

Upstairs at Chapel Lane is a much-needed base for the night shelter project.

While we have been operating from different churches around the city since our pilot project began in January 2016, our new home at Chapel Lane will enable us to use our resources more effectively and support our guests as they move on to more permanent accommodation.

We hope that Chapel Lane will become a welcome place of respite for many, as we put God's love at the centre of everything we do.



# Stoke-on-Trent Churches Community Night Shelter

*People helping people*



### **How did the night shelter project begin?**

A group of volunteers at Stoke-on-Trent foodbank noticed the rise in the number of guests who were being referred to the foodbank with no fixed address; either due to rough sleeping or sofa-surfing. After a great deal of networking with like-minded individuals across the city, we opened as a pilot project each Saturday night between January – March 2016 at Swan Bank Church, with a team of around 30 volunteers.

### **Why is the night shelter needed? Aren't there other homelessness services within Stoke-on-Trent?**

There are other services, and we have enjoyed building positive working relationships with them over the past few years. Night shelter is a Christian response based on God's love for each individual, supported by churches and Christians across the city. However, we are keen to emphasise that we welcome volunteers and guests of all faiths and none.

### **How has the night shelter project developed since the pilot project?**

We assisted 19 guests during the 9 weeks of our pilot project, which has grown to over 70 in the last 2017/2018 winter. We continue to support guests where we can, during the summer months, with signposting, clothing and basic necessities as well as emotional support. We also liaise with other services to help guests move forward.

## **How can I get involved?**

Being involved with the night shelter can be as hands on (or hands off!) as you like. Here are some of the ways in which the people of Stoke-on-Trent have supported us so far...

### **Volunteering at the shelter**

Each night we are open for guests, we need volunteers to fulfill a range of roles; from making beds and serving food to welcoming guests and tidying up.

### **Preparing meals**

We like to provide our guests with a home-cooked meal each evening, and these are lovingly made by our team of cooks. Meals can be made at home and then brought along in the evening.

### **Donations**

For the past three years, we have operated entirely via donations and we are always keen to accept a range of clothing, toiletries and other necessities (see next page).

### **Financial Support**

While donations are extremely useful and very gratefully received, giving to the project financially allows us to meet specific needs as and when they arise.

### **Donations – What we need!**

- Male clothing – new packs of underwear (boxers) and socks; t-shirts and tracksuit bottoms; waterproof coats, hats, scarves and gloves; trainers
- Female clothing – new packs of underwear and socks; hats, scarves and gloves
- Rucksacks
- Sleeping bags
- Blankets
- Toiletries – small shampoos, soaps, shower gels, toothbrushes and toothpaste, hand sanitizer; roll-on deodorant

### **Donations – What we can't use!**

- Duvets, duvet covers and other bedding
- Furniture (unless for a specific request)
- Toiletries gift sets

### **How to contact us:**

**EMAIL:** [stokewinternightshelter@gmail.com](mailto:stokewinternightshelter@gmail.com)

### **FACEBOOK:**

<https://www.facebook.com/SOTWinterNightShelter/>

### **WEBSITE:**

<https://stokenightshelter.wordpress.com/>