



Sanctuary

"Giving shelter to the homeless of Gravesham"

Winter Shelter Review and Vision

The purpose of this document is to review the operation of Sanctuary between December 2015 and March 2016; to highlight issues encountered; and to outline the future direction.

11th May 2016

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1. Review of the Winter Shelter

What Sanctuary provided

Sanctuary is a project of City Praise Centre that was set up in response to a seen need of helping those on the street. In this first phase running between December and March, our aim was to provide shelter to those sleeping rough for 3 nights each week during the winter. Through the involvement of City Praise Centre (CPC) and Gravesend Methodist Church (GMC) in association with Gravesham Churches Together, along with other charity groups, we have been able to offer:

- A warm, safe place to sleep
- Hot meals
- Hot showers
- Laundering of clothes
- Provision of new/second hand clothing
- Repatriation back to their home country
- Help with paper work
- Liaison with authorities who can provide work, benefits and accommodation

None of this would have been possible without the support of our 150+ volunteers:

"I suppose the thing that struck me most when arriving for my first overnight shift and on every subsequent shift was that it was difficult to tell from appearance who were the guests and who were the volunteers. Sometimes it was just the language being spoken that was the give-away. It just reinforced to me that we are all just individuals, but some have been luckier in life than others." Priscilla McBean

"I have thoroughly enjoyed and been humbled by serving with the Sanctuary volunteers. It's been great to work with members of other Churches Together. It's been very satisfying, serving guests that have been so grateful, polite and friendly. " Ozzie Hall-Osman

"I volunteered at Sanctuary not knowing what I was letting myself in for, but I have been truly blessed by the experience. Meeting the guests and listening to some of their stories has changed my view of homelessness and made me realise it could happen to anyone. It has been a privilege to help in the small way I was able to and I know there has been a lot more work going on in putting people in touch with the right help they need. Thank you to all who have worked so hard in organising and running this very worthwhile project." Janet Hall

In terms of effort, the winter shelter operated for 53 days, made up of 159 shifts, covering 2385 hours, or 17,500+ volunteer hours, consuming £8,300 in resources.

The daytime effort put in by GMC volunteers over the same period was 754 hours.

As a consequence, Sanctuary has:

- Dealt with 85 different guests
- Prevented 657 sleeps on the street
- Helped 12 guests get housing
- Provided 1588 hot meals (including breakfast and evening meal)
- Repatriated 5 people back to their home country

Unique to Sanctuary has been the follow-up work that goes on during the week. At the current time we are working with around 12 people in helping them with paperwork, hospital appointments, and getting

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them a permanent place to sleep. This work is vital as it provides an opportunity to help those who are homeless to feel part of a family and to become a functioning part of the local community.

This is not something we have done alone. Throughout this period, we have worked with various agencies including:

Porchlight	Gravesham Job Centre	The Home Office engagement Team- Folkestone
Langley House Trust/ Probation services	Kent Police through the MEAM Process	Care Grow Live – Harmer Street, Gravesend
Mental Health Team Dartford /Gravesham	Social Services/Early Help Team	Gravesham Borough Council

Finances

We have received much financial support for Sanctuary, all of which goes to helping the homeless in the area. As at the end of March:

	<u>Oct 2015</u>	<u>Nov 2015</u>	<u>Dec 2015</u>	<u>Jan 2016</u>	<u>Feb 2016</u>	<u>March 2016</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
INCOME:							
One-off gifts	£0	£4,614	£1,142	£2,679	£1,238	£835	£10,508
Standing orders							£0
Gift Aid reclaim							£0
Total Income	£0	£4,614	£1,142	£2,679	£1,238	£835	£10,508

EXPENDITURE:

Not attributed	£11	£1,296	£1,978				£3,285
Admin (telephone, printing, paper, postage, etc.)				£173	£420	£305	£898
Promotion (leaflets, adverts, banners, etc.)							£0
Supplies (sleeping bags, sheets, beds, etc.)				£813	£788	£509	£2,110
Catering (food, drink, etc.)				£214	£53	£1,410	£1,677
Volunteer expenses (petrol, etc.)						£72	£72
Other expenses				£264			£264
Total Expenditure	£11	£1,296	£1,978	£1,464	£1,261	£2,296	£8,306

Current Bank Balance: £2,202

It should be noted that many non-financial gifts have been received that otherwise would have been purchased. This includes:

- Running costs (Light, heat) of Gravesend Methodist Church
- The many gifts received of clothing and food
- The work of Langa Sarva from the Asian community in providing food on a Tuesday night.
- The amount of effort put in by our volunteers, estimated at around 17,500 hours for the overnight shelter and 755 hours for daytime staff

2. Issues Arising

A number of issues have come to light that Sanctuary can do little about and requires government/local authority intervention. These include:

- **There is a homeless issue in Gravesend.** We regularly see 20+ people coming to the shelter on any one night, although not all stay to sleep. Despite initial thoughts that homeless people would be attracted into the area if a shelter was offered, most come from the Gravesend area. Guests initially came through 'word of mouth', but recently they have come from various agencies including:
 - Police with people they have found through local PCSO's who know of Sanctuary
 - Littlebrook Mental Hospital who pass on to us those leaving them who have no accommodation
 - Rethink charity based in Gravesham
 - Gravesend Job centre
 - Porchlight re-housing charity
 - Probation service along with prisons and prison chaplains
 - Gravesham Council
 - Domestic violence victims who can't get a place at a safe house

It is obvious that without Sanctuary, these people would have slept rough on the street and may not have found someone who will listen to their story and offer help. Many of the guests have been asking "What happens when Sanctuary closes" – for which we must find an answer.

- **Many of the homeless have other problems that prevent them from finding work/accommodation.** This year alone 3 of our guests, through our intervention, have been sectioned and many more who suffer from mental health and drug abuse problems are finding it hard to cope with everyday living.
- **Those with mental/drug issues are a target for dealers/loan sharks.** A number of our guests who have been housed are soon in financial difficulties as benefits given to them goes on buying drugs and alcohol. This is not what they would want when thinking rationally, but an absence of support allows their cravings to retake over their lives. The problem is that they are expected to top-up their rents but as this goes on addiction guests end up borrowing from loan sharks. This leads to the situation where they can't pay the rent and are evicted back onto the street. These people need help – e.g. their room should be paid completely and directly out of their benefits.
- **There is no coordinated response from the authorities to the homeless.** Apart from the Memes initiative, there is no central organisation who can deal with their issues. As a consequence, the pastoral care team within Sanctuary has been acting as an information hub, directing the homeless to the appropriate agencies.
- **Many of the homeless do not qualify for housing.** Despite the rhetoric from some politicians, there is very little help for the homeless. The criteria for those who qualify is very narrow. Anyone losing their job and then evicted for not paying their rent are considered to have made themselves intentionally homeless. From our experience, those people 'sofa surfing' or sleeping in cars are not considered to be homeless.
- **There is little of no affordable housing in the area.** The price of rented accommodation that is available is very high – usually more than the government allowance. Even the agencies such as Porchlight struggle to find anything in the Gravesham area, and those rooms they do find are often poorly maintained and squalid.

- **Ex-offenders seem to have priority.** People who have come out of prison seem to be a priority for government, although local government stress that all homeless are given equal priority depending on their circumstances.
- **There is little or no support for everyday living.** Some of our guests, even if they do get a room, are not capable of looking after themselves. Some are unable to get to hospital appointments as they have no transport. One of our guests spoke very little English and was expected to provide their own translator when attending a hospital appointment. This is impractical and totally not acceptable when trying to obtain information for health related issues.
- **When Sanctuary closes, where are the homeless expected to sleep?** The Sanctuary homeless shelter can only operate on a temporary basis. Those that do find a place to sleep on the street are often moved on – but where can they go to? Moving people on does not solve the problem and shows the complete absence of care for those who are homeless through no particular fault of their own.

3. Moving Forwards

Based on this experience, our aim for Sanctuary going forwards is as follows:

3.1 Vision

"To incorporate homeless people into families and communities that will stabilise them and give them a purpose as a disciple of Jesus Christ."

We are a Christian organisation and as such believe that fullness in life is experienced when someone enters into a personal relationship with God. However, we do not believe in ramming home our beliefs and welcome anyone of any race or belief. It is through our actions and love for mankind that we demonstrate the lifestyle we would like others to adopt.

3.2 Mission

To be a 'first point of contact' to those who are homeless irrespective of situation or background. Our focus is on providing assistance not catered by other agencies, which we plan to do either directly or in conjunction with other partners such as Gravesend Methodist Church. Our current plans include:

Permanent Night Shelter (by end 2019)

At the moment we use Gravesend Methodist Church as a temporary winter shelter. Our objective is to have a permanent Night Shelter where the homeless can sleep in comfort and safety all year round.

Dedicated sanctuary office (by end 2016)

The office will have a dedicated team of trained case workers who can link individual needs with the appropriate agencies, whether they be local authorities or other charities. It will be open throughout the week where the homeless can drop in to discuss their situation.

Dedicated homeless facilities (by end 2016)

Gravesend Methodist church already provide a place where the homeless have access to hot showers, obtain packed lunches, where clothes can be washed and new clothing obtained, so they can live a life of dignity. In future years we would like to extend this to the provision of a 'soup kitchen', which may be in a permanent place or as a mobile canteen.

Support worker training (by end 2017)

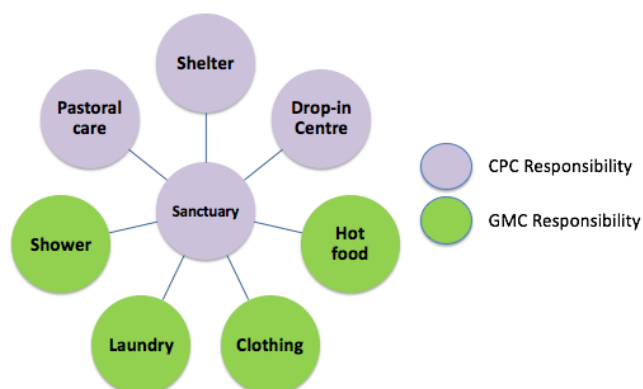
We already have training in place for volunteers. This objective will be to extend this program to agencies and companies on how to deal and help people living on the street.

Transitioning the Homeless into 'families' (by end 2017)

The aim of this objective is to provide a mechanism where homeless people make the transition from living on the street into a stable, environment where they can thrive as part of the local community. We have a number of ideas ranging from families 'adopting a homeless person' to providing a 'half-way house where the homeless can get used to living as part of a house-based community.

3.3 Structure

To achieve the above objectives, Sanctuary will be structured as an umbrella organisation with multiple focused teams.



For 2016, these teams include:

- **Shelter team** that will provide overnight sleeping arrangements including sleeping bags.
- **Drop-in Centre** that will provide a focal point for guests to meet on specific evenings.
- **Hot food team** that provides food to those in need which could be through a mobile catering facility or at a nominated shelter venue.
- **Clothing team** that provides new and second hand clothes from an established base and ensures that we have a stock of the right clothes
- **Laundry team** who take care of getting clothes washed, dried and handed back to guests.
- **Shower team** who provide showers along with toiletries and who ensure the facilities are left clean and well stocked
- **Pastoral team** who deal with individual guest issues and links them with appropriate agencies

At the current time:

CPC will take responsibility for the umbrella organisation and the way funds are raised, activities promoted, and interaction with agencies and the press. It will also manage the Shelter, Drop-in and Pastoral teams.

GMC will take responsibility for Hot food, Clothing, Laundry and Shower teams that take place during the day at the church.

Each team will be run under the banner of Sanctuary and be managed by the appointed project leader(s).

Sanctuary will use its newsletters and database of volunteers, to recruit staff for each team, but the respective project leader will be responsible for:

- Setting up and communicating rota's
- Training and caring for their own volunteers.
- Defining the way in which their team is run.
- Publishing the set times for when they operate

So, for example, the pastoral, clothing, shower and laundry team may operate during the week all year round, while the shelter team only operate between December – March on certain evenings.

The umbrella organisation will continue to operate under the CPC charity with a separate bank account and website, whose activities are monitored and directed via an inter-church steering committee.

3.4 Sanctuary office and administration

Much of the administration for Sanctuary takes place at CPC, while the guests are mainly dealt with by activities carried out at GMC. During the year we plan to have someone from Sanctuary available at GMC to help with the processing of information and dealing with guest issues.

3.5 Sanctuary ambassadors

Ambassadors are those people who are appointed by the steering group to represent Sanctuary in their local church as well as other charitable / commercial groups. They will be responsible for raising awareness, providing information on what is going on, recruiting new volunteers for the different teams, getting people to sign up to the Sanctuary newsletter, and canvassing for financial support.

They will also help deal with any volunteer issues that may arise from a particular group and in following up volunteer references.

Ambassadors may be linked to just one church/group or a number of churches/groups in a locality. They will be equipped with fliers along with other materials and meet up with the project leaders on a regular basis.

3.6 Closer relations with Gravesham Council

It would be good to have a closer relationship with Gravesham Council and other agencies to better understand how we can support each other. The aim would be to have a clear, coherent coordinated response to the homeless.

3.7 Proposals for Sanctuary Post March

Although the overnight shelter has now closed, Sanctuary will run a 'Drop-In' centre on Thursday and Sunday evenings between April – June 2016. There will be just one shift (6:30 – 10:00pm) and will not include an overnight sleep or breakfast. Hot meals will be the only service provided – guests will need to come back at the appointed times for laundry, showers and clothing needs.

The pastoral team that helps people will still operate throughout the day and can be contacted via the Sanctuary phone number.

The winter shelter (if a permanent shelter has not been established) will commence in December 2016. As happened last year, a volunteer evening will be held that in advance to go through how the shelter will operate and to ask volunteers to recommit for the winter.

4. Outline Budget

A budget has been put together for the next year based on the experience of the Winter Shelter, and bearing in mind our overall objectives. This shows a total budget requirement of £59,348 for the period May 2016 to April 2017. It assumes that we will deal with 100 homeless guests during the year.

Capital Expenditure:

2 new computers	£2,000
1 new printer	£350
Cupboards and boxes for storage	£250
Desk and chairs	£500
Kit and wash bags (30 sets)	£150
Sleeping bags (100 bags)	£1,000
Air beds (30)	£240
Sheets, pillows (30 sets)	£300
Badges and lanyards	£150
Total Capital Costs:	£4,940

Personnel Costs:

These will operate throughout the year linking the homeless with the appropriate agencies.

Administrator (3 days/week - £12,000pa)	£12,000
Case Worker (Full time - £15,000pa)	£15,000
Total Personnel Costs:	£27,000

Administration Costs:

This will operate throughout the year.

Office rental	£1,800
Office supplies – printing, postage, inks	£1,200
Sanctuary phone	£360
Telephone calls - Methodist	£275
Petrol dealing with guests	£1,200
Planning centre rota software	£360
Total Administration Costs:	£5,195

Spring / Autumn Shelter Costs:

This will run between April and June 2016, October – November 2016

Food – evening meals	£2,400
Air freshener, disinfectant	£250
First aid kit/clear up materials	£125
Heating and utilities	£750
Other	£0
Total Evening Only Shelter costs	£3,525

Winter Night Shelter Costs:

This will run between December 2016 – March 2017.

Food – evening meals	£3,168
Food – breakfast meals	£2,640
Food – lunch bags	£1,440
Laundry / cleaning costs	£500
Air freshener, disinfectant	£200
First aid kit/clear up materials	£100
Additional Building Insurance	£240
Gas - Shelter location	£1,280
Electricity - Shelter location	£340
Hire of hall - Shelter location	£6,000
Contract Cleaner	£800
Total Winter Shelter costs	£16,708

Support Services:

This operates throughout the year and includes the provision of hot showers, laundry and new clothes.

Water costs	£720
Electricity	£600
Stationary	£240
Toiletries and laundry	£420
Other	£0
Total Support Service costs	£420

TOTAL BUDGET FOR 2016 £59,348

A monthly breakdown of these figures and the assumptions used can be had on request.

Funding will be sought from a variety of sources including individuals, church groups, charities and grants. Expenditure will be under the guidance of the Sanctuary Steering Group that meet on a quarterly basis.

5. Summary

Sanctuary has been a real eye opener into the problems facing the homeless. We have learned a lot and achieved far more than we conceived at the start. It hasn't been without its problems but we have battled through and many people have benefited from the love and generosity of Christians living in the town.

Sanctuary is well known and we have good, favourable contacts with local authorities and related homeless charities. We have also built great links with churches in the area that has resulted in a huge army of potential volunteers.

In the long term, we feel that Gravesham needs to have a permanent venue as a homeless shelter and drop in centre to deal with their issues. This will need to be operated through salaried staff as well as volunteers.

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For now, we will continue to work out the steps that will takes us from where we are today to where we would like to be in the future.