

Dover Winter Night Shelter

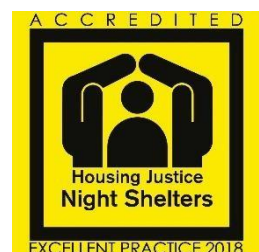


Project Report 2024/2025

Overview

Having now run winter shelters since 2016 we have considerable experience under our belts. From the initial rotating models using church and community halls in the early years to B & B accommodation during Covid to having our own dedicated 10-bedroom property to use, we have changed and adapted as circumstances dictated. This year again there was a change where we did not use volunteers for meal provision as we wondered what was really being achieved with and for the guests and conscious that there are amongst volunteers a tiredness and an element of compassion fatigue. This was evidenced by volunteer numbers dwindling since the pandemic.

The smooth running and outcomes have been consistent with previous years so we will consider carefully whether or not reverting back to older models or further new changes need to be made. One of the changes on the horizon may be to have an all-year-round shelter with a limited (two month) stay. This reflects the fact that the clients we deal with are homeless all year not just in the cold months.



Operation of the Night Shelter

Co-ordinating team

There was a mixed team involved in the operation of the Night Shelter as follows:

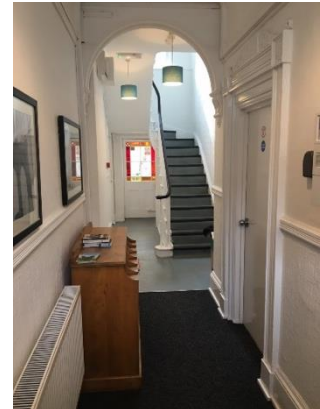
- Rob – House Manager (DOC)
- Noel – Project Lead (DOC)
- Support also provided from
 - Carina – DOC Centre Manager
 - Donna – Resettlement support worker
 - Catherine Webster – Serveco
 - James Moorhouse – Serveco
 - Alex Havova - Serveco

Dates

This year's Night Shelter operated from the 1st December 2024 to the 28th February 2025.

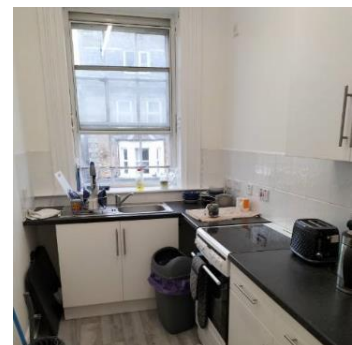
Venue

The Night Shelter operated again from Suffolk House, 302 London Road. This building was formerly used as a bail hostel and then left empty for 4 years until we entered into a lease for this building in October 2022. Ten bedrooms (two double occupancy), four kitchens, four



bathrooms and a dining/ lounge area

were available over the four upper floors in this building. Access was also available to a patio area and garden at the rear of the property. It provided a warm and pleasant environment for all guests. As we did not need to keep a dining area that increased our capacity to 12 guests at any one time.



Volunteers

This year as a change to previous shelters we decided to give our volunteers a year off and not ask them to provide meals.

Food

The only food provided to our guests was a choice of breakfast or lunch at our Sunrise Café. For those with no recourse to public funds we provided food that we had available and if necessary, a voucher to purchase food at one of the local supermarkets.

Suffolk House is well equipped with cooking facilities so those who wanted to were able to cook for themselves.

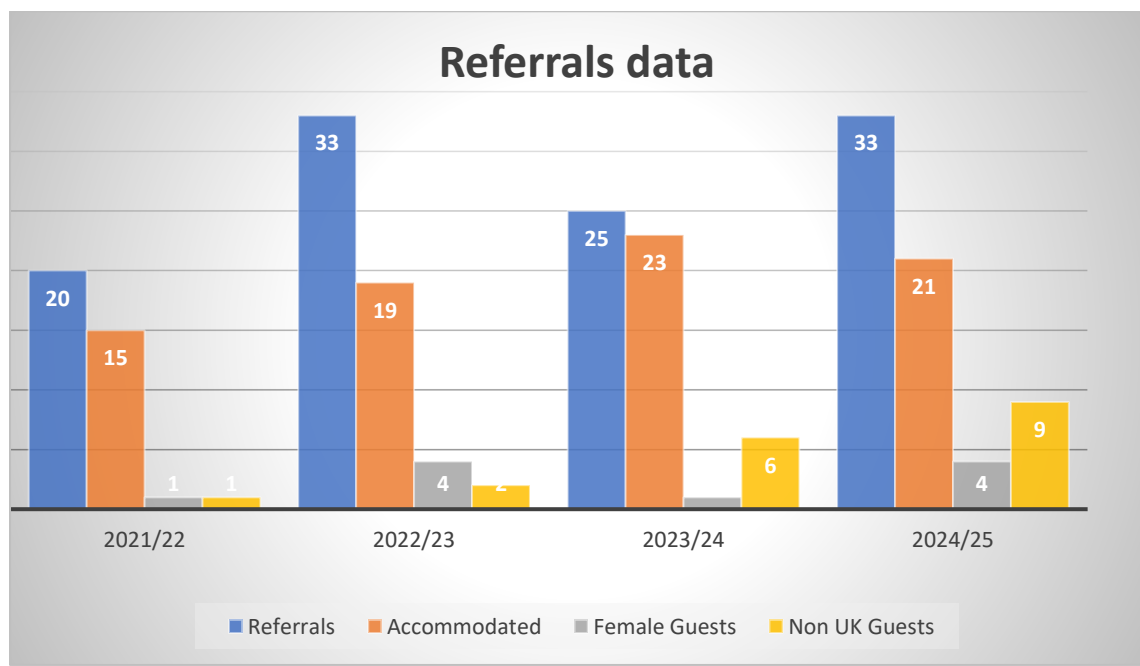
Referrals and Guests

Referrals for potential guests came through Dover Outreach Centre (Drop In), Dover District Council, Porchlight, Serveco, Probation and other agencies.

This year the following referrals were received/undertaken:

- 33 completed/received
- 2 declined as unsuitable
- 21 were offered a place in the Night Shelter and stayed one or more nights
- 4 female guests
- 9 of the guests were foreign nationals

All guests enjoyed the security of having their own room/space and not having to leave at a specific time. Room inspections were undertaken weekly to check that our guests were looking after themselves and their rooms. Very few issues that needed addressing were ever discovered at these inspections.



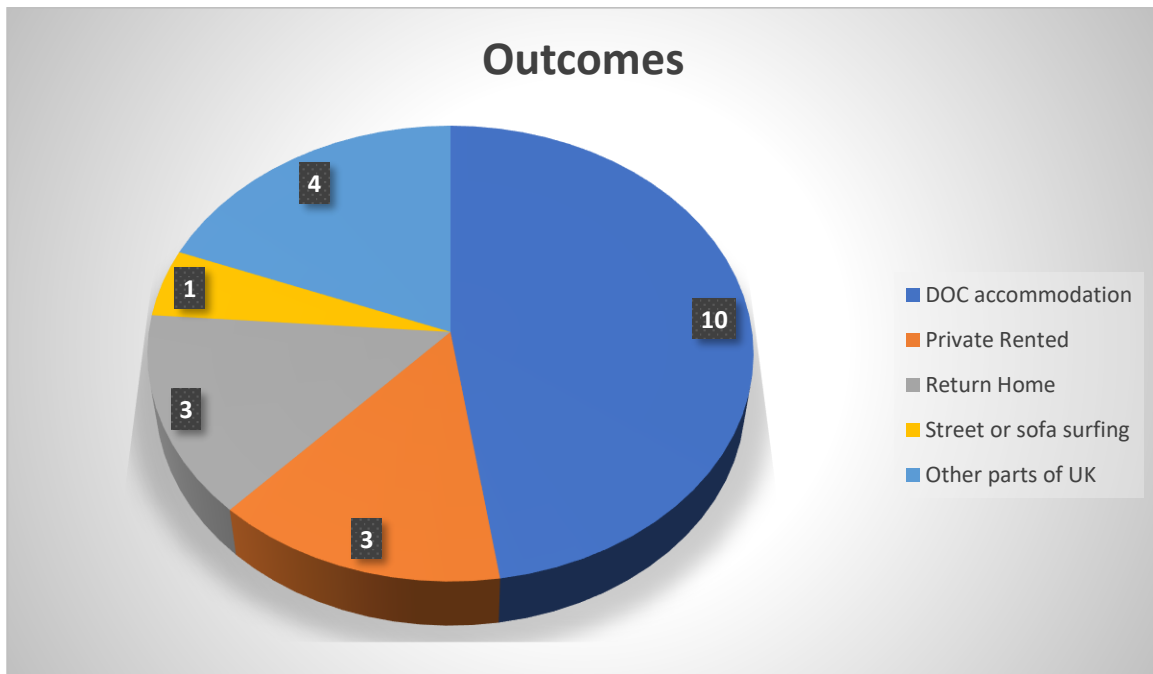
Behaviour

All guests accepted and signed a Guest Agreement which gave details of the venue and the conditions of entry and rules around conduct, drug and alcohol use. We operated a “three strikes and out” policy unless incidents were of a very serious nature.

Over the course of the Night Shelter, four guests were asked to leave permanently, with alcohol, drug and anti- social behaviour issues being the causes.

Outcomes

Following support provided through the Night Shelter, the Outreach Centre, Dover District Council, and Serveco the following outcomes have been achieved:



Finance

This year the costs of the Night Shelter were again partially funded by grants from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Dover District Council. The remaining funding was from private donations to Dover Outreach Centre.

Thank You

All that remains is to say is a big thank you to all involved, whether in a small or big way you have helped to make this a successful shelter and have made our guests feel welcome, loved and cared for. The outcomes are overwhelmingly positive in the most part and could not have been achieved in isolation, a lot of hard work has been contributed to this end from the team of people involved.

God bless you all
Noel