



KINGSTON CHURCHES ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

Background to the Post of Full Time Housing Adviser

Initially on a 9 month contract

KCAH aims to relieve the distress of homeless and those threatened with homelessness. Our focus is to work with single people in housing crisis and primarily those who do not qualify for getting help from the local authority. In addition, KCAH promotes public awareness of housing services and needs. KCAH serves, first and foremost, those who are in the borough of Kingston-upon-Thames. The services of KCAH are free, confidential, impartial and independent.

KCAH runs a Housing Crisis Intervention Service (HCIS), offering housing and welfare benefits advice. Our other key focus is 'The Access Project', providing shared accommodation in eleven houses across the borough for single homeless people with low support needs.

KCAH also oversees a night shelter scheme using different church venues and which is being expanded significantly this year to cover a seven month period due to Ministry of Housing funding.

The KCAH office is located in the grounds of St Peter's Church, Norbiton share the converted church hall with the Joel Community Services Night Shelter, an permanent all-year-round shelter which KCAH refers clients into as part of a pathway out of homelessness.

The Housing Crisis Intervention Service (HCIS)

This service is overseen by a Senior Housing Adviser who is being seconded to the position of Rough Sleeper Coordinator but who will line manage this post and one other housing adviser who has worked at KCAH for two years. The HCIS provides general housing and welfare benefits advice and also offers a Hostel Placement Service which aims to place single homeless people into a night shelter or hostel or appropriate temporary accommodation outside the borough.

The advisers work very closely with a variety of local stakeholders including the faith community, the local authority, public health, the YMCA, the Joel Project, the local MPs and outreach teams that operate in Kingston. KCAH holds an Advice Quality Standard (the AQS) for the provision of housing and welfare benefits advice.

In general, the Advisers will see around 400 new clients each year and can also expect 1,500 repeat visits each year – it is rare that a solution is found for the client in one visit. The Advisers need to be sensitive to the needs of their clients and also know how to deal with difficult clients. The role is very person-centred.

KCAH Housing Advisers need to gain an excellent working knowledge of housing law and the welfare benefits system. Advocacy has become a significant part of the role and this comes in a range of forms eg challenging local authority homelessness decisions, safeguarding issues, DWP decisions, working with public health services.

The Housing Advisers are part of a growing team at KCAH that needs to be close-knit in order to work best for those needing our services and in order to operate in a demanding working but rewarding work environment which is now very outcomes-focussed.

For more information, visit our website at www.kcah.org.uk