The shelter day...

Every Winter Shelter runs differently, and our plans will develop depending on the partners we work with and the location of our venues, but at the moment, we envisage the typical shelter day looking something like this:

**Up until 4pm:** Guests register at the designated registration point (to be confirmed)

**Between 4pm and 6pm:** Team leader liaises with the registration teams to collect new registration forms and details of new guests (and any other issues that have arisen during the day.)

**At 6pm:** The catering team arrives at that day’s venue and begins preparing dinner for up to 16 people (having been told that morning how many roughly to expect). The beds, bedding and other equipment is delivered.

**At 7:30pm:** The team leader, guests and that night’s sleepers arrive at that night’s venue. The Team Leader welcomes each guest and ensure that they are all fit and safe to enter. New guests are inducted into the life of the shelter and its rules. Tea and coffee are served and they settled in to wait for delivery.

**At 9:00pm:** After dinner, when all the tables are put away, and the washing up is done, the catering team leave. The night-sleepers organise the guests in the putting up of beds and settling in for the night. Board games, books etc are provided for entertainment. Some venues may have a TV/DVD player.

**At 11:00pm:** Lights out until 6:30am

**At 6:30am:** The guests get up and begin putting away their beds, bedding etc in preparation for breakfast. The breakfast team arrive.

**At 7:00am:** The guests and night-sleepers have breakfast together. After, guests and volunteers sweep and clean the venue ready to depart. The night-sleepers complete the contact book.

**At 8:00am:** The guests and volunteers leave the shelter. The beds and bedding are collected for transport to the following night’s venue. One of the volunteers contacts the next day’s team leader with the details from that night’s contact book, and any other details they need to know.

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**Medway Winter Night Shelter**

It is easy to think that we do not have a homeless problem in Medway. However, at a rough and conservative estimate there are at least 50 people sleeping on our streets each night, with more “sofa surfing” or living in vulnerable housing. They could even be you or me if we suffer an unfortunate life event such as job loss, inability to pay the mortgage, family breakup or addiction problems.

The Medway Winter Night Shelter is a project run by the ‘Churches Together in Medway’ and the Strood Community Project to help homeless people with a connection to Medway during the coldest and most difficult time of the year. We hope to open a Winter Shelter in January 2016, but to do that, we need your support. This booklet will give you information about the Shelter we hope to open, and how you and your church or organisation can get involved.

**More Information**
To learn more about the Medway Winter Night Shelter Project or to volunteer please go to our website [http://www.medwayshelter.weebly.com](http://www.medwayshelter.weebly.com) or email medwayshelter@gmail.com
Interested in Volunteering?

Having venues to shelter our guests is one key part of setting up the shelter, but we will not be able to get going without a large number of volunteers willing to give up some of their time to support our work.

We need approximately:

7 team leaders: The most demanding, but also the most rewarding role. The team leader is responsible for the same day each week. They liaise with the other team leaders, those managing shelter referrals, with those cooking on their night and those sleeping in the shelter. They attend the meal, ensure all guests are fit to enter the shelter and get to know them. They are not required to sleep in overnight (though some might choose to.)

60 Cooks for Evening Meal: Between 6pm and 9pm, a meal is prepared for about 16 people. The cooks buy the food (the cost of which is reimbursed by the project) and then prepare and serve a two course meal in the kitchens of one of our evening centres. After dinner, they wash up and clear away.

60 Cooks for breakfast: The breakfast team arrive at the previous night’s shelter at 7:00am and serve hot and cold breakfast, fruit juice, tea and coffee to guests. Breakfast ends at 8:00am, and the guests and volunteers leave at this time.

60 Overnight volunteers: Without our overnight volunteers we could not run the shelter. These are men and women who, in teams of four, join the guests for dinner and then sleep overnight with them at the Night Shelter to ensure its smooth running. When needed, they also lend a sympathetic ear to our guests and help them to settle in to the Shelter’s way of life.

10 Launderers: The Shelter’s linen needs to be washed weekly. Our laundry team work on a rota system to collect, wash, dry and return the linen each weekend.

The commitment: These figures are based on everyone taking a turn one day a fortnight. The more people volunteer, the fewer shifts people will need to do. You will be given any necessary training and support. Every shift will have a shift leader to give support and advice and deal with any situations that arise.

Could your church be a venue?

To get the Winter Shelter running, we first need to find some venues. Some churches have already offered a day a week, but the more churches that offer, the more opportunities we have to ensure we have the right facilities in the most accessible part of Medway.

What it means to be a host church

- Your church or hall will be in use on the same night each week for the duration of the shelter (or less if we get enough churches volunteer to change venues half way through the 10 weeks).
- The building needs to be available from 6pm – to 8:00am
- There need to be cooking facilities.
- There need to be toilets and washing (though not showering) facilities.
- There needs to be heating.
- The building needs to pass a health and safety audit (including fire exits, smoke alarms (including in the toilets), secure doors etc.)
- Your insurance needs to cover the shelter for the time it is there. (For one night a week, most insurers will agree to add this free of charge – if not, the Shelter project will cover any additional fee.)

What it does not mean to be a host church

- You will not be expected to “run” the shelter, merely to provide the buildings.
- You will not be expected to finance the shelter (including heating, lighting and food) for the time it is in your building.
- You will not be expected to provide all the volunteers for the time the shelter is in your building (though it can be very helpful to have someone from the “home team” who is familiar with the facilities, especially the first time it is used.)

Supporting the shelter financially

Not every church is able to be a shelter venue, but there are other ways to support us. It will cost over £5,000 to run the shelter, at a conservative estimate, even if all of our labour is voluntary. If your church, or individuals in your community could donate, even a small amount, please get in touch.