



GREENWICH
WINTER NIGHT
SHELTER

GWNS VOLUNTEER
HANDBOOK

2021 -2022

Meet the team

Our staff



Katy Ridsdill-Smith
Development Manger
katy@gwns.org.uk
07562689456



Georgia Sims
Volunteer Co-Ordinator
georgia@gwns.org.uk
07704602558

Our trustees



Margaret Cave
(Chair)



Marianne Gass
(Deputy Chair)



Tom Greenwood
(Secretary)



Hugh Ridsdill-Smith



Beverley Campbell



Steven Parker



Lakshan Saldin

1. Introduction

Greenwich Winter Night Shelter is based in Eltham and provides warmth, emergency accommodation and support for the homeless in Greenwich. We can accommodate 9 people in single rooms and offer an evening meal, overnight stay and breakfast during the winter months.

History

GWNS began in 2014 when a group of churches came together to address the growing challenge of homelessness. Until 2020, we operated a 'one shelter, seven venues' model across 7 churches in Greenwich. Unfortunately, the pandemic meant we were unable to run as a winter night shelter which prompted the decision to move away from the rotating model and set up a static shelter from one venue. We hope this move will mean we can provide more consistency, support and stability for our guests.

GWNS Mission

We provide a safe, warm and judgement free environment for people experiencing homelessness to recharge and be supported into more sustainable housing. We believe that everyone has a right to a roof over their head and will advocate on behalf of our guests to work towards breaking the cycle of homelessness.

2. Volunteering with us

GWNS relies heavily on the generosity, hard work and dedication of our volunteers. Each year, volunteers give their time to support the smooth operation of the shelter. Here at GWNS, we value all of our volunteers and there are many ways you can get involved.

2.1 Volunteer roles

Evening Coordinator

Each night of the week is run by an Evening Coordinator who is responsible for the overall operations, making sure the rota is staffed with enough volunteers and that everything runs smoothly. Evening coordinators will ensure there is a shift leader for each shift.

Shift Leader

The Shift Leader is responsible for allocating tasks to volunteers, making key decisions and supporting volunteers where necessary in responding to guests. The Shift Leader feeds back to the Evening Coordinator at the end of the shift.

Volunteers

Volunteers are responsible for interacting with guests, serving food, cleaning away and any other tasks that the Shift Leader asks them to do.

If you have any additional skills that you think we might find helpful for the shelter e.g. languages, social media, laundry, cleaning then please email us at volunteering@gwns.org.uk. We would love to hear from you and put your skills to good use!

2.2 Volunteer shifts



You can see which shifts are available and sign up here:

<https://greenwich-winter-night-shelter.volunteerlocal.com/volunteer/>

3. Volunteer expectations

Volunteers are a vital part of GWNS, we see volunteers as key players to us and would not be able to run the shelter without them. GWNS is a team and we are pleased that you have decided to come and join us. Hospitality is one of our core values, we offer a safe and respectful space to meet our guests' practical needs. We are an inclusive shelter and welcome guests and volunteers from all backgrounds.

Below are what we expect from our GWNS volunteers:

- To be hospitable and respectful of one another
- To be reliable and punctual
- To attend GWNS training
- To work alongside another volunteer at all times (no lone working)
- To work as part of a team

It is important to maintain boundaries and to keep everyone safe so there are a few things that we ask our volunteers **not** to do:

- Bring alcohol or drugs to the venue or arrive under the influence of alcohol
- Arrange to meet with guests outside the shelter unless it is an activity arranged with GWNS
- Share or request personal information (phone number, address, email)
- Lend money or phones to guests
- Give any medication to guests (even paracetamol)
- Make promises to guests. GWNS needs to build/maintain trust in order to be effective in finding appropriate help for guests; broken promises can undermine this work

4. Health, Safety and Safeguarding

We are very conscious that this project will be launching still within COVID-19. We take COVID-19 seriously and the safety and wellbeing of all is our biggest priority. We will be keeping you up-to-date with our COVID-19 policy and will make you aware of any changes that take place. We will do our best to make sure that all volunteers and guests feel comfortable with the measures that we put in place. If you fall under the vulnerable category as per NHS guidance, we strongly advise not to volunteer in a front line role, but there are many other ways that you can still get involved.

All cooks will need to have an up-to-date Food Hygiene Level 2 certificate. You can complete the course online by following this link: <https://food-safety.org.uk/courses/> it costs £10 which can be expensed. Volunteers will not be able to cook unless they have an up-to-date qualification.

During every shift there will be at least one person that will be First Aid trained. GWNS will be arranging some first aid training days throughout the year.

There will also be someone who is fire safety trained on each shift and a fire protocol will be in place for all volunteers to know.

Disclosure of a safeguarding issue

GWNS is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use the night shelter are not abused and that the way in which we work with individuals minimises the risk of abuse. This policy outlines the duty and responsibility of staff, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of GWNS in relation to the protection of adults at risk from abuse or harm.

The key aims of the policy are to ensure the following:

- Staff and volunteers are aware of what abuse is and how to spot it
- GWNS has a clear system of reporting concerns as soon as abuse is identified or suspected
- Abuse is responded to appropriately, respecting confidentiality
- Harm and abuse are prevented through rigorous recruitment and interview process

If you are concerned about a safeguarding issue, speak to your Shift Leader or Evening Coordinator in the first instance. They will contact a member of staff or one of the trustees to discuss further.

Alternatively you can contact the below directly:

- Marianne Gass (Trustee and Safeguarding Lead): 07722318852
- Katy Ridsdill-Smith (Development Manager): 07562 689456
- Georgia Sims (Volunteer Coordinator): 07704 602558
- Margaret Cave (Chair of Trustees): 07740 859958

NB: Where there is an immediate danger during the operation of the shelter, emergency services should be contacted by dialling 999. Local police are informed that we located here.

5. Respect and Confidentiality

It is important not to push for personal information from guests. Please acknowledge that some people may feel hurt or let down by their experience and may not wish to talk about it. Others will be more open and able to tell you their story. Respect confidentiality and do not allow your conversation with a guest to become common gossip especially with other guests or volunteers. Confidentiality is important for building trust, but it is not about keeping secrets and this should be made clear to guests. If at any time you feel that the individual you are speaking to poses a threat to themselves or another person, or to the safety of the shelter, you should advise the individual that you will need to let your Evening Coordinator/Shift Leader know immediately. Likewise, if you feel that a conversation is too demanding, tell the guest that you may have to tell your Evening Coordinator what is being said in order to get appropriate help. The decision whether to proceed with the conversation then rests with the guest.

6. GWNS Complaints & Grievance Procedure

If you have a complaint or would like to raise a grievance then please do contact Margaret Cave (Chair of Trustees, 07740859958) or Katy Ridsdill-Smith (Development Manager, 07562689456). We will seek to resolve the issue informally with those involved as soon as possible. If this isn't, it will be fully investigated.

7. Practicalities

How to sign up to shifts?

We use volunteer local to manage all our shifts, this is how you sign up for shifts. You will be sent a link once we have contacted your referee and training is completed. The link will take you to your volunteer profile where you will be able to access and manage your shifts.

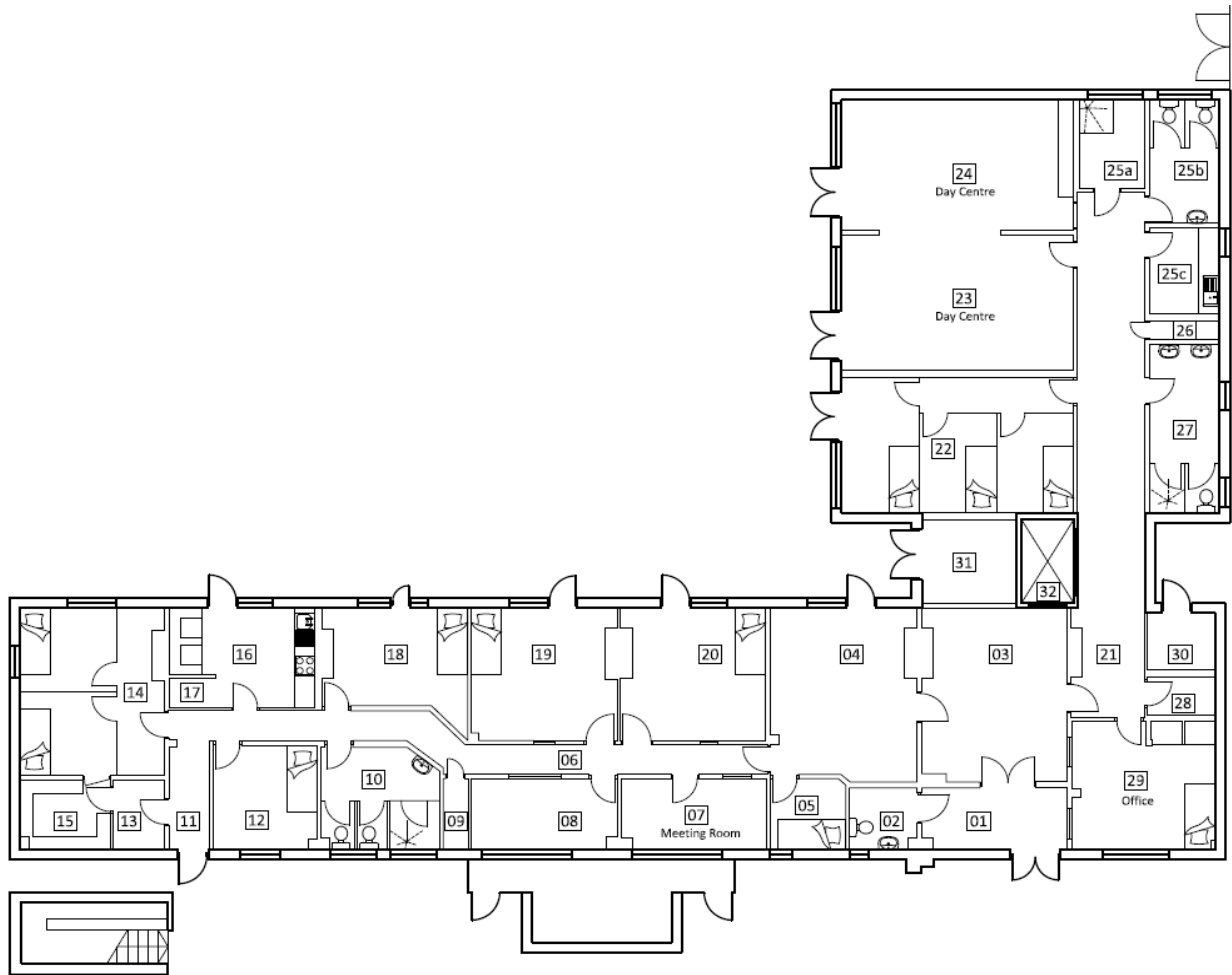
How to claim expenses?

Go to www.gwns.org.uk -> go to bottom of page 'Volunteer Expenses' -> p/w is gwns2020. Cooks can claim back up to £50 for the evening meal and £10 for the Food Safety Course, any other purchases you wish to expense need to be approved by your Evening Coordinator, a member of staff or a trustee.

Parking & Transport links

Parking is available on site, we have 6 allocated spaces which require a permit to use which will be kept in the office for volunteers to use, these will have to be returned once your shift as finished. There is off street parking too, you are unable to park there between the hours of 1.30pm-3.30pm. The 124 stops right outside the shelter, and Mottingham station is a 4 minute walk from the shelter.

Here is the floor plan of the venue:



Find us here 

Greenwich Winter Night Shelter
360 Middle park Road
Eltham
SE9 5QH



Notes