



KINGSTON CHURCHES ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

Background to the Post of Night Shelter Coordinator

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. 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.

The KCAH office is located on the grounds of St Peter's Church, Norbiton, sharing the converted church hall with the Joel Community Services Night Shelter- a permanent, all year long, church night shelter which KCAH refers clients into.

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 across the borough for single homeless people with low support needs.

KCAH also has been running winter night shelters since 2009. Up to now, it has overseen a two month long 'roaming' night shelter scheme using different church venues every February and March. This scheme is mainly for a specific group of identified, entrenched rough sleepers who otherwise struggle to access temporary accommodation. Outside this period, over the last winter, KCAH also responded to severe weather conditions by running an emergency shelter scheme in partnership with Everyday Church, known as 'The Haven' - with incredible success.

The Winter Night Shelter 2018-2019

Following a successful proposal by Kingston Council to secure funding from the Ministry of Housing (MHCLG), in partnership with both KCAH and SPEAR (another homeless charity that works in several boroughs), KCAH is now tasked with the responsibility of running a shelter from September 2018 through to the end of March. The night shelter scheme will run alongside:

- an increased outreach team in Kingston (run by SPEAR)
- a couple of assessment houses to place rough sleepers into (SPEAR)
- a Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator position to ensure multi-agency working (KCAH)

This extra investment is designed to tackle rough sleeping in Kingston for the winter of 2018-19. Kingston Council, again with the involvement of KCAH and SPEAR, has submitted a proposal for similar funding for the next financial year, 2019-20. If this sustainable funding is secured, the Night Shelter Co-ordinator post might be funded until March 2020.

The scheme will run between September and end of January, using an 'open access' model as used for 'The Haven' last winter. Up to 30 rough sleepers will be able to gain access each night and can come and go as they like. This encourages the most entrenched rough sleepers to use the shelter. Most likely, two venues will be used to cover this period. Then the scheme will revert to the traditional system of using seven other church venues across Kingston borough during February and March.