



News from the Homeless Drop-In

The needs of the homeless and vulnerably housed are as great as ever.

The Drop-In continues to provide for their basic needs as well as helping them to move on.

Some people suddenly find themselves homeless. With timely assistance they can be helped straight back into accommodation, preventing them from developing the problems associated with homelessness.

Others may need help with a particular problem, or over a longer period.



Lunch from the local Korean Salvation Army, much appreciated by all

Darren

Darren had been homeless for three weeks following the breakdown of his marriage. He is a skilled craftsman, but could not work because he was so overwhelmed by the problems of homelessness. Darren kept saying how he couldn't believe that someone who had worked all their lives and paid their taxes would not be able to find somewhere to live when he needed it.

The Drop-In workers sat with Darren and went through his options – a referral to No Second Night Out, to a housing provider in London, or the possibility of housing in the North-East of England. Darren decided that he wanted to apply directly to the housing provider so an application was done then and there, and he has now had an offer of somewhere to live.

Joe

Joe had been attending the Faith in Action Homeless Drop-In for some time. He had a serious alcohol problem and couldn't hold down a job for long. A health check at the Drop-In revealed a serious health issue, and Joe had to spend weeks in hospital receiving treatment. During this time he gave up drinking. When he next saw the Drop-In staff, he confided how horrified he was that he knew his visitors were coming before they entered his room, because they smelt so strongly of alcohol. Joe is now housed, is not drinking, and has a responsible job as a delivery van driver.

Cooker appeal thank you

Thank you to all those who generously contributed to the cooker appeal, especially former Mayor of Merton Councillor David Chung and Revd Andrew Wakefield.

Congratulations to Year 8 Teresa at Ursuline High School for their winning presentation about Faith in Action. These Year 8 girls have won £250 towards the cost of our new cookers. Thank you also to First Give which funded the competition.

We now have two new cookers in the Drop-In kitchen, enabling the cooks to prepare 60 to 80 meals per session quickly and efficiently, providing high-quality hot meals for our service users.

Sainsbury's thank you

Thank you to Sainsbury's in Kingston Road for their generous support.

Sainsbury's have been collecting donated groceries for the Homeless Drop-In, and as a 'Charity of the Year' we received £1577 from their 5p carrier bag charge.

Vegetable donations

We are very grateful to Vision of Love, a privately-funded local service organisation, for providing a large quantity of vegetables every fortnight.

This is a valuable contribution to service user lunches and improves the nutritional content.



Volunteers needed

Volunteers work with professional staff to help create a welcoming environment. This is a wonderful opportunity to be part of a warm and supportive team doing something really worthwhile. Contact Caroline or Andy – see contact details below. Here are two volunteer stories showing what you might do. Lots of different jobs. Polish speakers wanted particularly, and there's kitchen work too.

Greeting service users

I have mainly worked on the Drop-In reception desk, having I retired from social work and started here. I greet people and write down their names, and have one-to-one conversations when service users come over to chat.

Volunteering here is very rewarding, but also humbling. Every service user is an individual with their own story to tell, sometimes hard to bear, often heart-warming too. It's really moving to see how service users look out for each other. If one of them is in distress, others are usually there to help – sometimes in quite subtle, unassuming ways. I enjoy working with other volunteers too; we all have the same aims of helping people.

Helping service users work online

With a background in human resources and communication, I help service users write CVs, carry out job searches, and apply for benefits. I also look after the Drop-In laptops and provide some IT support.

I value the sense of being able to help vulnerable people in need, even if it's just by showing them respect and simple human decency. I now have a better understanding of issues around homelessness and social vulnerability. I also have gained an insight into the often related issues of mental health, drug and alcohol dependency, and the implications of social policy on homelessness generally.

Funding the work of the Homeless Drop-In

To ensure that we continue to provide and develop services for the homeless and vulnerably housed, we need continuing financial support from across the local community. With our costs rising and homelessness likely to increase, we appeal for help in broadening our support.

We greatly appreciate the regular donations of the generous contributors to our Square Meal Appeal and aim to increase these. Can you help? For how to give please visit our website.

Further Information

To learn more about the Drop-In and how you can help, visit our website or contact Andy our project manager on 07843 280419 or email faithinaction@wimbledonguild.co.uk.

www.mertonfaithinaction.org

You can now follow us on Twitter
twitter.com/mertondropin