



**HANDBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS  
OF THE  
EAST SURREY WINTER NIGHT SHELTER**



# EAST SURREY WINTER NIGHT SHELTER VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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## **1. MISSION STATEMENT**

To provide for homeless and disadvantaged people in Reigate & Banstead Borough and Tandridge District Council a range of welfare and accommodation services in the name and with the love of Christ, seeking to bring new hope and new opportunity to rebuild damaged lives.

We work in professional partnership with relevant voluntary and statutory agencies while giving the maximum opportunity for volunteers to serve in all our activities.

We are inspired by Matthew Chapter 25:40 that 'whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me' and encouraged by Isaiah 58 to 'feed the hungry and shelter the homeless'.

*"If the hunger of others is not my own,  
If the anguish of my neighbour in all its forms touches me not,  
If the nakedness of my brother does not torment me,  
Then I have no reason to go to church and to live.*

*Life is this: to love one's neighbour as oneself;  
This is the commandment of God.  
Love means deeds, not good wishes.  
For this reason, I commit myself to working for the necessities of others."*

*Javier Torres, Nicaragua*

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### 2. EAST SURREY WINTER NIGHT SHELTER RULES

1. Guests must sign a Guest Agreement prior to being approved for entry into the shelter. They are admitted on the basis that they abide by the signed agreement. Guests are expected to treat the shelter, those who use it and those who work here, in the manner in which they would like to be treated.
2. Guest are given a sheet with the location of the Winter Night Shelter venues, the opening times, the WNS mobile number (07943 685660) and the details of where to catch the minibus to get to the venues outside of Redhill.
3. The Shelter opens to guests at 7:30pm. No one will be admitted into the shelter after 8pm except in an exceptional situation by prior arrangement with RHT Project Co-ordinator or the Shift Supervisor. Once admitted the guest must remain for the night. No one is allowed to go out of sight of the shelter and return. The shelter closes at 8am the following morning.
4. If guests do not turn up at the shelter by 8pm, unless prior arrangements have been made with the RHT Project Co-ordinator and the Shift Supervisor, their place may be offered to someone else on the waiting list.
5. No drinking of alcohol, taking drugs or aggressive behaviour is allowed on or around the premises. No person may bring animals, unlawful drugs or weapons on to the premises, and no violence or abuse of any kind is allowed.
6. Anybody suspected of bringing unlawful drugs onto the premises will face exclusion and the matter may be reported to the police.
7. Any person found using illegal drugs or whom the staff have a reasonable suspicion is using illegal drugs on the premises may be asked to leave. Any person found dealing in drugs would be reported to the police.
8. Any violence, harassment, sexual or racial abuse, at the discretion of the Co-ordinator or Shift Supervisor, will be reported to the police.
9. There is no smoking inside the venues. Smoking is limited to the designated outside area. A minimum of two volunteers will be in the smoking area with the guests at all times when it is in use. **THIS IS NOT NEGOTIABLE**
10. No pets are allowed in the Shelter

**IN SHORT: NO ANIMALS, NO DRUGS, NO ALCOHOL, NO AGGRESSIVE, RACIST OR SEXIST BEHAVIOUR**

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### **3. Overview of the Winter Night Shelter - ADMISSION CRITERIA**

The East Surrey Winter Night Shelter is provided for men and women who have a Reigate & Banstead or a Tandridge Connection, are homeless and over the age of 18.

Our aim is to support and enable guests within the shelter and through their regular support workers to work to engage with external agencies and us until they are able to move on into more permanent accommodation.

Guests of the East Surrey Winter Night Shelter are welcome regardless of background or personal history, as long as they behave appropriately and adhere to the Shelter Guest Agreement. Everyone using the Winter Night Shelter can expect to be treated with courtesy and respect and with practical help insofar as it is possible to provide it.

A bed is only guaranteed for one night at a time. Anyone who manifests aggressive or violent behaviour that makes him or her disruptive or dangerous, may be refused admission.

Before they come to Shelter, they will have been interviewed by the RHT Project Coordinator or a Trustee and asked to sign a Guest Agreement. They are admitted on the basis that they abide by the signed agreement.

Prior to the shelter opening, a daily Referral List will be provided by the RHT Project Coordinator and accessed on the Tablet. However, the welcoming volunteers, in conjunction with the Shift Supervisor must decide if the guests meet the admission criteria when they arrive. Please bear in mind that the purpose of our project is to provide shelter to all those who need it as long as the safety of guests and volunteers is not compromised. The people we offer shelter homeless may have difficult behaviours so consider whether there are ways in which a disruptive person may be 'talked down' at reception, or given a cup of tea (not coffee) and asked to wait until they calm down.

Please feedback any concerns or incidents to your supervisor to record on the confidential Supervisor Briefing Notes of the guest list kept on the Tablet, which goes to the each host church in the Venue Box each night.

Guests can register as a volunteer once they have alternative accommodation. No favouritism can be shown to individual guests.

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## **4. GUIDELINES FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS**

### **Choosing your shifts**

Volunteers are able to select their own shifts using their Dutyman link sent to them by RHT after registering as a volunteer. Dutyman will email shift duty reminders to volunteers three days and one day before their shifts. Should a volunteer not be able to undertake their shift they can request a swap with another volunteer using Dutyman. If volunteers cannot find a suitable shift to swap with, they should contact the RHT office on [info@rhtes.org](mailto:info@rhtes.org) at the earliest opportunity.

We do not make it possible for a volunteer to remove themselves from a shift as it could result in a shift being short-staffed at short notice. If it is considered that the number of volunteers is too few to run the shelter, the RHT Project Co-ordinator will then make a decision as to whether the shelter should remain open that night. After working hours, should not all volunteers turn up, the Shift Supervisor should ring the Trustee on Call who will make the call on whether the Shelter is safe to open.

On the night introduce volunteers to one another; ensure that everybody knows who is a volunteer and their names. Volunteers must wear a name badge that shows their First Name. 'Buddy' up new volunteers with a more experienced volunteer. Allocate people tasks for the evening: reception, serving tea, serving meals, putting out tables, beds, introducing guests to the building etc.

### **Working with Guests**

Never leave anyone alone in a room with a guest. **AS A VOLUNTEER NEVER BE ALONE WITH A GUEST.** Try to engage in positive simple social conversation.

### **How you can help**

Many of our guests have issues with mental health and/or addictions. Please respect a guest's wishes regarding his/her care; it may be helpful to provide immediate practical support – a drink or food, for example. It is important to resist the temptation constantly to step in and try to solve people's problems. **Listening** is the most important skill. It can be useful to the person you are supporting if you empathise with their emotions and encourage them to feel they are in a safe place.

The basics

- Talk informally with guests, keeping your conversation simple and positive
- Avoid being too direct
- Stay well clear of controversial issues including religion or politics

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- This is not a time or place to proselytise
- Remember that some guests will take a promise very seriously
- Never argue with someone, if possible. Being uncritical can make the difference between a person feeling safe or threatened. If you feel a situation is getting out of control, speak straightaway to your Shift Supervisor.

There is more information on potential mental health problems in section 8.

### **Decision Making**

It is the responsibility of the Shift Supervisors and the Winter Night Shelter Venue Coordinator, to make all decisions concerning the Shelter. **Under no circumstances is anyone to question the Venue Coordinator or Shift Supervisor's decision in front of the guests. Any complaints or suggestions should be communicated to the appropriate person in private and recorded on the Tablet.**

### **Potentially Threatening Situations**

If you feel at any time you are in a situation you cannot handle or one that is becoming aggressive or intrusive – back off. Never under-estimate the threat and do not respond aggressively yourself. To do so will increase the chance of confrontation. Stay calm, speak gently and clearly and avoid being drawn into further argument. This may not be easy. Remember your first duty is to yourself.

Never put a hand on anyone who is angry. A person on the brink of physical aggression has three possible choices: to attack, retreat or compromise. You need to guide them towards the second or third option. Encourage the person to move, perhaps to see a friend. Offer a compromise, such as talking through the problem, or divert the aggression into such actions as banging on the table or tearing up paper if you feel that this type of action would help.

If the threat of violence is imminent, avoid potentially dangerous locations such as the top of stairs, restricted spaces or places where there is equipment, which could be picked up and used as a weapon. Keep your eye on potential escape routes; keep yourself between the aggressor and the door and, if possible, stay behind a barrier such as a table. Don't turn your back; be prepared to move very quickly if necessary. If you manage to calm the situation down, then gradually try to re-establish contact. Take care with your words and actions, making a cautious approach. A cup of tea for both of you may cushion the after-shock. Explain to the Shift Supervisor what has just happened and, if necessary, record it on the incident form on the tablet. Again, never be alone with a guest.

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### **5. GUIDELINES FOR SHIFT SUPERVISORS**

The following is a summary of the Shift Supervisors guidelines as detailed in the Shift Supervisor's Handbook. A copy of this will be in the tablet. Please also refer to the section on Confidentiality on page 21 of this document.

You have the responsibility for managing the human and physical resources of the Shelter. You will be called upon to make decisions as to the most appropriate course of action. You should make these decisions in consultation with the staff who may already have experience with the guests.

You will find information and equipment you need in the VENUE BOX AND TABLET.

#### **Checklist of items you will need:**

- **Tablet and charger**
- **Volunteer Agreements**
- **First Aid kit**
- **Sharps disposal kit**
- **Copy of the Night Shelter Rules and the Admission Criteria – see pages 4 & 5 of this document**
- **Sticky name labels/marker pens**

#### **The Buildings Health and Safety**

You must be familiar with the building. Importantly you must be aware of where the fire exits are and where the fire extinguishers are. You must ensure that fire exits are unlocked and not blocked and that your volunteers know where they are. Explain the best evacuation procedure in the event of fire.

Ensure that any areas where you do not want guests to go are secure. Ensure that volunteers know where guests can and cannot go. Identify a safe area where volunteers can leave belongings.

#### **Food**

It is the Evening Shift Supervisor's responsibility to make sure that the food is organised for the evening. If there is a problem with food provision, please phone the RHT Project Coordinator on 07943 685660 before the shift, during office hours (9am to 4.30pm).

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If you are working in the kitchen, you must wash your hands **BEFORE** and **AFTER** you touch food. Raw meat should always be chopped on a separate board, using separate utensils. Please don't serve food containing uncooked eggs. If you reheat food, make sure it's piping hot, possibly using a food thermometer, if in doubt.

Please have a list of ingredients of your meal to hand in case you have questions about any allergens.

It is advisable to display notices for the benefit of guests, volunteers and staff to wash their hands after using the toilets.

### **Expenses**

Volunteers can claim expenses for items such as food, extra labels or other stationary in the Venue Box. Advise them to contact RHT on [info@rhtes.org](mailto:info@rhtes.org) for details on how to do this.

### **Before You Open (for Evening Shift Supervisors only)**

The Shelter opens at 7.30pm. **Do not admit anyone to the Shelter before 7.30pm** as this will mean that you open before your team is fully prepared and it means there is consistency across all venues. Guests know they will not be admitted before this time.

Before this, welcome your volunteers giving each of them a sticky label for their name – first name only. If it is their first shift of the season, they should also sign a Volunteer Agreement.

### **ALL GUESTS AND VOLUNTEERS ARE ONLY TO BE KNOWN BY THEIR FIRST NAME**

Discuss any incidents/accidents with the volunteers, as appropriate. Bear in mind the need for confidentiality. If you anticipate a problem, discuss it and agree what you will do. Everybody should know what is going to happen and how you will deal with a problem before you open. Bring staff and volunteers together before you open to discuss any events, allocate jobs etc.

If you do not have enough volunteers and you do not feel that it is safe to open, delay your opening time. If this is necessary, go outside to talk to the guests who are waiting and explain what is happening. Phone the Trustee on Call on 07943 685660 who will have a list of volunteers to contact.

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### **Supervisor Briefing Notes (see also Confidentiality page 21)**

All Shift Supervisors are responsible for writing a Shift Summary and also a note on each of the Guests on their individual Guest Summary form. These will all be stored on the Tablet.

### **Incident/Accident forms**

Please ensure all incidents and accidents are reported in the Incident Form on the Tablet and also in accordance with your church procedures. It is very important for the safety of all volunteers in the shelters that any serious incidents are also reported as soon as possible to the out of hours Trustee on Call.

**Note: No information about individual guests should be recorded on the Shift Summary or Incident/Accident Form.**

### **Guests brought to Shelter by the Police**

In exceptional circumstances, a guest could be brought out of hours by the Police without having first been interviewed by RHT. If this does occur and the Shift Supervisor feels the person is aggressive or will put the Shelter at risk, then they can refuse them entry.

If you choose to admit the person, please explain to them:

1. Entry only permits them to stay in the Shelter one night
2. They should report to us at Drop-In the following morning at 11am for details on how they can be referred to get a bed for ongoing nights. If it is a weekend, then this rule still applies and they must come to see us on the Monday morning.

### **Volunteers**

It is important that you maintain good relationships with volunteers. There will be experienced people on your team, as well as you. Your job is to ensure that this expertise is shared and does not become the focus for conflict. **One way of doing this is to keep the channels of communication open and to work together as a team.** For instance, take a few moments to discuss a matter with the volunteers before making decisions about how to deal with a disruptive guest.

### **Pets**

We will not allow pets into Shelter.

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### **6. GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS ON RECEPTION**

Work with the Evening Shift Supervisor in a team of two and deal with one person at a time welcoming them to the Shelter.

#### **You will need:**

- **Tablet and charger**
- **Copy of the Night Shelter Rules and the Admission Criteria – these are on pages 4 & 5 of the this document**
- **Sticky name labels/Marker pens**

ALL THE ABOVE WILL BE PROVIDED IN THE VENUE BOX.

The Shelter opens at 7.30pm. **Do not admit anyone to the Shelter before 7.30pm** as this will mean that you open before your team is fully prepared and it means there is consistency across all venues. Guests know they will not be admitted before this time. All new guests will have signed the East Surrey Guest Agreement before entry to the shelter (rules summarised on page 4).

Welcome each guest give them a label with their name on it.

**Note: ALL GUESTS AND VOLUNTEERS ARE ONLY TO BE KNOWN BY THEIR FIRST NAME**

You may **not** 'frisk' anyone coming into the Shelter and do not search any bags. Instead take a record of how many bags they have and request them to take out items they need for the night. This includes any prescription medication they might have. The bag(s) should then be locked away until they leave in the morning.

If you feel that somebody is trying to 'smuggle' something into the Shelter you may ask them to empty their pockets and bags before they are admitted. If in doubt about anyone, discuss the matter with the Shift Supervisor.

If somebody appears seriously unwell at any time tell the Shift Supervisor immediately. Do not hesitate to dial 999 in a medical emergency.

Do not worry if the Welcome takes a little time because it is an important function. It is at reception that people discover whether this is a place where they feel they are welcome or they are considered to be a nuisance, where they form an impression

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whether they feel safe or not. This is also an important time to consider safety issues for other guests and volunteers. The Referral Form will list all the names of the Guests attending the shelter.

If a guest is an alcoholic, it may have been agreed with RHT that they may take a prescribed amount during the time they are on Shelter. This will be stated in their individual Guest Summary and the Shift Supervisor will therefore be aware of this. Should this be the case, the bottle must be stored in a safe place and the Guest can request it. It must be marked at the level when it arrives and marked again once they have taken their 'dose'. It must be returned to the guest when they leave the shelter.

Label all items and make sure that they are put safely away. You may not store unlawful drugs or weapons. Unlawful drugs may not be brought onto the premises for any reason.

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## IN SUMMARY

### THE SEVEN GOLDEN RULES

The following rules are a useful summary of the advice for volunteers covered in this handbook:

1. Treat guests as guests
2. Don't give out personal details, including your last name
3. Don't give away money or gifts, including clothes, food, toiletries. Come via the RHT office
4. Don't contradict what your WNS Venue Coordinator or Shift Supervisor says in front of guests
5. Don't be alone with guests - remember the rule of staying in 2s and do not form relationships with guests
6. Don't search guests, bags or clothing
7. Don't give advice or make promises you can't keep

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## APPENDIX

### RENEWED HOPE TRUST VOLUNTEER GUIDANCE

The guidelines outlined in the next few pages apply across all our projects – Drop-In, Real Meal and the East Surrey Winter Night Shelter.

#### **1. GUIDANCE NOTES FOR SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

This information is meant as a starting point and a guide. If you find yourself in any situation that you are not sure how to deal with, withdraw and speak to the Shift Supervisor.

Some of our guests at our projects misuse substances. Alcohol and heroin are the two that you are most likely to come across, although there may be others. Taking any drug, unless prescribed, or drinking alcohol is against the rules of the Winter Night Shelter and by accepting a place, Guests have agreed to abide by this.

IF YOU SUSPECT THAT A GUEST IS USING ANY ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES WHILST ON THE PREMISES YOU SHOULD INFORM THE SHIFT SUPERVISOR IMMEDIATELY.

#### **Alcohol**

Alcohol is a depressant drug. It slows down the heart, breathing and reactions. Too much in one go can slow the body down so much that it stops working altogether.

Alcohol also affects judgement and causes people to become uninhibited. This makes them more likely to behave in a way that they wouldn't normally. This can lead to people being overly friendly or, at the other extreme, aggressive.

Alcohol is physically addictive. A person's tolerance to alcohol increases and so more is required to achieve the same effect. It is life threatening for a heavy drinker completely to stop drinking alcohol without medical supervision.

Drinking alcohol on the Project's premises is against the rules (unless with prior agreement as outlined in the 'Guidelines for Reception'. If you know someone is drinking alcohol, you must inform the Shift Supervisor immediately.

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### Heroin

Heroin is a depressant drug. It is the same as diamorphine, the very strong painkiller given in hospitals. It reduces reactions to pain and slows down breathing and heart rate. It gives people a feeling of warmth and a sense of wellbeing. It relieves feelings of anxiety and fear. Heroin bought on the street is often mixed with other things. That is why it is difficult to tell how big a dose has been taken. Overdose is a real risk, which can result in coma and death.

Heroin can be smoked on tin foil, swallowed in a bag or injected.

Tolerance to heroin does develop so more is required to have the same effect. Although coming off heroin is unpleasant, it is not usually life threatening. It is difficult to stay off. Medical supervision and detox usually involves the use of methadone. Methadone is a similar drug to heroin but the doctor prescribes it. It is green syrup that is swallowed. Selling and even sharing methadone is illegal.

Using heroin at the on site is against the rules. If you know someone is using heroin at the venue or if you find any needles, syringes or foils, inform the Shift Supervisor IMMEDIATELY.

### First Aid

Both alcohol and heroin can cause a person to become drowsy and/or lose consciousness. They can also both cause people to vomit.

If someone becomes drowsy or unconscious in the Drop-In, Real Meal or Winter Night Shelter:

1. Inform the Session Leader/Shift Supervisor who can assess if medical assistance is required. Call 999 if in doubt.
2. Put them in the recovery position.
3. Loosen tight clothing.
4. Keep warm with a blanket.

**Never give black coffee to try to “sober up” a person. It makes the drugs work faster.**

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## **2. GUIDANCE NOTES FOR DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS**

### **What is mental illness?**

Mental health problems can affect us all at some point in our lives. We all have times when we feel stress, depression and emotional distress. Usually these periods are short and we recover without outside help. But sometimes these reactions can become prolonged and unusually intense, which may affect our ability to cope with the demands of everyday life. Our thinking, our perceptions and mood may be affected and we may temporarily lose touch with reality.

Mental illness is not well understood and it may frighten people. All too often it carries a stigma. People who suffer from mental illness are vulnerable and most present no threat to anyone but themselves.

Not all mental health problems fit into these more common descriptions. It is simply meant as a summary of mental illnesses which may affect our guests.

### **Some common mental health problems:**

- **CLINICAL or SEVERE DEPRESSION**

This involves a constant feeling of despair, with very low self-esteem and the feeling this mood will never lift. The patient finds it hard to care about anything, for example your personal hygiene or physical surroundings. They may, at times, have thoughts that involve harming themselves.

- **MANIC DEPRESSION or BI-POLAR REACTIVE DISORDER**

This involves extreme mood swings from intense elation to severe depression, with periods of ordinary functioning in between. Whilst feeling “high” they may have immense drive and energy but it can accelerate into a more chaotic state, causing disruption in their relationships, in managing your affairs and intense turmoil in their life. When feeling “low”, they suffer the same symptoms as depression.

- **ANXIETY**

Anxiety involves feelings like worry, fear, apprehension or dread. They may find it hard to make simple decisions about daily life. They may have sleepless nights; experience panic attacks or physical sensations of nausea, palpitation and difficulty in breathing.

- **OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER**

This involves an irresistible compulsion to carry out certain actions many times, such as checking that things are in their place, washing hands or counting. The person may

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feel extremely anxious if the routines of checking, washing and so on are not carried out, or are interrupted. They may feel distressed they are unable to control these compulsions.

- **SCHIZOPHRENIA**

This involves a wide range of experiences and symptoms. The most common are:

- Hallucinations, such as hearing voices
- Delusions about themselves, others or something controlling them
- Paranoia: believing someone is trying to harm them

- **PHOBIAS**

This involves fear of a particular situation or of things such as enclosed spaces, heights, spiders or snakes. This can be so severe that it may lead to panic attacks. The person's life may become ruled by fear and trying to avoid these situations may make it almost impossible to carry on daily life.

- **EATING DISORDERS**

Anorexia involves a person depriving themselves of food, sometimes to the point of starvation. They tend not to recognise how thin they are becoming, concentrating instead on feeling in control of themselves and their body.

Bulimia involves bingeing on large quantities of food and then making themselves vomit or taking laxatives to regain a sense of control.

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### **3. GUIDELINES ON BOUNDARIES**

The following information gives background on some of the points in the RHT Volunteer Agreement, which every volunteer is required to sign on their first shift.

*The aim of these guidelines is to make explicit to staff and volunteers what is expected of them in respect of their relationship to guests and to highlight that which is specifically not allowed.*

To ensure the smooth running of the Drop-In, Real Meal and Winter Night Shelter and the safety of volunteers, Drop-Inners and guests, we need to establish a framework of boundaries. Service Users need to know where they stand and volunteers must not do something that jeopardises their own or a colleague's ability to deal appropriately with a person in any circumstances. For example, **if we are too friendly, we may have trouble when an unpleasant action has to be taken such as giving a warning.** Conversely, if we are angry or authoritarian, we will not gain the trust of our service users and will not have the goodwill needed to calm down a challenging situation.

#### **Consistency**

To the best of our abilities we must be consistent in our approach to guests and work as a team. It is important not to forget that our project operates over a large number of venues and has many volunteers.

Consistency also means that all involved need to adhere to the guidance of this handbook and of any training you have received from Renewed Hope Trust, even if you disagree as an individual.

#### **Respect**

Everyone engaging with any of our Projects should be treated with respect; to show disrespect can have far reaching consequences. If we don't treat them with respect, there is no reason for him/her to show any respect for us or to pay any attention to what we have to say.

In all our dealings with them, it is important that we are aware of our own attitude, the use of language and endeavour not to be abusive, contemptuous, flippant, authoritarian, judgemental or critical.

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### Expectations

Our expectations of guests and Drop-Inners need to be realistic. Many guests are extremely vulnerable and we don't wish to make them more vulnerable through our actions. We also need to be aware of guests' expectations and take care not to raise their expectations of us unless these can be reasonably met.

**Please don't make promises that you cannot keep.** It may be more sensible not to make any promises at all.

### Money, goods and services

**It is imperative that you stick to the basic principle of not loaning or giving money to any Guest or Drop-Inner of RHT. There are NO exceptions to this.** Neither should you become involved in any monetary dealings.

Aside from it being against RHT Volunteer rules, it can have unintentional consequences. Other guests may get jealous, the transaction may go wrong or the relationship with the guest might change and the guest may present difficult behaviour.

If the person needs help with budgeting or finance suggest that they book an appointment with Community Debt Advice and they can find out more information about this from the office.

### Self-disclosure

A good rule of thumb is *"do not tell anyone anything that you would not be prepared to announce to the church hall or staff room"*. This can include volunteers as well as clients. If someone persists in asking for your personal information, leave the situation and decide whether you want to inform whoever is supervising the session. It is inappropriate to give any person your address or phone number.

### Gifts

From time to time guests will want to give gifts to staff or volunteers. Small gifts may be accepted particularly if they can be shared. As a rule all gifts should be shared with the rest of the team. Gifts must be reported to your session leader or supervisor and recorded in the Incident Form. Any gift deemed to be too expensive or in some other way inappropriate should be gently returned to the guest. No member volunteer should encourage a guest to give gifts.

### Collusion with guests

The lifestyle of street homeless and other vulnerable people means that we may suspect that a guest or guests have done something that is illegal, or that we disapprove of in some way. It is not necessarily the case that we should inform the

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police every time this happens or that we should lecture guests on their morals. However, we should not help guests in what they have done nor should we turn a blind eye. You should inform your Shift Supervisor/session Leader of such an instance and they should inform the RHT office. For Drop-In and Real Meal this should be by email or in person and for Winter Night Shelter the Tablet can be used.

### **Collusion with volunteers**

We should not collude with a colleague in doing something that is unethical or unprofessional. Such instances are difficult to deal with and you may feel you have to be loyal to your colleague; however, turning a blind eye will not help the situation and will put the rest of the team in a difficult situation. You should speak to your Shift Supervisor/Session Leader about any such concerns. If your concern regards their conduct please the RHT Project Co-ordinator directly at the earliest opportunity.

### **Physical contact & relationships**

As part of our work we will get to know people at meaningful levels and may build affections for certain guests in all our Projects. Intimate relationships and contact with guests outside of the Projects inevitably create difficulties for everyone and are in conflict with the Volunteer Agreement. **Your safety and theirs is of paramount importance.**

However, some physical contact is reasonable and inevitable. For instance, a guest may reach to shake your hand. An arm on a shoulder or hand on an arm could be read by another as an intimate gesture so be aware of your body language and be careful not to initiate such contact. **Remember to never be alone with a Guest or Volunteer.**

### **Volunteer support**

If you have any concerns about relationships or boundaries within the Drop-In, Real Meal or Winter Night Shelter, please speak in the first instance to the session Leader or Shift Supervisor. If you are still unsure, don't hesitate to contact a staff member via the office on 07943 685660 or email [info@rhtes.org](mailto:info@rhtes.org).

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### **4. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is important in order to build trust with persons using the Drop-In, Real Meal or Winter Night Shelter. **However, it is not about keeping secrets.** In your discussions with guests and Drop-Inners this should be made clear. You should never promise to keep secrets.

It will seem obvious that we should not breach confidences, but there are some exceptions for the following reasons:

- a) To protect Volunteers.
- b) To protect Guests.
- c) To ensure consistent good practice in the different places in which we work.

### **Guests and Confidentiality**

Before sharing any information given to you by anyone, you should consider whether you would want other people sharing your private information. If you learn anything from a guest that concerns you, please immediately share it with whoever is in charge.

The **RULE** is that:

Personal information given to you by a guest may be shared only with people with specific areas of responsibility: your Shift Supervisor/Drop-In Leader/Real Meal Leader, WNS Venue Co-ordinator and RHT staff member. It should not be shared other guests or other outside agencies.

Guests can have access any information that RHT holds that relates to them personally by contacting the office staff directly. As a volunteer you do not have to disclose this information there and then. They have no right to read any information that does not relate to them.

**All entries made in an incident book, WNS Tablet or on the guest list should be factual and not based on personal opinion.**

The **EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE** are:

- 1) On occasions when you have a concern for the safety of a guest, for the safety of another guest or the safety of yourself or a colleague.

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- 2) Where you feel that the integrity or safety of the Renewed Hope Trust and its projects are at risk. For example, this may be where you discover that a guest is dealing in drugs or that a guest has stolen from the Winter Night Shelter. In such circumstances always inform the RHT Project Coordinator or other staff member in the office the next working day. For Night Shelter, inform the Trustee on Call.

In each of these cases, which are not exhaustive, always inform the session Leader/Shift Supervisor.

### **Volunteers and Confidentiality**

The **RULE**:

Volunteers should not give personal information regarding themselves or others to guests. This includes surname, telephone number, address, email address and any online social media details.

Under no circumstances should any volunteer share personal information of another volunteer with a guest.

Volunteers should also not share personal information of another volunteer with another volunteer. This is for the person concerned to share themselves.

**VOLUNTEERS WILL BE KNOWN BY THEIR FIRST NAMES ONLY.**

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## **5. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

This information has been drawn up to assist volunteers to operate in safety within the Shelter. It is designed to complement common sense rather than replace it.

### **Awareness of the environment**

Be aware of the potential hazards.

Become familiar with the premises and its hidden areas.

Become familiar with your team. Does somebody know where you are? Do you know where your colleagues are?

Take time to think about what you are going to do rather than react hastily.

### **Your Health**

Are you in good health? If not, you may be susceptible to illnesses that others bring in or you may infect others.

If you have been suffering from sickness or diarrhoea in the last 48 hours, you are kindly asked not to come to your shift, but please let us know by calling 07943 685660 or email [info@rhtes.org](mailto:info@rhtes.org) so we can enlist the help of others.

The risk of catching or passing on a mild infection whilst volunteering can be minimised by the provision by RHT of appropriate first aid equipment including wash proof/water proof plasters, gloves and a resuscitation face shield, and the application of some common sense rules as follows:

- If you have a cut, sore or open eczema you should cover it with a wash proof or water proof plaster.
- Washing your hands with warm water and soap, if time available before giving assistance, but certainly afterwards
- Using the alcohol hand gel provided.
- Always wearing the gloves provided when dealing with blood, vomit, spit, urine or any other body fluid.

The first aid bag is fully equipped and regularly checked and each venue will have alcohol hand gel available.

### **General Cleanliness**

Kitchen and toilets should be kept clean and disinfected as necessary. Unnecessary clutter can be a hazard to mobility, a fire hazard or a place where vermin can congregate. Food should be kept secure from infestation.

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### First Aid/Disposal Kit

All Project venues, including the Winter Night Shelter venues, should have a First Aid kit and there is also a first aid kit in the WNS Venue Box. It is ideal that a qualified First Aider administers anything that is needed. There is, however, a booklet on basic First Aid with the kit.

**ALWAYS WEAR GLOVES WHEN DEALING WITH INJURIES - EVEN IF YOU THINK IT MAY BE UNNECESSARY.**

### Sharps

Do not expose yourself to harm, which can come from hidden 'sharps' (syringes, razors etc.) by putting your hand in bags, bins or sleeping bags. Where sharps are found they should be disposed of in the Sharps Box. **Do not pick up a sharp using only rubber gloves, as you will not be protected.**

The Session Leader/Shift Supervisor should record the incident as stipulated by the Project in hand – Shift Summary on the Tablet for Night Shelter, briefing in Drop-In and feedback on the Real Meal Google sheet. **This includes if any needles or drugs are found.**

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### **6. GUIDELINES ON VIOLENCE, AGGRESSION and HARRASSMENT**

Renewed Hope Trust aims to ensure a all its projects offer a non-threatening environment for the safety and security of guests, volunteers and staff.

On entry to the Project all guests and volunteers are reminded that no violence or aggressive behaviour will be tolerated in the Winter Night Shelter and/or Drop-In and/or Real Meal, and will be a cause for exclusion from the Project, with the right reserved to call the police. All are also reminded no objects that could be considered of use as weapons may be brought onto the premises.

Renewed Hope Trust opposes harassment and will take action against any guest or volunteer, who harasses another on any grounds, including race, gender, disability, colour, ethnic and national origin, sexuality or religion.

**Any rules, warnings and expulsions below apply to both guests and volunteers.**

#### **Violence towards persons**

Two strict rules apply with regard to the response to violence.

- 1) Automatic dismissal follows any incident of physical violence. This applies to the person who intimidates and the person who retaliates.
- 2) Anyone who sees any violence is required to report it to the Session Leader/Shift Supervisor immediately, thus preventing secrecy and collusion.

The police may be called by staff if there is a risk of subsequent violence in the neighbourhood or to any person at a later time, or if immediate assistance is required.

The Session Leader/Shift Supervisor should record the incident as stipulated by the Project in hand – Shift Summary on the Tablet for Night Shelter, briefing in Drop-In and feedback on the Real Meal Google sheet. For Night Shelter, be aware the Venue may have its own incident reporting procedure.

#### **Aggressive behaviour**

It is the judgement of the Shift Supervisor or session Leader as to their suitability to be allowed onto the premises and whether their behaviour is severe enough that they should be asked to leave.

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In the event of aggressive behaviour from a person then they shall be reminded of their obligations as guests and given the opportunity to modify their behaviour (see pages 9-10).

All incidents shall be recorded to be actioned by RHT staff in accordance for the specific projects reporting procedure.

### **Violence against property**

Respect for property is required of everyone in the Winter Night Shelter; again the above procedures apply. All incidents should be recorded.

### **Harassment**

Renewed Hope Trust opposes harassment and will take action against any person, whether volunteer or guest, who harasses another (on the basis of race, gender, disability, colour, ethnic and national origin, sexuality or religion). Harassment offends human dignity and constitutes a violation of the basic human rights of respect and privacy.

Harassment is talking and/or acting in a bullying, intimidating, invasive, tormenting or taunting manner to someone relating to the above categories.

#### **Procedure for harassment**

- Tell the harasser to stop
- Walk away
- Report the incident immediately to the Shift Supervisor/session Leader.

### **Harassment by a guest/drop-inner**

If such an allegation is proved, then a warning will be given to the harasser. If the harassment continues then the harasser can be asked to leave by the Shift Supervisor/session Leader. Incidents must be logged for office information.

A member of staff will tell them that if their behaviour remains unchanged they risk being excluded from all RHT Projects.

In the case of harassment by a volunteer, the above procedure applies. If the case can be proven, the Project Coordinator and Trustees may ban the volunteer from all RHT Projects.

Guests & Volunteers are reminded of their right to make a complaint. Any incident of harassment is to be reported in the incidents book along with the action taken.

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### 7. COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

This information is intended for any person involved any of RHT's Projects whether they are a guest, or a volunteer.

The following actions may be adopted in the event of a grievance or complaint arising during the course of the normal operation of the Project, which does not fall into the categories of normal discipline outline in details above. It may relate to how the rules and guidelines outlined are implemented or exercised or a grievance reported concerning working conditions.

- The complaint should first be raised with the relevant Shift Supervisor/session Leader for them to recorded and to be passed on to the RHT Project Coordinator.
- If it is inappropriate to write the nature of the complaint on an incident form, any complainant should make their complaint in writing separately and pass this to the Shift Supervisor/session Leader to pass on to the RHT Project Co-ordinator.
- If the complaint concerns the conduct of the Shift Supervisor/session Leader, then the complaint should be raised directly to the RHT Project Co-ordinator.

The RHT Project Co-ordinator and Trustees will seek to resolve the matter informally with those concerned. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, then the complainant will be invited to make a formal complaint in line with Renewed Hope Trust's Complaints Policy.

### 8. EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

In the event of an emergency involving police, fire or ambulance, the priority must be to deal with the incident on site. In the rare event of an incident making the venue unsafe for sleeping, then call the Trustee on Call who will advise of further action to take.

If a volunteer has to leave the premises and there are not enough people to cover (this is more likely to be with the overnight shift), let the Trustee on Call know.

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