour, an important skill to have in this role.

Luke, like Karen, embraced the shelter from the start. In his first week he was thrown in at the deep end where both Project Workers were invaluable in providing training to volunteers.

His enthusiasm was infectious and his care and attention to the needs of our guests outstanding. He happily went the extra mile for a guest, accompanying them to interviews, doctor's appointments and the like.

His compassion for the ethos of the shelter was unquestionable.

Luke was hard working, very practical and very able to deal with situations as they arise without fear or trepidation. His van driving skills were legendary.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

The Administrative Assistant, John Burgess, was employed from mid-October and was engaged straight away in the mammoth task of preparation; helping to finalise venues and venue co-ordinators and also meeting with church leaders and to listen to their experiences of previous years and iron out any issues raised. Training dates were also finalised and other preparation tasks undertaken. He also arranged for the fire assessments to be made and made various contacts aware that the shelter would be running again.

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks were undertaken this year and the Administrative Assistant was responsible for helping volunteers to fill out the forms and checking supporting documentation. 88 CRB checks were undertaken with the remaining volunteers having existing CRBs checked either by the Administrative Assistant directly or by confirmation from their Church.

The information supplied on the volunteer forms was recorded and then disseminated to the venue co-ordinators. Referees given on volunteer forms were followed up. He was able to ensure that all volunteers were either allocated a shift, or were, at least, contacted about available shifts.

John supported the Project Manager, acknowledging receipt of donations and overseeing the use of various media which also played a part in the Administrative Assistant's work.

John also showed himself to be an excellent minute-taker for the Steering Group, nothing escaping his eagle eye for detail.

John dealt with issues of disappointment with a great deal of tact and diplomacy and six venues were confirmed with The United Reformed Church offering themselves as a venue for two nights.

John's work ethic and compassion was outstanding throughout the contract and he was always available to lend an extra pair of hands in the shelters.

## **5. ADVOCACY**

One of the main roles of any Winter Shelter is to offer help and support to those whose circumstances have led them to becoming homeless. Yes, a Winter Shelter is what it says on the box, but it is also an opportunity to achieve much more.

Shelter, in the form of a warm place to stay, a hot meal and companionship, is provided and a window may arise for all those involved in the running of the shelter to help vulnerable guests to access help. Our guests have a wide range of issues that have led to their current predicament. These include long-standing drug /alcohol problems, mental health (often combined) issues, financial difficulties and relationship breakdowns. This window therefore provides a chance for staff and volunteers alike, by listening to our guests' concerns, to help steer them into addressing their issues. Through sign-posting a Winter Shelter can aid our guests in accessing help from relevant external agencies in order for them to turn their lives around. We can act as advocates and identify their needs and encourage them to transform their lives by addressing their housing issues, their addictions, mental health, relationships and life skills alike.

Guests have been helped with registering with local doctors, dentists, mental health professionals and drug and alcohol agencies.

## **REFERRALS**

Referrals came from a variety of sources throughout Kent - The Rainbow Centre, Salvation Army, Shepway District Council, Ashford Gateway, Porchlight and the CAB.

Referrers were asked to contact the Winter Shelter Staff prior to submitting a referral form in order to check for vacancies. A completed referral form would then need to be submitted by 12 noon. A cut off period is necessary so that a detailed risk assessment can be undertaken by Winter Shelter staff. It also enables staff to inform venues of the number of guests to expect on a given night so that they can cater for them accordingly. The Winter Shelter relies on the generosity of the Churches and the volunteers and it is a common courtesy to keep them informed. Some referrers, however, try to push boundaries and submit late applications or just send potential guests to the Rainbow Centre. At times, some referrers appeared not to appreciate that a responsible organization needs to conduct a full risk assessment in order to safeguard the vulnerable adults accessing the shelter but also the volunteers and staff. It is paramount that referrers understand that The Winter Shelter relies on volunteers to staff the venues and to compromise safety would be unprofessional in the extreme. A Winter Shelter

should not be used as a convenient option for referrers who may have deemed individuals too risky for their services.

### **WORKING WITH NON-SHELTER CLIENTS**

A 'Winter Shelter' staff team operating from an administrative location within the Rainbow Centre will inevitably come into contact with those who use the Centre's services.

The Winter Shelter team has worked closely with these individuals, staff and volunteers to ensure that a holistic atmosphere of help and support is achieved.

We have engaged extensively with individuals who seek advice on housing options, drug/alcohol and mental issues and the like.

We have worked with clients who although homeless chose not to stay at the venues, those deemed inappropriate for admission to the shelter and those who because of their behaviour, as guests, have been banned.

A good working relationship was forged between the Winter Shelter and the Rainbow Centre. This involved diplomacy, communication and goodwill on all sides.

There were two potential guests whose needs were considered to be beyond the scope of the winter shelter. The project staff were and remain concerned that there is the potential for people with these needs to fall through the gaps in provision. Both were referred to the local council housing services and are currently accessing other provision.

## **6. FUNDING & FINANCE**

### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

At a time when money is tight for many individuals and organisations it is important that the way FCWS spends the generously donated money is clearly explained. We have been successful this year in gaining substantial grants from eight different organisations in addition to over £8000 being received from individuals and churches connected with Folkestone. From the beginning we set out to spend money in a responsible way, seeking the best value whilst trying to get products that were durable and of good quality. Staff wages are always going to be the biggest cost and as can be seen they account for 85% of our total expenditure. On a three month project the wage costs could be dramatically increased or decreased by the amount of lead in time you give staff, which in turn affects the amount of training that staff can undertake. If the shelter is to be safe, well lead and provide a high quality service then fund raising must reflect the need to pay for appropriate lead in periods to enable staff to be trained for the tasks ahead. We are grateful to the Church Urban Fund for supporting the part-time employment of a member of the 2010-11 project team to provide services to those who had used the shelter, continuity between the projects and assistance on gaining funds for the 2011-12 project. We are pleased to announce that due to our fund raising success, and the generosity of Homeless Link and the Allen Lane Foundation, we will be able to provide even better services between the 2011-12 and 2012-13 projects.

### **HIDDEN COSTS**

Churches and individuals provided the cost of most of the food and refreshments at their venues or in some cases churches provided these costs for other churches acting as venues. This was an impressive commitment to the project throughout its 12 weeks of operation. A large amount of toiletries, socks and other items were given directly to staff at the Rainbow Centre in support of the shelter. These proved essential to those guests who arrived with the 'shirts on their backs'.

## FCWS INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

<b>FCWS Income &amp; Expenditure 2011-2012</b>			
<b>Income</b>	<b>2011-12</b>		<b>2010-11</b>
East Kent Provincial Charities RC	£250.00		
Folkestone Town Council	£5,000.00		£5,000.00
Beatrice Laing Trust	£2,500.00		
Shepway District Council	£10,000.00		£11,500.00
KCC Payments Account	£750.00		£736.00
The Allen Lane Foundation	£5,900.00		
Souter Charitable Trust	£7,500.00		
Folkestone Rotary Club	£2,000.00		
Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust	£12,000.00		
Copy-Link	£50.00		
Coutts Charitable Trust	£750.00		
Rotary Club of Channel	£300.00		£3,000.00
Folkestone Lions Club	£90.00		
Homeless Link		(for use between 2011-12 & 2012-13 Projects)	
	£5,000.00		
Salvation Army	£3,000.00		£11,381.00
Church Donations	£2,777.95		£3,964.00
Donations from Individuals	£5,199.81		£7,865.00
Church Urban Fund Grant			£5,000.00
	<b>£63,067.76</b>		<b>£48,446.00</b>
Church Urban Fund Grant		(Received 2010-11 to fund cover projects gap)	
	£5,000.00		-£5,000.00
Salvation Army		(due from 2010-11) (£11,381 includes £3,000 due)	
	-£3,000.00		
Homeless Link		(Received 2011-12 to fund cover projects gap)	
	-£5,000.00		
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£60,067.76</b>		<b>£43,446.00</b>

<b>Expenditure</b>			
Recruitment Costs for Staff	£1,174.19		£3,377.00
Staff Wages	£36,405.94		£36,095.00
CRB's and Training	£323.80		
Insurance	£293.54		£10.00
Contributions to Rainbow Centre (gas, elec, rent)	£3,650.00		£127.00
Contribution to 2 Night Venue Costs	£457.91		
Garage Rent (including 2010-11)	£554.50		
Vehicle Costs	£781.70		£170.00
Transport	£166.10		£108.00
Printing	£46.99		£515.00
Postage and Carriage	£71.46		£180.00
Telephone	£35.00		£60.00
Bedding and mattresses	£232.07		£723.00
Laundry contributions	£50.86		£75.00
Audit and Accountancy			£120.00
Cleaning	£11.79		£35.00
Website costs	£136.57		
Sundry Expenses not listed	£408.48		£1,037.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£44,800.90</b>		<b>£42,632.00</b>

## **7. FEEDBACK, REVIEW & ANALYSIS**

### **THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE – TIME WELL SPENT**

At the beginning of December 2011, I noticed an article in the local free paper regarding the annual Homeless Shelter, which announced, “Volunteers required”. I had thought about doing something like this before, however, family commitments especially around Christmas seemed to take over and - as they say - ‘that was that’.

However the following day, as I was about to place the paper in the recycling bin, I thought again, then I made the decision to give it a go. Phoned the telephone number and luckily there was a volunteers meeting that afternoon. Wow, a bit scary. Charlie, the Project Manager, gave most of the details about the shelters, the guests and issues that volunteers needed to be aware of; drugs, alcohol, mental health problems and so on. But the reality is homeless people die out there during the coldest months of the year and here, for this brief time, we can help, really help. By the time the talk had finished, all my original fears had evaporated and I know I needed to be there, did not really know what my role would be but I felt so inspired and hoped I could make a small difference by volunteering.

The run up to Christmas, (does it begin in September?) with its accompanying bombardment of advertisements, jingles, noise, glitter, people in a hurry, annoyed, angry, no parking spaces, queues at the checkout, over-spending – everything that Christmas is NOT about. There IS more to Christmas. People who really care for their fellow human beings, give up their time without payment, asking nothing in return, who put others’ needs before their own. Without these wonderful unselfish people the shelters would not exist.

The guests – all different, all unique, all so pleased to have a place to sleep. Imagine trudging the streets all day, hungry, cold, often soaked through, inadequate footwear and clothing - The Shelter offers brief respite for a few hours to these weary souls. Arriving at the Shelter, a smile, handshake, cup of tea? Could be the first words spoken in kindness that day. We (the volunteers) all get into a sort of routine; unloading the van at whichever Church has ‘opened its doors’ - the inflatable mattresses, bedding, towels, donated clothing etc. The food is prepared - good wholesome grub - and tables laid. Volunteers are needed to help with the set-up of the room, meeting our guests, preparation and serving of food, the overnights (split into two shifts) ending with the tidy up early morning. This goes on every night during the cold, dark months of winter.



Now towards to the end of the 3 months respite, it is plain to see our guests seem more relaxed, happy to involve themselves in games and conversation, eat basic good hot grub and sleep in a warm, safe environment - without the fear of abuse, assault, or an even more threatening fate.

What happens now? During this time a number of our guests have moved on to appropriate accommodation and some have sought the help of organisations to enable them to move on from their present circumstances. Unfortunately, even with the help of the dedicated Winter Shelter Team there are limitations – and not just the obvious financial type - as to what can be achieved over a 12 weeks period.

For my part, I feel that although I do a little, when combined with everyone else's efforts, the results are greater than the sum of the parts. There are those that give so much more, the logistics, the cooking, the volunteers that stay overnight, in what is a refuge for the homeless but not home to those that are prepared to give up the warmth and comfort of their own beds to sleep on blow up mattresses in church halls during the winter months.

However, after all that, what I want to say is that it has been the most inspiring, meaningful, amazing experience. I have met and spent time with the most wonderful people, guests and volunteers alike.

**An FCWS volunteer**

### **POST-IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW**

A review meeting was held at the Folkestone Rainbow Centre where Churches, agencies and venue co-ordinators could provide their feedback and “Highlights” and “Shadows” of where the shelter worked and how it could be improved next winter. Comments were given and where appropriate grouped together into related topics and then all those present highlighted the areas they agreed with most providing that area with a star.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

##### **1. More consistent application of clear rules – 10 stars.**

Stricter rules on sobriety made the atmosphere among guests more positive.

Staff took responsibility for admitting guests in the evening.

Good consistency in the boundaries and rules set this year.

Good general atmosphere – Few conflicts.

Guests were managed well at entry to shelter.

Tightening of rules on access (intoxication).

Consistent threshold applied for entry with regard to intoxication.

Alcohol rules.

Alcohol control.

No bringing in of alcohol/intoxication – behaviour consistent across venues / people guests.

Team had a stronger sense of boundaries.

There seemed to be fewer incidents with guests.

Good ground rules for guests – they were consistent.

## **2. Communication – 7 stars.**

Good communication with staff and volunteers.

Communication with staff was very good.

Good communication with core team.

Volunteers felt valued and important.

Excellent briefings about guests each evening.

Regularly updated about everything by staff.

Staff cohesion.

Project leaders sticking around for the evening.

Fantastic support from all project leaders / workers – thank you.

## **3. Support / Volunteers – 6 stars.**

Support of everyone involved.

Lots more volunteers this year.

Volunteers to help with morning clean up this year – new volunteers.

Great team of volunteers.

Volunteers taking so much from the shelter.

#### **4. Churches willingness – 6 stars.**

Flexibility of URC to offer their church as a second venue.

Commitment of churches to run it for another year.

Continuing goodwill of each church plus others in providing helpers and covering financial implications – Food, premises, heating.

Goodwill of volunteers all-round as before, with some with 2 years experience.

#### **5. Outcomes – 2 stars.**

Seeing guest getting housed and moving forward in their lives for better.

#### **6. Volunteer / Guest safety – 2 stars.**

Guests and volunteers had confidence and trust in each other.

Volunteers reported feeling safe this year.

Just seeing smiles on their faces with knowledge of knowing they are safe.

#### **7. CRBs – 2 stars.**

### **Other Highlights:**

Team working.

Showing homeless that society does care / take notice.

Guests liked sofas to sit on.

Staff supported guests well with referrals to GPs and other agencies.

Regular multi-agency meetings.

Communication with Foodstop – essential for future.

Folkestone Christians as Church of Christ.

Hospitality of venues.

Delivery of contents of the van regularly on time, with a smile regardless.

Freedom to pray if guests wanted to!! – Is this not an opportunity to share faith.

## **SHADOWS:**

### **1. Lead-in time – 9 stars.**

More lead time for paid / voluntary staff to set up project.

Slow start to receiving volunteer lists slightly difficult but circumstances understood.

Lead time for project staff to start of shelter.

Volunteers names came through too late – added pressure.

Lead-in time.

### **2. Agency relations – 8 stars.**

For co-ordinator to know more about the agency and what they provide.

Would be helpful to have one meeting with agencies just before shelter opens to get update on changes to legislation and services.

Weekly multi-agency meeting not well attended by other agencies.

Better co-ordination by CAB to provide our service to clients within the shelter next year.

### **3. Referrals – 8 Stars.**

Noon cut-off time for referrals does not help a client group who generally are not up and about early.

Referral forms need updating.

No out of hours number for people to refer themselves in at weekends.

More flexibility with booking in time.

### **4. Beds – 4 stars.**

Air beds were uncomfortable / inefficient.

Air beds are rubbish.

Equipment breakdown – inflatable mattresses, pumps.

**5. I.T. Facilities – 3 stars.**

More RAM or faster desktop.

Computer – More RAM needed.

PDF with whether night shift workers and best time to contact the volunteer.

**6. Illness – 1 star.**

Capacity to respond to staffing if illness struck.

**7. Out of hours – 1 star.**

Help for the guests outside of Rainbow Centre open hours.

**8. Saturdays / Sundays – 1 star.**

Each church should take their Saturday / Sunday turns.

**9. Fundraising – 1 star.**

Fundraising toward shelter beforehand would be helpful.

**Other Shadows:**

Incorporating churches costs into future budget.

Somehow the volunteers heard less about the advocacy this year.

Not enough exchange across churches, volunteers and other organisations (Lions Clubs etc.) May have been a localised difficulty.

How can we help more with PR, DVDs etc.

Publicise start in September / October to make known.

Need to think through how we introduce faith and works.

Meal rotas not implemented.

Van unreliability.

Could have done with venue co-ordinator meetings (start, middle and end).

Seeing some of the same people coming back 3 years running despite having been found accommodation.

Volunteers names released to different venues at different times caused some friction.

Volunteer registration and CRB checks very rushed.

Guests got confused what nights and times. Maybe a card credit card sized laminated would be easier for guests to keep hold of rather than maps.

Volunteer co-ordination trickier in last month – tiredness, illness, use at other venues.

### **BEDDING**

There were issues related to the heating and bedding provided to the guests. We managed to acquire some more heaters this year and these were moved around the venues, one night even managing to be too warm!

Bedding has posed several problems this year. The inflatable mattresses, together with the pumps that inflate them, look increasingly less like the best option. The failure rate being so high that we had to employ what was salvageable from the mattresses used in the first year. The inflatable mattresses and pumps do not seem able to cope with the length of the shelter and are better suited to camping holidays, assuming your holiday doesn't last 84 nights!

### **LEAD-IN TIME**

It has been expressed that the lead-in time for the shelter means that communications, especially for venue co-ordinators, did not leave much time for preparation before the start of the shelter. The shelter staff only started a matter of weeks prior to the start date and therefore had to hit the ground running. It was felt that it was a testament to the team and venue co-ordinators that all was in place for the shelter to operate. In producing volunteer lists for the venue co-ordinators, the time prior to the start date had to be traded against the number of volunteers who had passed through the application process. It will be fed forward that the venue co-ordinators' lives could be made much easier by receiving all the necessary information earlier. Thanks are certainly due to those venue co-ordinators who came forward at the last minute.

## **BOUNDARIES**

Boundary rules can be a sensitive matter and it is was the intention to make the guidelines fairly clear at the training sessions. It was felt necessary to reinforce these at some of the venue handovers and thought will be given to how this may be further reinforced next year.

## **DEFAULT POSITION**

A rolling winter shelter should always have a default position so that it can cater for a situation where, at short notice, a venue may become unavailable. In past years the weather has intervened and meant that venues have been unable to host and last minute, fraught negotiations have had to be made in order for the night shelter to operate. Emergency plans therefore should always be made as to how guests and volunteers can be safely catered for if a real emergency happens such as fire and flooding. The weather this year has been unseasonably kind to us in terms of snow but it can be a real threat. We had one occasion this year when a venue was unable to host a night due to its drainage system failing which led to winter shelter staff having to find alternative arrangements. Our thanks go to Church leaders and volunteers who came in at the last moment and offered their services.

## **ILLNESS**

Staff illness or the potential of staff illness is an area that needs to be addressed. The winter shelter team is small and any event that leaves a staff member unable to work has a huge effect in both practical and logistical terms. The winter shelter operates during the coldest months of the year and the close proximity of guests, staff and volunteers in the venues can lead to individuals being struck down with an infectious illness. The employment of a part-time project worker, should funds allow, needs to be considered in order to prepare for such eventualities.

## **DEDICATED OFFICE / LANDLINE & MOBILE PHONES / COMPUTERS**

The FCWS shelter office is currently situated in a partitioned office in an area occupied by the Rainbow Centre 'drop in'.

During the lead up time and the duration of the shelter the office becomes a hive of activity. The office houses not only the Project Manager and two project workers but also the administrative assistant. This coupled with the need for the office to be a hub to meet with current and prospective volunteers, other agencies and (during the shelter) dealing with the registration, risk assessment and daily care of guests, creates an overcrowded and hectic atmosphere. It does not lend well to privacy especially with the vulnerable guests we represent and disruption is inevitable from others wanting to access staff. The office also often becomes an additional storage place for donations of clothing, bedding and toiletries that have been kindly donated to the shelter. Consideration therefore must be undertaken to provide both administrative and private space in order for the winter shelter to operate more effectively.

Currently the landline telephone for the winter shelter is the same as the Rainbow centre this can often lead to confusion not only for agencies and the general public wanting to speak with winter shelter staff but also the volunteer staff manning the telephones on reception. Lost telephone connections have not been uncommon. A dedicated winter shelter telephone must be implemented for future years.

We have been very fortunate this year that our staff mobile telephones were donated by 'phones for u' it would however be reasonable to explore the possibility of providing phones of a higher specification as the project relies on good communication at all times.

Computer technology needs to be seriously updated for future years. At present we have only one computer dedicated to the winter shelter, other computers provided by the goodwill of project staff. The Winter Shelter has had to cope with not only sharing one dedicated computer but also a computer which is severely lacking in speed and this problem has been compounded by the enormous amount of work the processing of CRBs has generated this year. A new computer system, or at the very least, extra Ram least should be considered for future shelters and the provision of an additional (laptop?) for project workers.



## **THE SALVATION ARMY VAN**

For the past three years we have used the Salvation Army Van to move the Shelter on a daily basis. A typical day involves picking up the van before 07.30 driving to the previous night's shelter, loading shelter equipment and then driving to the lock-up for storage during the day and then returning the van to the Salvation Army before 09.00 for their use during the day. The setting up for the next night's shelter starts at 17.45, again with the picking up of the van, driving to the lock-up loading the shelter, driving to the venue, unloading and then returning the van back to the Salvation Army. All in all quite a performance!

This military style operation has been marred this year by certain issues. The Luton Van has suffered from two breakdowns, the first being a flat battery on collection the second being very much more serious, a starter motor failure, coupled with the need for a new gear box. This later incident meant that the van was off the road for two weeks and resulted in the winter shelter needing to make alternative arrangements by hiring a transit from a local van hire firm.

The team is acutely aware that the van is fulfilling two roles and is the property of the Salvation Army. Sharing a vehicle does lead to loading problems as it dual purpose means sometimes using every available space like a jig saw, especially if large pieces of furniture remain in the van.

As a team we have made sure that the van has always been returned to the Salvation Army with diesel on occasions however we have collected the van only to find a journey to the petrol station is paramount to avoid incident.

A decision will need to be taken for future years in how best to resolve these logistical problems. The purchase or hiring of a suitable van dedicated for the period of the winter shelter should be considered. In this way the winter shelter can be stored in the vehicle for the duration and free up valuable time that will serve our guests better.

## **STORAGE**

Storage historically since the inception of the Winter Shelter has been a problem.

The Churches do not have the capacity to store the winter shelter nor does the Rainbow Centre and its lack of parking.

The Winter Shelter for the past two years has rented a lock-up garage from Shepway District Council. The location of the lock-up is on the outskirts of Folkestone up a steep hill, has no electricity and prone to damp.

Double handling of winter shelter equipment twice daily is time consuming and detracts from essential work with guests.

The cost of renting a lock-up on a yearly basis must be considered especially as the winter shelter operates only 12 weeks of the year.

Consideration therefore must be taken in combining storage with the provision of a dedicated winter shelter vehicle.

### **CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU CHECKS**

From this winter, the Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter steering group decided that all volunteers should have an enhanced CRB check, where an appropriate one is not already in place, in order to volunteer. This decision was made to ensure that the shelter continues to develop best practice to meet statutory requirements and to ensure that measures are taken to safeguard both our volunteers and the vulnerable adults that make up our guests. It should also be noted that insurers and some of the charitable trusts that provide our funding had sought clarification that all our volunteers would have CRBs in place.

The Diocese of Canterbury kindly processed the CRBs on behalf of the shelter and met the cost so that the shelter fund or the individual volunteers were not out of pocket. 88 CRBs were processed by the Administrative Assistant through Canterbury Diocese with the remaining volunteers having existing CRBs checked by the shelter or through their church.

The Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter followed the CRB code of practice and undertook to treat all applicants fairly and not discriminate against any subject of a disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed. If a disclosure arose, a confidential risk assessment was carried out by the Diocese.

References were also taken up to complete the volunteer process.

We would like to thank all our volunteers for their understanding in having these checks completed. Thanks also go to those who took time to supply volunteer references and those church leaders who may have been inundated with telephone calls and emails from the Administrative Assistant.

## **8. FUTURE**

### **BRIDGING THE GAP**

Last year the funding of a part-time development officer by The Church Urban Fund was invaluable in making some of the preparations for this year's shelter. At the same time, it is recognised that earlier appointment of the winter shelter team would be helpful next year, funds permitting. Specific funding has been achieved to run a befriending pilot project and to aid transition to next winter's shelter and beyond; all good ingredients to 'bridging the gap'.

### **SHELTER CONTINUES**

One of the great achievements of the Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter has been the way so many people have come together to remove boundaries and embrace and enjoy the company of the homeless in and around Folkestone.

We have seen those guests reluctant to embrace the housing options available gain in confidence and sociability and we pray that this confidence will grow and bring about lasting change.

Other guests have come and gone and we don't always know how they are, months or years after their stay with us. Rest assured that many guests each year, with the help of everyone involved, manage to address some of their issues and find a healthier, happier future.

We often meet again with our "frequent-flyers" and continue to do what we can to help them improve their situations and challenge some of the reasons why they are still accessing shelter.

It has always been the intention that the shelter staff listen to what the churches and volunteers have to say. The running of a winter shelter is always open to unpredictable events and it is a challenge to manage 60 or more people accessing shelter staff and assisting 200 plus volunteers and trying to ensure that everyone's needs or views are met or, at least, appreciated.

The following are expressions of what some of the volunteers feel the shelter has achieved over its three years;

"Real feel good factor in venue, almost a family feel at times".

“Seeing guests gain in confidence and sociability during the shelter”.

“Making guests feel valued, which allowed them to believe in a future”.

“I feel extremely humbled”.

“I wasn’t sure what to expect but have found it so rewarding”.

“It was lovely, the way volunteers and guests gelled together”.

Training has often been a source of mixed views from volunteers and it can be a very difficult task to tailor it to the number of volunteers who come forward. The feedback was reviewed again this year prior to drawing the training together and a few tweaks were made. Some of the feedback we have received this year is that the training could have contained a little less on drug awareness and more on what is expected of a volunteer. More information on drug awareness was included this year as a response to last year’s feedback. However, it has been the impression that more on the practicalities of volunteering is needed and this will be fed back into the training for next winter.

Last year’s issues concerning guests congregating outside the Rainbow Centre, venues and in town was raised. On registering, the guests were specifically asked not to arrive before 7.30pm and this was reinforced throughout their time with us. We believe that this has been less of an issue this year.

Unfortunately, the Rainbow Centre was not able to host a drop-in for our guests this year and this something that is being looked into. It is felt that the generally mild weather played a part in the lack of early evening provision not becoming an issue. Alternative provision for guests prior to the shelter is being explored for next year.

It is understood that the Police feel that the impact some of our guests may have played last year has not been an issue this year. The nature of the issues our clients sometimes present with means that it is impossible to remove this potential problem. How the issue is managed always plays its part but there is a limit to what can be done to eradicate this issue entirely.

It has been expressed that the tougher stance on alcohol this year has been beneficial to all concerned. Many people feel that the shelter has been a safe environment, in which, to volunteer. It should be noted that there was more resistance to this stance from volunteers than guests. Of those guests with alcohol concerns all have, at the very least, attempted to address these issues and realise the impact it can have on their accessing services. It is never easy to decide the stance to take but, in their best interests, it was felt that to try and move guests towards sustained improvement, every encouragement to address addiction concerns needs to be given.

A weekly “guest update” meeting with referral agencies was instigated to try and ensure greater communication with and a better response from some of the agencies involved with housing options. It should be expressed that the uptake by agencies was not to the level of what the shelter management hoped. However, good communications were established and maintained with Shepway District Council, Porchlight and various other agencies.

It should, also, be expressed that the shelter staff have noticed that the current economic situation is having an effect on the amount of housing provision that is available to the homeless. Many hostels have been full and landlords expecting greater incomes for their property. There are a number of charitable housing projects around but few in the Folkestone and Shepway area. The projects further afield have often not, for whatever reason, been available to our guests. It would certainly be of benefit to have a longer term homeless provision locally that could provide longer support for our guests and thus more time in which to access services available.



## 9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter would like to acknowledge our thanks to all the various people, organisations and bodies that have contributed to ensuring that the shelter continues to make such a difference to the lives of homeless people in Folkestone. Our thanks go to the following, by no means, exhaustive list;

The Volunteers and Churches of Folkestone and surrounding areas.

Arthur Atkins – Environmental Health

Aspirations

Beatrice Laing Trust

Bill Regan

CAB / KCA / CRI / CMHT / CARR-GOMM

Candice Watson

Catching Lives

Changing Rooms

Church Urban Fund

Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust

Copy-Link

Dianne Tanner

East Kent Provincial Charities RC

Eleanor Jones – Folkestone Herald

Folkestone Lions Club

Folkestone Rainbow Centre - Jon, Richard, volunteers, Debbie and Foodstop

Folkestone Rotary Club

Folkestone Town Council

Folkestone Vehicle Rental

Homeless Link

Housing Justice

Joel Francis

John Limebury

Kent County Council

Lorna Tomkins

Millfield Drop-in

Porchlight

Prayer co-ordinators – Isoken and Inguna

Reverend Dianne Johnson

Rotary Club of Channel

Salvation Army

Shepway District Council

Souter Charitable Trust  
Terry Cooke-Davies  
The Allen Lane Foundation  
The Coutts Charitable Trust  
The Diocese of Canterbury  
The Police and CSOs  
The Samaritans  
The Vine Bookshop  
Trisha Jamieson – Folkestone Express  
Venue Churches  
Venue co-ordinators



## 10. FACTS AND FIGURES BEHIND THE FOLKESTONE CHURCHES WINTER SHELTER 2011-12

### GUESTS:

69 (66 male / 3 female) Individuals sought assistance from the shelter staff either to book a place on the shelter or for general advocacy to be carried out on their behalf. 60 people completed the registration process.

### Guest Information:

As part of the registration and risk assessment process, various information about the guests was recorded.

### Age Spread:

18-20 : 6

21-30 : 19

31-40 : 13

41-50 : 16

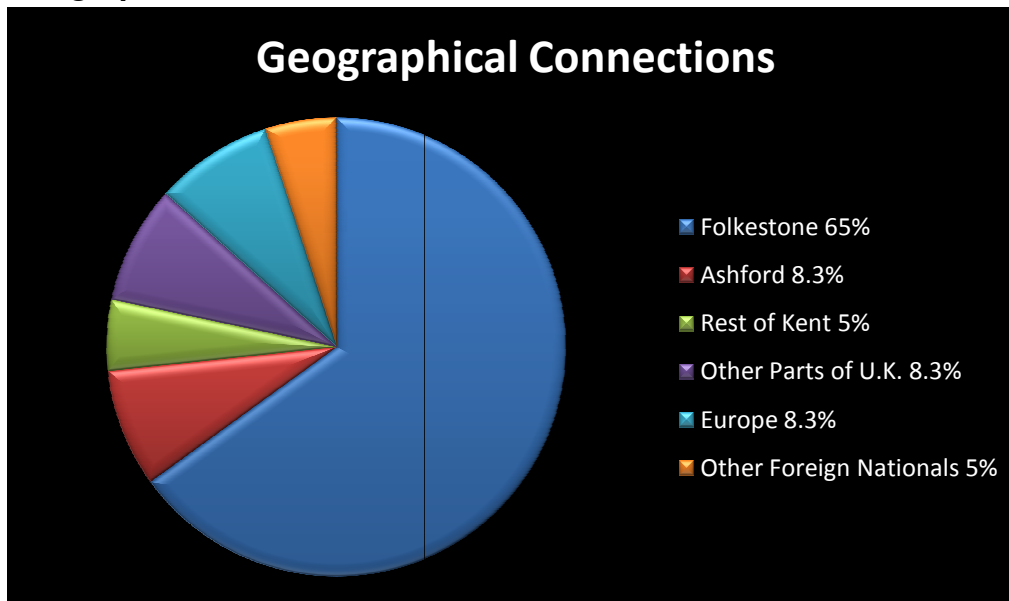
51-60 : 4

61+ : 1

Youngest Guest : 18

Oldest Guest : 62

### Geographical Connections:





**Beds:**

33 People accessed beds on the winter shelter with 736 beds taken up from 822 booked for the night in question – 89% take up rate and 73% of capacity used. 18 people failed to take up beds that had been booked, some of these on more than one occasion. This did result in a couple of occasions whereby someone was not able to access a bed, with the shelter full, for that bed not to then be taken on the night.

On 9 occasions someone was refused access for the night, 7 for being intoxicated with alcohol, 1 for aggressive behaviour towards shelter staff and 1 for arriving after the curfew without prior consent.

7 People went through the referral process but chose not to access a bed. 2 people were considered not suitable for the night shelter after undertaking the risk assessment process. 9 other individuals did not access the shelter itself but received advocacy from the shelter staff.



## Reasons for Homelessness:

For the 60 people who completed the process, 7 main categories were recorded as reasons for homelessness;

1. Upbringing.
2. Relationship.
3. Financial.
4. Immigration.
5. Bad Health.
6. Alcohol.
7. Drug Misuse.

Of the above issues; Upbringing played a part on 14 occasions (23%), Relationship breakdown 27 times (45%), Financial 17 times (28%), Immigration 4 times (6.6%), Bad Health 4 (6.6%), Alcohol 14 (23.3%) and Drug Misuse 6 (10%). It is perhaps worth noting that upbringing and relationship was stated at twice the rate of alcohol and drug misuse.

Combinations of the above were recorded;

36 times 1 of the above was the reason for homelessness (60%).

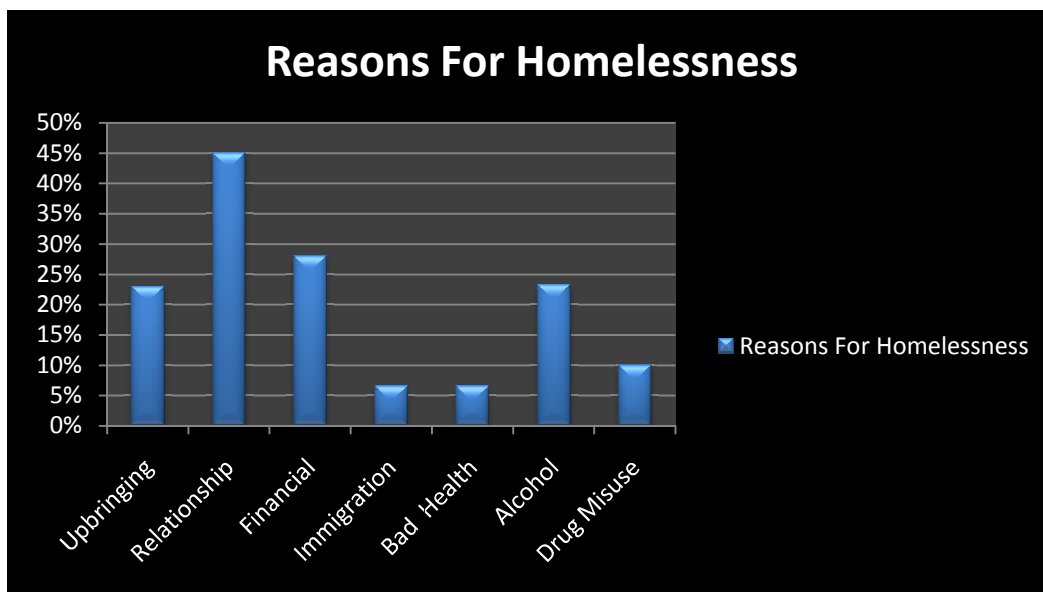
14 times 2 of the above (23%).

4 times 3 of the above (6.6%).

Twice four of the above (3.3%).

Once five of the above (1.6%).

3 people withheld this information; 1 gave gambling; 1 behavioural issues and 1 was locked out of their flat.



**Offending History:**

21 (35%) reported having spent time in prison, with 35 (58%) having some offending history, 40% having no offending history.

**Work History:**

The following work history was recorded:

29 have worked since 2009.

15 have worked between 2000 and 2008.

12 did not supply any information or have not worked.

4 have not worked since before 2000.

2 reported as being ex-army.

**Drug History:**

36 reported no current misuse of alcohol.

3 mentioned a past history of alcohol misuse.

20 mentioned current misuse of alcohol.

33 recorded no current use of controlled drugs.

14 recorded a past history of use of controlled drugs.

19 mentioned current use of controlled drugs.

23 recorded no current or history of alcohol misuse or drug use.

**Guest Health:**

19 (31.6%) guests recorded as having no physical or mental health concerns.

25 (41.6%) guests reported some physical health concerns.

33 (55%) guests reported some mental health concerns.

The physical health concerns raised consisted mostly of joint, musculo-skeletal pain and issues with feet. Other concerns included Asthma and Epilepsy.

Depression was the most common mental health diagnosis raised. Other diagnosis included: Anxiety, Stress and Schizophrenia.

**Guest Outcomes:**

Of the 33 who accessed beds:

15 are in housing – private rented or sheltered.

7 have moved to other areas of the U.K. or moved abroad.

4 are awaiting decisions on housing or receiving help in housing options.

7 refused help with finding housing or failed to maintain strong links.

Of the 27 who went through the registration but did not access beds:  
4 are in housing.  
22 have not maintained links with shelter staff  
1 has advocacy available if he chooses.

**VOLUNTEERS:**

7 volunteer venue co-ordinators.  
224 volunteers (136 female / 88 male).  
5420 volunteer hours over 84 nights.

