



News from the Homeless Drop-In

The needs of the Merton 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.

New Opportunities Worker

Much staff time is spent managing the daily work of the Drop-In and service users' immediate needs. This means that we often have insufficient time to address the next level of service user support.

We now have a pilot project focusing on helping service users to explore education, training, volunteering and employment opportunities.

Viv the New Opportunities Worker is working with local educational, training, volunteering and employment services. She is engaging with the individual people in the Drop-In and their needs, building trusting relationships, and working alongside them to help them to achieve their desired goals. *(A model has been used in this photo.)*



Kevin

Kevin has been working as a craftsman on building sites. The work was increasingly just short-term contracts – two weeks here, six weeks there. Kevin found that he couldn't pay his rent with such unreliable income, and had become homeless. He was too proud to claim benefits, but was struggling to find work while he was sleeping rough.

The Drop-In offered Kevin practical help at first – showers, laundry, hot food and the respect to let him make up his own mind. After further discussion, Kevin agreed to claim benefits for a brief time, just to get back on his feet. We referred him to a housing provider and he was offered a room in a shared house.

We just heard that Kevin was about to return to work and was acting as a mentor to a 20-year-old in his house, helping him to find a new beginning.

Sue

Following the death of her husband Sue found herself unable to cope – not eating, not paying bills, not able to work, and therefore receiving no income at all.

We invited Sue to come to the Drop-In, where we offered her a freshly-cooked lunch and gradually uncovered her story.

The Drop-In hosts many outreach workers from other organisations, and Caroline from the Department for Work & Pensions could help Sue with her queries about claiming benefits.

We helped Sue to make an application for benefits, referred her to a specialist bereavement service, and helped with many practical problems.

Sue is attending the Drop-In regularly to eat a nourishing lunch and to address each new problem as it comes up.

Volunteers needed

Volunteers work with professional staff to help create a welcoming environment at the Drop-In. Could you join us? 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. There are lots of different volunteer jobs. These include:

- sitting at the front desk to greet service users as they arrive, and listening to service users' stories
- organising showers for the homeless and working in the laundry
- helping service users to fill in the online forms they must complete to register for work, benefits, or housing
- kitchen work, preparing freshly cooked and nourishing meals

We would particularly value volunteers who are able to speak Tamil, Polish, Rumanian, Bulgarian or Arabic.

Trustees needed – contact Faith in Action for further information.

Thank you

Thank you to local companies who are providing donations of goods and money.

Nandos on Wimbledon Broadway gives leftover (and in-date) chicken to the Drop-In every week.

Sainsburys and Tesco near South Wimbledon station organise donations for us.

The Terrace restaurant in Centre Court shopping centre gave us two carloads of stuff after they closed down.

Anwar Sheikh of Khanage curry restaurant on Wimbledon Broadway and his wife Sonia did the strenuous Three Peaks challenge and raised a substantial donation for the Homeless Drop-In.

South-West Railway will again have a stand at Wimbledon station on a day in December, collecting donations for the Homeless Drop-In and raising awareness of its existence.

The Red Cross came into the Drop-In and gave service users a First Aid lesson, since they are often first on the scene when there's a problem.

Thank you also to the Anglican Diocese of Southwark: their Lent Call 2017 raised £6000 for the work of the Homeless Drop-In.



Salvation Army thank you

Congratulations to our Salvation Army colleagues who this year are celebrating 130 years in Wimbledon. The Homeless Drop-In is located in the Salvation Army hall. They are our very helpful landlords, always providing friendly support.

Funding the work of the Merton 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 team@mertonfaithinaction.org.

www.mertonfaithinaction.org

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