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# Volunteer Handbook

03 January 2022 – 01 April 2022

Project Manager – Gwyn McPherson – Tel : 07308 150048

A warm welcome

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for homeless people in the coldest months

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome and thank you for volunteering to be part of Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter (MCWS).

MCWS is a registered Charitable Independent Organisation, number 1156735. The charity began in October 2013 and, as its name suggests, it runs during the winter months.

We aim to ensure that all our Shelters are safe and welcoming for those who use them, whether as guests, volunteers or staff. Please take some time to read this handbook carefully.

### **Winters 2013-14 to 2019-20 inclusive**

From its inception in October 2013 up until March 2020 we provided hot meals, overnight accommodation (dormitory style), and a listening ear/support for homeless guests in church buildings, for 12-13 weeks each winter.

Our scheme ran on a rolling night shelter basis, meaning the load was shared between church venues and teams: we used seven different church venues, one for each night of the week.

During these years we could accommodate up to 15 guests per night. However, over the course of the Shelter the total number of people helped was far greater than this, as guests were housed or moved on and new guests took their place.

### **Winter 2020-21 (Covid)**

In line with the Government's Covid guidance, we were unable to provide overnight shelter during the winter of 2020-21. However, we worked closely with Maidstone Borough Council (MBC), who provided temporary accommodation under the Governments 'Everyone In Scheme' to ensure everyone was kept off the streets.

During this winter we worked alongside MBC to provide continuing support to our local homeless community (all in rooms/temporary accommodation) by providing hot home-cooked takeaway meals and food packs for people who needed them. We also provided meals to individuals and families in need of food, who were suffering due to financial distress caused by the pandemic. Our meals were distributed from both The Salvation Army food banks and Union Street Methodist Church in order to reach the people most in need of support.

### **Winter 2021-22**

Our plans for winter 2021-22 are to provide sit down hot meals and a listening ear/support for homeless guests and others in need, as in the earlier years of our activities. We will provide these meals and support inside local church venues.

We also plan to provide overnight support for homeless guests, but this will be in a rented property with up to four individual bedrooms rather than dormitory-style in church halls. This is to adhere to the latest guidance for Winter Shelters, in order to continue keeping guests as safe from Covid as possible and to provide a more dignified manner of support. Rather than having overnight volunteers, we will employ an overnight security person, to ensure both our guests and the rented property remain safe each night.

In addition to the meals, listening ear/support and overnight accommodation, we are planning to work with the Day Centre to provide training in basic, essential skills such as cooking, budgeting, computer skills, job applications etc to help and support them as they integrate back into society and self-sufficiency.

## **Covid-19 vaccinations / safety**

We are asking for all volunteers to have been fully vaccinated for their own protection. However, if there is a reason why you haven't received your vaccinations, you will be required to take full responsibility for keeping yourself and others safe whilst in our shelters.

## **MCWS Values & Aims**

Our key values at MCWS are hospitality and kindness and our aims are:

- ❖ Providing hospitality and overnight shelter for homeless people in the winter months.
- ❖ Engaging members of churches in Maidstone and other volunteers in building supportive relationships with homeless people in Maidstone, without discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or religion.
- ❖ Supporting homeless people to find long-term accommodation.
- ❖ Undertaking such other purposes in relation to the needs of homeless people as the trustees may from time to time determine.

## **SHELTER STRUCTURE**

The day-to-day work of MCWS is undertaken by:

### **The Project Manager, Assistant Project Manager and Project Workers (Operations Team)**

These are the people who liaise with external agencies, including MBC Outreach team, in order to assess and manage referrals to the Shelter.

The Project Manager is responsible to the Trustees. Our Project Manager is Gwyn McPherson, who is in her 4<sup>th</sup> year in this role. Prior to taking on the role of Project Manager, Gwyn was a Volunteer, Venue Lead (volunteer in charge of a venue) and Project Worker. She has been involved with MCWS in various roles since its inception. Gwyn's contact number is 07308 150048.

The Assistant Project Manager is Claire Kehily, who is in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year in this role. Claire also previously held roles as a Volunteer and a Project Worker for MCWS. Claire will support Gwyn in order to ensure the shelter runs smoothly each evening/morning.

Both Gwyn & Claire work to a rota, to ensure at least one of them is available at the shelter at all times. They will work closely with our Project Worker(s) (not yet appointed) and with our volunteer teams, to ensure everything runs well and to deal with any issues that may arise. Their contact details will be available in each Venue's information folder.

### **The Administrator**

This is the person who manages the administration of the Shelter office and liaises with our volunteers, including preparing volunteer rotas. Our Administrator, Mandy Fuller, is responsible to the Project Manager and can be contacted on 01622 296450.

### **The Trustees**

Our Trustees have overall responsibility for the running of the Shelter. They are also actively involved in supporting it.

#### Gordon Mackley - Chairman

Gordon is the Chairman of the Trustees. He retired from work in 2016, after a 43 year-long career in railway operational management and transport information systems. He is a Licensed Lay Reader in a Church of England church near Maidstone. Gordon served as a Street Pastor in Maidstone from the start of the scheme in October 2008 until Covid restrictions were first imposed in early 2020. He was a Team Leader for many years as well as the Maidstone Co-ordinator for a period. He became involved in Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter from the first year, serving as a volunteer.

#### Martin Hinchliffe – Operations

Martin has a strong desire to help others less fortunate than himself. He is saddened by regularly seeing the homeless on the streets of Maidstone, London and other cities and attempts to play his part in supporting and reducing the number of street homeless. He has previously volunteered for Crisis at Christmas in London and has volunteered for eight years with MCWS. He has been a Trustee of the charity for 5 years. He has experience in managing operations and safety management, following a career in engineering and is the lead Trustee for shelter operations.

### Wendy Foster – Human Resources

Wendy has over 30 years' experience as a senior Human Resources practitioner, mainly in public sector and not-for-profit organisations, and is the lead Trustee for this specialism. She is an active Christian and has good links with local faith-based groups. In addition, Wendy is a Trustee for Citizens' Advice Maidstone, a role that led to her increased interest in support for the homeless in Maidstone.

### Rev John Tapper – Treasurer

Rev Canon John is a Chartered Accountant and is the charity's Treasurer. John has assisted the Shelter both as an overnight volunteer and also collecting items for the guests

### Zofia Grzymala – Partnership Support

Zofia is well known for her passion and dedication to helping homeless people and influencing change in the services provided. She has a substantial knowledge of the homeless and housing sector. Her professional experience includes managing Homeless Care charity (supported accommodation, day centre and food bank) as well as her roles within the Origin Group and Sanctuary Housing. Through many years in the sector, she has developed a deep understanding of what it really means to be homeless and the support homeless individuals need the most. Zofia is currently working as General Manager of Kent Supported Housing.

### Richard Larkman – Fundraising

Richard has a commercial background in procurement, business transformation and property. He has volunteered at two locations within the Shelter. In addition to being a Trustee for MCWS, Richard is also a volunteer and Trustee for Homeless Care, Maidstone Day Centre.

## **Volunteers**

Our volunteers are the people who make the Shelter happen on a day-to-day basis. This includes preparing and cooking meals for our guests, listening to them/chatting with them, playing games etc and ensuring that our venues are left clean and tidy at all times.

## **GUEST REFERRAL PROCESS**

The Winter Shelter is an open access shelter. We operate our own assessment referral process, liaising with other agencies. Referrals are received and reviewed by the Operations Team.

Risk assessments are carried out for each guest, for the health and safety of all our guests and volunteers.

## **GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS**

It is important to recognise that the guests who use the Shelter often have complex problems, which the Shelter and its volunteers are not equipped to deal with. Although we may want to, we cannot solve peoples' problems. We are there to provide basic support and a listening ear.

Whilst guests are being kept safe and fed during the coldest part of the year, our Operations Team work with support agencies and organisations to ensure they get the support they need, to help them address their problems on a longer-term basis. If you are getting into conversations you cannot deal with, let the Operations Team know. Under no circumstances should you feel obligated to do anything asked of you by a guest, nor should you put yourself in a situation where you are keeping secrets that you are not comfortable with, so please do not try to take on too much. (See 'Respect and Confidentiality', p8)

### **What is required of our Volunteers?**

- ❖ An understanding of your own limitations and boundaries in engaging with guests.
- ❖ Willingness to follow instructions from the Shelter Operations Team and to work as part of a team
- ❖ Ability to respond calmly but quickly in an emergency.
- ❖ Being able to judge when to call for help.
- ❖ Familiarity and ability to work within Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter policies and guidelines, especially regarding Health and Safety procedures.
- ❖ Knowledge of basic First Aid would be useful, but is not essential to volunteering.
- ❖ Sensitivity to issues relating to homelessness, including mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse.
- ❖ Basic knowledge of the building, especially the location of fire exits. (This information will be provided at your first volunteer session)

## **Volunteers should**

- ❖ Be reliable and arrive on time; sign in and out when arriving and leaving the venue
- ❖ Make sure you know the venue layout, especially the emergency exits, and any areas that are out of bounds to guests.
- ❖ Treat guests with respect.
- ❖ Be friendly and make guests feel welcome.
- ❖ Work as part of a team and support the Operations Team. You must not challenge their decisions in front of other volunteers or guests as you may not be aware of information to which you are not privy.
- ❖ Not make arrangements to meet guests outside the premises unless it has been arranged by MCWS staff.
- ❖ Not make promises when speaking to guests. People can feel very let down by a promise not kept. MCWS needs to build trust in order to be effective in finding appropriate help for guests. Broken promises can undermine this work. ('I will try...' not 'I will...')
- ❖ Not wear or bring valuables to the Shelter as MCWS cannot be held responsible for their safekeeping or any loss – there may not be anywhere to store valuables safely.
- ❖ Wear appropriate and sensible clothing.
- ❖ Wear the correct PPE, as required by Government guidelines at the time

## **Respect and Confidentiality**

When talking to guests it is important not to press them for information. Please acknowledge that some guests may feel hurt or let down by past experiences and may not wish to talk about them. Others will like nothing better than to tell you their story. Respect guests' confidentiality and don't allow your conversation to become common gossip - especially with other guests or volunteers.

Although confidentiality is important for building trust, it is not about keeping secrets and this should be made clear to guests. If at any time you feel there is an issue, let a member of the Operations Team know immediately. Likewise, if you feel a conversation is getting too demanding, tell the guest you may have to let the Operations Staff know what is being said, in order to get appropriate help. It is then up to the guest if they want to continue.

## **Gifts**

From time to time guests may wish to give gifts to staff or volunteers. Small gifts may be accepted, particularly if they can be shared. The general rule is that all gifts should be shared with the team, and the guest should be told this is the policy. In any case, all gifts should be reported to the Operations Team and recorded in the Logbook. Any gift deemed to be too expensive or in some way inappropriate should be gently returned to the guest. Guests should not be encouraged to give gifts.

## **Golden Rules**

- ❖ Check identities – know who people are.
- ❖ Do **NOT** give personal information especially your address, telephone number or e-mail address and **NEVER** lend your mobile phone to any of the guests.
- ❖ Do not invite or take guests to your home.
- ❖ Make sure neither you nor a colleague is left alone with a guest. This is not only for your own safety, but so that if anyone alleges an impropriety against you there is a witness.
- ❖ Do not give or lend money to guests.
- ❖ We have a no alcohol policy on the premises.
- ❖ Do not touch guests unexpectedly.
- ❖ No drugs (other than prescribed) or alcohol allowed.
- ❖ Do not intervene physically to stop a fight.
- ❖ Do not give any medication to guests, not even aspirin, paracetamol etc.
- ❖ Report any concerns you have, confidentially, to the Operations Team, who will take appropriate action.
- ❖ Do not invite any outside agencies into the shelter. Please refer them to the Project Manager who will invite them if appropriate.

## **Complaints**

There are policies, available on request, about dealing with complaints by guests.

**There will always be at least one member of the Operations Team present at the evening meal venue from 6.00pm until 9.30pm, at the overnight property from 9.00-10.00pm and from 7.30-10.00am the following morning.**

## RULES FOR GUESTS

- ❖ Anyone **in need** of a hot meal will be given one. However, in order to adhere to Social Distancing guidelines, there will be restrictions on numbers allowed into each Venue. If we have too many meals-only guests, we will provide takeaway hot meals to those in excess of our 'safe' numbers.
- ❖ Only guests who have been allocated a place by the Operations team will be allowed into the overnight accommodation.
- ❖ Guests will not be allowed into the Shelter if under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- ❖ No possession of alcohol or illegal drugs on the premises.
- ❖ No offensive weapons.
- ❖ Violent, threatening, discriminatory or other anti-social behaviour or language will not be tolerated.
- ❖ No smoking inside the building (There will be an area available to smoke outside)
- ❖ No pets.
- ❖ The evening dinner venue will open at 6.45pm and guests must arrive each night no later than 7.15pm. Guests will be requested to leave the venue by 9pm at the latest.
- ❖ On a guests' first night at a venue, a member of the Operations team or a nominated volunteer will show the guest around, to make sure he/she knows his/her way around, including where the fire exits and assembly points are.
- ❖ Guests are not allowed in the kitchen.
- ❖ Guests must not ask volunteers for money or give gifts to volunteers.
- ❖ Guests must not ask the volunteers for any of their personal contact details.
- ❖ Guests must only use areas of the building designated to the Shelter
- ❖ Once a guest has taken up his/her place at the Shelter for that evening, he/she cannot leave and come back later that evening.
- ❖ Guests must remember to take all their items with them when they leave.
- ❖ The Shelter is for those aged 18 years and above.

The Shelter rules are for the safety and protection of all persons. If guests break the rules they may be asked to leave, excluded for a week, or permanently barred from the Shelter.

## **TIMETABLE OF SHIFTS**

### **Afternoon shifts**

#### **General support for guests at daily registration: 3.15pm – 6.15pm**

- ❖ Prepare and offer drinks/light refreshments
- ❖ Socialise with and support guests

### **Evening shifts for evening meal**

#### **Cooking Team: 6.00pm – 9.00pm**

- ❖ Prepare, cook and serve the evening meal. Dinner will be served at 7.30pm
- ❖ Wash up and clear away all items used
- ❖ Sanitize the kitchen, in accordance with the latest Covid guidelines

All kitchen volunteers will need an up-to-date food hygiene certificate, issued within the last 3 years. If you don't have one, we can arrange this for you.

#### **General volunteers (non-kitchen teams): 6.30pm - 9.30pm**

- ❖ Set up tables and chairs
- ❖ Welcome guests from 7pm and show them to a table.
- ❖ Serve guests at the tables, including serving tea and coffee over the course of the evening. Dinner will be served to guests (table service) at 7.30pm and our evening volunteers are encouraged to partake of a meal alongside the guests, in the manner of a family/friend's mealtime.
- ❖ Socialise with our guests: chat with and, more importantly, listen to them if they wish to talk. Play board games etc with guests – again, only if they wish to do so
- ❖ Clear and tidy away tables and chairs
- ❖ Clean & sanitize all areas, including the toilets and all door handles
- ❖ Ensure any incidents are recorded in the Logbook

Volunteers will be encouraged to chat with our guests for the duration of their time in the shelter each night.

After dinner, there will be a short time for continued chat or socially distanced games, before guests are asked to leave at 9.00pm. This will allow time for our volunteers to ensure all areas are clean and sanitized before leaving the building each evening.

## **Morning shifts at rented accommodation/house**

### **Breakfast Team: 7.30am – 9.00am**

- ❖ Put on kettle to offer guests a hot drink when they wake up
- ❖ Wake up guests
- ❖ Prepare a cooked breakfast for those who would like one. Other breakfast options will also be available, such as cereal and toast etc
- ❖ Prepare packed lunches for guests to take away
- ❖ Wash up and tidy kitchen.
- ❖ Sanitize the kitchen, in accordance with the latest Covid guidelines

All kitchen volunteers will need an up-to-date food hygiene certificate, issued within the last 3 years. If you don't have one, we can arrange this for you.

### **General volunteers (non-breakfast teams): 9.00am – 10.00am**

- ❖ Tidy beds and change bedding unless the same guest(s) are returning the following night. The Operations team will advise on this. (It is advised to wear gloves when handling used bedding and shake bedding carefully.)
- ❖ Clean the property as needed including:
  - dust/hoover if needed
  - clean bathroom(s) and change towels
  - empty bins
  - sanitize door handles
- ❖ Ensure guests leave premises by 9.30am.
- ❖ The Operations team will ensure the Logbook has been completed and a record made of any incidents.
- ❖ Take bedding and towels away for laundering (the Operations team will advise on this).
- ❖ The Operations team will secure the building once all guests and volunteers have left.

## **VENUES** (for meals/social interaction)

The Operations team (or one of the other volunteers) will ensure the following information is communicated to all volunteers at their first shift in a Venue.

All volunteers must:

- ❖ Be familiar with the building in which they are working
- ❖ Know where the fire exits and fire extinguishers are.
- ❖ Know where the First Aid Box and list of emergency numbers are.
- ❖ Make sure that fire exits are unlocked and not blocked.
- ❖ Be aware of the venue's Fire Instructions.
- ❖ Know the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.
- ❖ Know where guests can and cannot go.
- ❖ Make sure any areas that are 'out of bounds' to guests remain secure
- ❖ Know a safe area where they can leave their belongings.

## **RENTED PROPERTY – for morning duties**

The Operations team (or one of the other volunteers) will ensure the following information is communicated to all volunteers at their first shift in the rented property.

All volunteers must:

- ❖ Be familiar with the building in which they are working
- ❖ Know where the exits and fire extinguishers are.
- ❖ Know where the First Aid Box and list of emergency numbers are.
- ❖ Make sure that doors are unlocked and not blocked.
- ❖ Be aware of the Fire Instructions at the property
- ❖ Know the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.
- ❖ Know the safe area where they can leave their belongings.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

Our policy is to provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for both volunteers and guests using the Winter Shelter. We aim to provide such information, training and supervision as is needed for this purpose, adhering to strict Covid guidance.

### Objectives

- ❖ To provide a working environment that is healthy and safe, with satisfactory amenities.
- ❖ To ensure Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice are observed.
- ❖ To provide and maintain safe premises and equipment including appropriate protective clothing/PPE.
- ❖ To ensure the use, handling, storage and transportation of food, equipment, articles and substances are safe.
- ❖ To ensure the systems of work are safe and to provide or locate appropriate training and advice for volunteers in these matters
- ❖ To promote effective communication between the Shelter Trustees, Operations Team, Church/Venue Coordinators, Volunteers and guests on safety matters in each church
- ❖ To ensure all volunteers and guests using the premises are safe and not risking their health.
- ❖ Clean up any spillage immediately.

## **FIRE INSTRUCTIONS**

All volunteers need to be aware of the fire instructions for the venues at which they are volunteering. They must familiarise themselves with the procedure(s) in case of fire. All venues must have fire instructions clearly displayed on the wall.

## **MANUAL HANDLING**

**There are some basic principles that each volunteer should observe prior to carrying out a manual handling operation:**

- ❖ ensure that the object is light enough to lift, is stable and unlikely to shift or move
- ❖ heavy or awkward loads should be moved using a handling aid
- ❖ make sure the route is clear of obstructions
- ❖ make sure there is somewhere to put the load down wherever it is to be moved to
- ❖ stand as close to the load as possible, and spread your feet to shoulder width
- ❖ bend your knees and try to keep the back's natural, upright posture
- ❖ grasp the load firmly, as close to the body as you can
- ❖ use your legs to lift the load in a smooth motion as this offers more leverage, reducing the strain on your back
- ❖ carry the load close to your body, with elbows tucked in
- ❖ avoid twisting your body as much as possible, by turning your feet to position yourself with the load.

## **FOOD HYGIENE AND KITCHEN SAFETY**

All kitchen volunteers should have an up to date 'Food hygiene certificate', issued within the last 3 years.

However, here are some general points for **all** volunteers to be aware of. Cooks and those storing, preparing and handling any food, including serving, should follow these guidelines or refer to our comprehensive Food Safety manual which will be available on request.

### **Preparation**

Food should be thoroughly cooked to a core temperature of at least 75°C and kept at that temperature for at least two minutes. (If you are cooking a casserole, the core temperature should be taken from the centre of a piece of meat.)

### **Cooling**

Cool food before putting in the refrigerator. Food should not stand around for more than ninety minutes, at which time deterioration will begin.

### **Reheating**

The practice of reheating should be avoided. However, if this is unavoidable, the food should be heated until it has reached a core temperature of at least 75°C and held at that temperature for at least two minutes.

### **Microwaves**

If food is being cooked or heated in a microwave oven, be especially careful to ensure that every part of the food is thoroughly heated. Microwaves often heat food unevenly, so you may need to stir and move the food around to ensure temperature consistency. Further, it is important to allow at least 2 minutes after removal from the microwave before eating.

### **Serving**

Hot food must be served at a temperature of at least 63°C.

*(Information from 'The Food Safety Handbook' by Graham Aston)*

## **ALLERGY GUIDELINES**

As a charity, MCWS does not have to provide information for guests, volunteers and staff about allergens present in the food as ingredients. However, the Food Standards Agency recommends that charities should consider the risks of allergens in the food they are preparing and inform those who will be consuming the food of any potential allergens. Details of allergens can be found on the Food Standards Agency website <http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide>

## **PROCEDURES FOR PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE**

Although MCWS does not expect violent incidences, it is important to recognise that actual or potential violence may be a problem whilst working with homeless guests.

The following guidelines were issued by the London Rough Sleepers Unit. They are used by both Shelter & Crisis and are intended to offer direction on the most effective ways of preventing violent behaviour and protecting from its consequences.

The Health and Safety Statement included in this booklet acknowledges the responsibility to provide direction and support to volunteers; in addition, all volunteers have an individual responsibility never to put themselves, their colleagues, guests or members of the public at risk. These procedures should be viewed within the context of that shared responsibility.

Although these guidelines focus on the extreme end of violent behaviour, this does not mean to imply that only physical assault is of concern. Threats and verbal abuse, for example, are also recognised for their intimidating and undermining impact and, where appropriate, these guidelines should apply to all forms of aggressive behaviour.

### **General guidelines for managing violence and aggression**

It is natural to be frightened of violence and this needs to be taken into account in the expectations of yourself or others when dealing with actual or potential violence or threatening behaviour.

In responding to violence or potential violence, your own safety and that of colleagues and the client group must be seen as the first consideration.

Guidelines can never cover every eventuality. Volunteers must also draw on their experience, skills and common sense when faced with aggressive situations.

All volunteers should co-operate in taking a consistent approach to confronting guests about unacceptable behaviour. They should also support any decisions made by the Operations Team, in banning or excluding guests from the building. As far as possible, one individual person should not be identified as the instigator of a ban – these should be presented as team decisions and all volunteers must actively support the decision, even if they have a different opinion.

### **Managing a violent incident**

Should an incident occur, it is the responsibility of all volunteers to alert colleagues at the first sign of aggression and to act co-operatively to diffuse the situation.

One or two volunteers should talk to the individual(s) concerned, remaining calm but firm, and trying to create opportunities for the guest(s) to back down without feeling humiliated. Where possible, the guest(s) should be taken aside.

Other volunteers should remain at a reasonable distance but pay attention in case the situation escalates. Volunteers who are not directly involved with the main protagonists should attempt to keep other guests calm, and prevent them from becoming involved unless they are friends who can assist positively.

In particular, one volunteer should ensure that any vulnerable person is removed from the area and, if possible, any potential weapons such as plates or cutlery should be removed from the area quickly and quietly.

Space should be created to ensure that people are not crowded into a confined area. All those present should be mindful of their own and others' 'safety escape routes' in case it should be necessary to get out of the way fast.

The Project Manager or Project Worker should be in a position to telephone for police assistance should this become necessary.

If an incident escalates and the guest(s) cannot be calmed, then volunteers should be prepared to vacate the area. Personal safety must be put before the protection of property. The police should be summoned immediately.

In exceptional circumstances, if retreat is not possible, volunteers should take appropriate measures to defend themselves. In the unlikely event of an attack, only use force sufficient to stop the attacker and prevent injury to self, colleagues or other guests. Reasonable restraint is acceptable.

## **After an incident has occurred**

If an incident does occur, it is likely to be very unsettling for everyone involved in the Shelter, whether volunteer or guest. Some things that can be done include:

- ❖ Providing First Aid where necessary.
- ❖ Providing reassurance and helping everyone to calm down.
- ❖ Recording details of the incident. This should be done by a member of the Operations team or a nominated volunteer.
- ❖ Arranging for any volunteer that has been scared or hurt to leave the shift, accompanied if appropriate.
- ❖ Arranging longer term support if and when necessary.
- ❖ Discussing the incident and trying to draw out constructive lessons for avoiding a similar incident in the future.
- ❖ Considering providing other guests with brief details of what happened and how it was dealt with; this is to prevent rumours and provide reassurance that incidents are dealt with effectively.

## **Personal Safety**

In order to promote safety in the Shelter, always remember to observe these rules:

- ❖ Check the identity of each guest arriving at the door by asking for their name.
- ❖ Never give your home telephone number or home address to a guest, or invite a guest into your home.
- ❖ Make sure you are never alone with a guest.
- ❖ Leave your valuables at home, or, if necessary, in the nominated safe place at the venue
- ❖ Do not give money to guests – if you are concerned about their situation, refer them to the Operations Team
- ❖ Do not touch any guest, even to wake them up.
- ❖ When dealing with lost property, never put your hand into a bag or pocket. Tip contents onto a flat surface so you can see what you are handling.
- ❖ Volunteers should act safely and not put themselves or other volunteers or guests in any danger. If you feel intimidated at any time during the shift, inform the Operations Team. Please take directions from them at all times, especially with regard to matters of personal safety.
- ❖ Do not offer guests any medication.

## **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL INFORMATION / PROCEDURES**

The following general guidelines are adapted from those used by Crisis at Christmas winter shelters.

### **Drugs or alcohol must not be used/consumed on the premises by any guest or volunteer:**

- ❖ Drinking alcohol whilst on shift is not allowed.
- ❖ Volunteers should not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs when coming on shift.
- ❖ Guests will not be admitted if inebriated or under the influence of drugs

### **Action to be taken if policy is breached:**

If guests are found drinking on the premises or if they are found to be drunk having gained entry to the Shelter, they will be asked to leave the venue. This can be done that evening by a member of the Operations Team or a nominated volunteer.

- ❖ If guests are found taking drugs on the premises, they will be asked to leave the venue.
- ❖ Anyone found dealing drugs will be asked to leave the venue.
- ❖ Volunteers who suspect that someone is violating these policies must inform the Operations Team. Volunteers should not police a night Shelter but they should not be negligent either.
- ❖ Any bans will be enforced by the Project Manager
- ❖ MCWS reserves the right to offer 'one chance' but this is completely at the discretion of the Project Manager, in consultation with the Project worker/Volunteers who were present at the time of any incident.

### **Communication**

- ❖ Guests will be advised of this policy on entering the Shelter, when they sign the Guest Agreement.
- ❖ If anyone is excluded from a venue as a result of breaching the policy, it may be extended to all Venues.