

# The Snowflake Trust



**Volunteers' Handbook 2018/19**

**THE SNOWFLAKE PRAYER FOR THE HOMELESS:**

*Jesus, help us to see your face  
in the eyes of every homeless person;  
keep them safe from physical and emotional harm; give them  
hope for a better future by the respect, kindness and love  
shown to them. Amen.*

*Teresa Black 2015*

## **Introduction**

The Snowflake Night Shelter offers shelter, hospitality and hope during the coldest winter months to people who would otherwise be sleeping rough.

Although several venues are involved on rotation, please regard them as being one shelter in one work. Please take some time to read and digest these notes, **the policy documents** available on our website [www.snowflake-nightshelter.org.uk](http://www.snowflake-nightshelter.org.uk) (and available in a folder at each venue), and take part in the training sessions that we offer. There will also be reminders on our notice board of what is expected of all Volunteers on the relevant shifts.

All Volunteers are expected to respect the Christian ethos of the Snowflake Night Shelter project: ***“for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me”*** Matthew Chapter 25

**Thank you for Volunteering to work in one of the Snowflake venues!**

**We hope that your experience of Volunteering will be rewarding and that all our venues will be safe and welcoming for those who use them, whether as Guests or Volunteers.**

## **The Shelter Project**

Throughout we refer to the clients of the Snowflake Night shelter as Guests. Respect for everyone is the essential bedrock in all we do. Volunteers must understand that the Guests have often been disappointed, had their hopes dashed, or been dealt with by a seemingly unsympathetic bureaucracy, and so may not react as Volunteers might expect. Courtesy and kindness break down the walls of stress and insecurity, and all Volunteers will require an endless source of understanding and patience.

The Snowflake Night Shelter has limited objectives of providing food and shelter and **is NOT a drop in centre** where anyone can just turn up. Other local charities have the expertise and resources to deal with the other needs of marginalised persons. So whilst as a Volunteer you may feel a call to assist a Guest in other ways, please keep in mind that you are here to assist the Guest within the limited objectives of the Snowflake Night Shelter. Of course you should be a sympathetic listener to Guests but do not let this draw you into giving advice. 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 agree to keep secrets that you are not comfortable with. Please speak to the Venue Coordinator, Overnight Supervisor or Project Supervisor (as appropriate) for advice.

**The Snowflake Night Shelter will operate from Friday, 30th November 2018 to Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019.**

The Snowflake Trust will have overall responsibility via its Senior Project Supervisor, who will oversee the smooth running of the shelter, The Snowflake Trustees, in liaison with statutory authorities and others, work with the Guests to find secure accommodation and more stable lifestyles.

Each venue has a team of Volunteers led by the Venue Coordinator who will take the lead role for each of the venues.

**WHAT IS REQUIRED OF VOLUNTEERS?**

A heart for the vulnerable, poor and needy and a willingness to be challenged and changed.

- Sensitivity to issues relating to homelessness, including mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse
- Familiarity and ability to work within Snowflake Trust Policies and Procedures especially the Health & Safety procedures and the Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy
- Ability to respond calmly but quickly in an emergency
- Judgement of when to call for help
- Basic knowledge of the venue especially the location of fire exits
- Willingness to follow instructions from the Venue Coordinator/Night Shift Leader or Project Supervisor (as appropriate) and work as part of a team.

## WHAT IS REQUIRED OF OUR GUESTS?

To attend daily and connect with the relevant agencies to help them move on.

- Guests must be at least 18 years of age.
- Arrival is from 7.00pm to 8:00pm. Some may arrive later by agreement and the place may be lost if guests do not arrive each night by an agreed time.
- No alcohol or controlled drugs are allowed in or around the premises. Some guests may be on prescription medication which of course is allowed.
- No violent, threatening, racist, sexist, homophobic or other anti-social behaviour/language is tolerated.
- No offensive weapons.
- In accordance with the law, there is no smoking inside the building. Guests may smoke outside close to the building within sight of the main doors.
- Sadly we cannot accommodate pets.
- Once inside the shelter, there should be no 'coming and going' from the shelter.

## General Guidelines

**Be on time!** If running late or having a problem which prevents you from attending, please phone 07547 482627 as early in the day as possible so that, if necessary, a replacement Volunteer can be organised.

- Make sure you know the layout of the venue, especially the emergency exits and that they are clear of obstructions and any areas that are out of bounds to Guests
- **Treat Guests and fellow Volunteers with respect & make them feel welcome**
- Address Guests and Volunteers by their first names only
- Work as a team and support your Venue Coordinator/Night Shift Leader or Project Supervisor. Do not challenge their decisions in front of other Volunteers or Guests
- There must be at least three Volunteers in the Shelter at all times
- Do not give or lend money to Guests
- Do not give out personal information especially street addresses, telephone numbers, social Media details (Facebook) or email addresses. You may think there will be no problems but Volunteers elsewhere have been pestered long after a shelter has closed with requests which are hard to refuse.
- Make sure you are not left alone with a Guest or leave a colleague alone. This is not only for your own safety but so that if anyone alleges an impropriety against you, there is a witness
- When speaking to Guests it is best not to make promises: people can feel very let down by a promise not kept. Snowflake needs to build and maintain trust in order to be effective in finding appropriate help for Guests. Broken promises can undermine this work.

- Do not take Guests to your home, but do stop to say 'hello' if you see a Guest during the day
- Arrangements should not be made to meet with Guests outside the Shelter unless it is an activity arranged by Snowflake. If you think a Guest may need spiritual advice discuss that with the Venue Coordinator. Reference to the Project Supervisor may well be appropriate/essential as s/he will have access to more information about the individual concerned
- For your own safety do not wear or bring valuables to the Shelter, nor offer lifts to Guests.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

When talking to Guests it is important not to push for information. Please acknowledge that some Guests may feel hurt or let down by some experiences and may not wish to talk about them. Others will like nothing better than to tell you their story. Please respect a Guest's confidentiality and take great care not to allow your conversation to become common gossip especially with other Guests or Volunteers. Confidentiality is important for building trust; however, it is not about keeping secrets and this should be made clear to Guests. You may keep a conversation in confidence so long as you do not feel burdened or uncomfortable about what has been shared. If things become too demanding tell the Guest that you may have to tell the Project Supervisor what is being said in order to get appropriate help. It is then up to the Guest as to whether they want to continue.

If you feel there is a threat to another person or to the safety of the Shelter you should tell your Venue Coordinator/Night Shift Leader immediately.

## TIMETABLE OF SHIFTS

- **6.00-10.30 pm EVENING SHIFT** (15 minute overlap for briefing between shifts)  
The Venue Coordinator or Project Supervisor opens up the venue and checks the security of the premises regarding doors to be locked or opened.
- All Volunteers help to unload the van, this can include Guests as well. Once van unloaded all Guests will need to wait in foyer until 7:00pm when the Shelter is ready for the Guests.
- The Project Supervisor/Venue Coordinator assembles the whole Volunteer team for a briefing and introduces any new Volunteers. The Snowflake Prayer is read, those not wishing to participate in this prayer do not have to.
- The Venue Coordinator ensures that all Volunteers know the locations of the fire exits and know the fire drill.
- **Volunteers are allocated**
  - to set out sleeping areas for male and female Guests comprising bed, chair and bag of sheets and duvet
  - to set out the relaxation area including newspapers, board games etc.
  - to prepare and cook a hot meal.
  - to set up tables & chairs for evening meal.
  - to check toilets for cleanliness, toilet paper, soap & paper towels
- **7.00 pm** Doors opened by the Project Supervisor, Guests are welcomed and allocated their beds according to the plan for the night.
- Show new Guests around, identifying fire exits and toilets.
- Serve drinks etc. over the course of the evening.
- **8.00pm or when agreed by Venue Coordinator/ Project**

**Supervisor.** Serve meal, as all Guests should have arrived by then, **Guests and All Volunteers to sit down together as a family.** Volunteers are welcome to eat as well if they would like too.

- Wash and tidy up after the meal.
- Organise social activities for the Guests e.g. games of draughts, jigsaws, dominoes etc.
- Any incidents are to be recorded in the log by the Venue Coordinator/Night Shift Leader as appropriate (NOT by volunteers as per GDPR).

### **10.15 pm - 7.00am NIGHT SHIFT**

(15 minute overlap for briefing between shifts)

- Night shift Volunteers arrive, are logged in.
- Night Shift Leader and Venue Coordinator have a handover briefing.
- Night Shift Leader assembles the Volunteer team for a briefing and introduces new Volunteers and shows where Fire Exits and toilets are.
- **10.30pm** Evening Shift Volunteers leave the venue.
- Make sure everyone is comfortable and settled in for the night.
- There should be one Volunteer and the Night Shift Leader awake at all times.
- **Volunteers to maintain silence so far as is possible so as not to disturb Guests' sleep – sound travels well at night! But must be able to see Guests at all time**
- **11pm Lights out** (if not already done so). All Guests should adhere to lights out and quiet.
- Serve drinks/food as required during the night.

- **6.45 am - 8.45 am MORNING SHIFT**
- **PLEASE DO NOT ARRIVE BEFORE THIS TIME AS THIS WILL DISTURB THE GUESTS!**
- Morning Shift Volunteers are welcomed, logged in and shown layout of the venue by the Night Shift Leader, noting particularly fire exits.
- **7.00am** Night Shift Volunteers leave the venue.
- **Lights are switched on by Project Supervisor.**
- Project Supervisor wakes the Guests
- Make Guests drinks and a lightbreakfast, whether the Breakfast is Hot or Cold is dependent on the Venue and time the Shelter has to vacate the premises .
- Guests should be encouraged to clear up their own bedding and stowing it in their allocated bag. It is advised that Volunteers who handle used bedding should wear **disposable gloves** (provided).
- Washing up and tidying up.
- Clean venue premises especially the toilets and shower areas.
- Ensure Guests leave the venue by 8.30am
- We need to ensure the Venue is left tidy and clean inside and outside, returning furniture to its original place, all lights, water heaters etc are turned off as required by the venue .
- Secure the venue by 8.45 am (this may be earlier in some venues).

## **HEALTH & SAFETY STATEMENT**

Our policy is to provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practical, safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for both Volunteers taking part in and Guests using the Snowflake Night Shelter, and to provide such information, training and supervision as is needed for this purpose.

## **FOOD HYGIENE & KITCHEN SAFETY**

The Snowflake Trust is registered with the Food Standards Agency and complies with all relevant guidelines. Volunteers will be expected to maintain the high standards of food hygiene and safety and are **requested not to bring in food from home for the Guests.**

## **FIRE SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS**

Volunteers need to be aware of the fire instructions for the venue/s they are allocated to. They must familiarise themselves with the procedure in case of fire.

## **PROCEDURES FOR PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE**

Volunteers should read the 'Violence' policy on the website or in the venue folder and should make themselves familiar with its contents. **All Volunteers** have an individual responsibility never to put themselves, their colleagues, Guests or members of the public at unnecessary risk.

## **DRUG & ALCOHOL INFORMATION/PROCEDURES**

A copy of the Alcohol and Controlled Drugs Policy is available on the website and is available in the venue folder

– Volunteers should make themselves familiar with its contents.

**The Snowflake Policy Documents listed below are available on the Snowflake Website and in the folder available in the Venue**

Adult Safeguarding  
Confidentiality  
Conflicts of Interest  
Consent for Photos  
Data Protection  
Drug & Alcohol  
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion  
Food & Hygiene  
Gifts  
Guest Agreement  
Guest Warning & Banning  
Health & Safety  
Lifting  
Privacy  
Recruitment of Ex Offenders  
Violence  
Volunteer Grievance  
Vulnerable Adults

## THE VENUES

**SUNDAYS**– St Matthews Church Centre, London Road entrance, St Leonards, TN37 6PD

**MONDAYS**– The Salvation Army Citadel, St Andrew Square, Hastings, TN34 1SR

**TUESDAYS** – St Mary Star of the Sea hall, 1 The High Street, Old Hastings, TN34 3EY

**WEDNESDAYS** – Wellington Square Baptist Church, Wellington Square, Hastings TN34 1BP

**THURSDAYS** – St Leonards Baptist Church  
Chapel Park Community Centre, St Leonards, TN37 6HR

**FRIDAYS** – St Johns Upper St Leonards  
Church Hall, Brittany Road, St Leonards, TN38 0RD

**SATURDAYS** – Concordia Hall, Church Road, St Leonards on Sea  
TN37 6HB



## **CONTACT US**

Please get in touch if you have any questions.

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Website: [www.snowflake-nightshelter.org.uk](http://www.snowflake-nightshelter.org.uk)

### **The Snowflake Trust Limited**

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