

REPORT OF HOMELESSNESS PROVISION

Introduction:-

This report comes following a survey of provision for the homeless in the Market Harborough, and Leicester areas and sets out to try and define the route for Churches to take when presented with a homeless person.

1. After discovering the person's name, try and discover where they have come from. As most housing provision is given to people with a local connection, wherever that happens to be, it is wise to recommend they try to return to their home area. If they are reluctant to do that, for whatever reason, then:-
 - a) If during office hours, the first step is for the homeless person to present themselves to the Housing Options Team at Harborough District Council Offices, Symington Building, Adam & Eve Street, Market Harborough; direct telephone no. (01858) 821019. It is best to call in or telephone the Housing Options Team as early in the day as possible, as places become filled quickly. N.B. Harborough Housing Options and Harborough Home Search are one and the same.
 - b) If out of office hours, they need to 'phone Housing Options Team out of hours no. (01858) 821076. They will be given a limited 'phone assessment in order to ascertain if they have priority needs.* A decision will then be made concerning whether they qualify for Bed & Breakfast accommodation until the offices are open again.
 - ↑ Priority Needs include:- women with children; pregnant women, Care leavers, people with severe mental health problems, wheelchair users, those at risk from violence etc
 - c) When the offices are open, a fuller assessment will often be carried out. Advice also be given concerning their Benefits entitlement. The local Job Centre + can make discretionary emergency payments and issue travel warrants to people who are genuinely without any money. These payments would usually need to be repaid once the person is in receipt of benefits.
 - d) If someone is new to sleeping rough they could be referred to Leicester County Council's "No Second Night Out" provision. This is run by Action Homeless at Mayfield House Leicester.

Action Homeless:-

7 Tichborne Street, Leicester Tel: (0116) 2211870 also

10 St James Terrace Leicester Tel: (0116) 2211855, run Accommodation Assistance - a 34 bed self catering accommodation in Leicester.

People don't have to have a local connection, but they would need to provide ID. They also run a house for women fleeing domestic violence; again no local connection is necessary

- e) The churches in Harborough, the Bower House and Social Workers can issue vouchers to access provisions from the Foodbank, based at the Congregational Church, High Street, Market Harborough.

The churches and the Bower House can issue vouchers for a hot meal and drink to the value of 6.00 at The New Horizons Café run by the Baptist Church in Coventry Road. Opening times Monday- Friday 9.15am -3.30pm.

- f) If a woman with children is fleeing from violence, then HDC would pay travelling expenses for a taxi to Leicester and then re-charge them in the future after their benefits come through. This may be 'staggered', in order to give them a chance to re-pay.
- g) Cold weather protocol - if the temperature is below 0% C for three consecutive nights, B&B temporary accommodation can be provided in Leicester via HDC referral, but only until the weather improves.
- h) Seven Locks Housing:-have temporary accommodation, but this is only offered to people referred by Harborough Council.

NB

1. I am advised that some of the people who appear in Market Harborough may in fact come from Leicester, having boarded a train in Leicester without a train ticket and been evicted from the train at Market Harborough.
2. There are no direct access hostels in Market Harborough

If someone is not prepared to give their surname and do not wish to be registered with Housing Options or Job Centre+ they are greatly reducing their opportunities for help with their homelessness situation. A failure to reveal their identity should act as a warning to those trying to help them!

Northampton Borough Council:-

Housing Options Service. Tel: 0300 330 7000

Anyone 'on the street' in Harborough would have to go through the referral system with Market Harborough Council first, in order to be considered by Northamptonshire and then it would have to be a severe case eg. escaping domestic violence.

N.B. Please see Northampton Hope Day Centre initiative on page 5.

Leicester City Council:-

Housing Options Service, York House, Granby Street, Leicester LE1 6FB
Tel: (0116) 4541008 Office hours:- 8am -6pm Monday - Friday.

Outside of office hours the only direct access hostel seems to be:-

The Dawn Centre, Conduit Street, Leicester (behind the rail station)

Tel: (0116)2212770.

This is a Leics City Council emergency stay hostel comprising 10 beds.
Preference is usually given to those with a local - ie Leicester - connection.

Therefore, it is best to telephone first, prior to sending someone over there. If accommodation is offered, say at week-end, then the person is allowed to stay until Monday morning, when they would be expected to register and be offered advice concerning their next option. N.B. Someone from the Leics City Council Housing Options Office comes over to the Dawn Centre each week day morning to interview any new applicants.

The Dawn Centre:- also accommodates The Y Centre (a branch of Leicester YMCA) which is a drop-in centre for people aged 16+ and is open 8am -1pm (Mon - Fri) there is also a Doctors' Surgery at the Dawn Centre.

Accommodation not requiring a local connection:-

- a) Wordsworth Road Supported Housing:- 37-39 Wordsworth Rd, Knighton Fields, Leicester LE2 6ED, Tel (0116) 244 8069. Fax 0116 244 8069
e-mail projectworker@wordsworthroad.co.uk No out of hours phone no.
Target group:- Single homeless men aged 25 and over with low to medium support needs, including rough sleepers and ex-offenders. No local connection is necessary. The organisation has many County connections Referral procedure:- Mon-Thurs 8am -5pm Fri 9am -4pm. Application form & interview. Proof of ID & eligibility for benefits & if possible proof of previous tenancies & rent arrears, if any.
Waiting list:- Operate a waiting list, priority to rough sleepers. Length of stay:- Min-4 weeks, max-2 years (average 4-12 months)
- b) Hunters Lodge - Community of Grace:- A small Christian Charity in Leicester which works with people who have been homeless or socially isolated. They deal in long term support. The project is a Mission Project for the United Reform Church in Leicester.

The main accommodation at Hunters Lodge has 16 bedrooms with shared bathrooms

Contact:- Rev David Morris, Hunters Lodge, 138 Gwendolin Road, Leicester

LE5 5FF Tel: (0116) 2201145 Out of hours 'phone no. 07790 896249

Age restrictions:- Minimum age 18, no upper age limit.

Relevant people groups:- Asylum seekers, refugees, emergency beds, male, some women, single people.

Restrictions:- They will not take men with a history of sex offences against children.

Local connection:- is ideally necessary, but not exclusively

- c) **One Roof Leicester:-** is a new project associated with Hunters Lodge and looking at using smaller houses, some of which have been donated by Church people in Leicester,
Contact:- Mr Ben Brown, using the same contact no. as Hunters Lodge
- d) **Action Homeless:-** details at the foot of page 1 & top of page 2.
- e) **Bethany Project:-** Western Boulevard, Leicester Tel: (0116) 2540518
No local connection required, however they will only accept referrals from Councils or other agencies. This is not a direct access hostel.
Target group: Women with children only - no single women
Age range:- 16+ no upper age limit.
Support is given to help women 'turn their lives around'

N.B **The Falcon Centre**, 27-31, Pinfold Gate, Loughborough LE11 1BE

Tel:(01509) 268699. At this point in time the Falcon Centre is only able to accept referrals from people with a local connection in Melton, Charnwood & NW Leics.

Other initiatives:-

Leicester Home Group:- Stonham, Bradgate House, 71-73 Stretton Road

Leicester LE3 6BL Tel: (0116) 2335733

This accommodation is for ex-offenders only, via Leicester City Council.

Applicants must have a local Leicester connection.

N.B. Kennedy House, South Wigston Tel: (0116) 2787444 is closing down at the end of September 2015, due to lack of funds.

Hope Centre, Oasis House, 35-37 Campbell Street, Northampton

Tel:- 0845 519 9371 www.northamptonhopecentre.org.uk

This is a day centre in the centre of Northampton - next to the Police Station. Anyone from outside the area can attend. They see 120+ people per day and offer befrienders, showers, clothes store, computers and food. There is a charge for some food:- Breakfast - free bread, butter and jam throughout the year (porridge in the winter) Cooked breakfast 1.60 Cereal 30p Lunch 1.60. (Please see leaflet attached)

Northampton Association for Adults Single Homeless (NAASH):- Tel:0845 2068646
Accommodation can be offered, but applicants must have a local connection or be referred by an agency.

Advice Centres:-

Shelter Housing Aid:-13 Welford Road, Leicester LE2 7AO

Tel: (0116) 2546064 Hours 10am -4pm . England.shelter.org.uk

Out of hours helpline no.0808 800 4444

They also advise those with housing and homeless problems and assist with appeals for housing and benefits.

NB I am informed that Refugees have to be granted with indefinite leave to remain in this country, before they become eligible for benefits. The Indefinite leave is usually 10 years.

To summarise

There appears to be limited accommodation available for people who do not wish to reveal their identity and register with the agencies that can provide accommodation and benefit payments. Some of the people who present themselves in our churches fit into this category; they often just want a meal and a bed for the night and move on. This makes it difficult for them and for us, as there is no history to draw upon.

Some Christians have suffered physical violence and rape when accepting the homeless into their own homes.

Erica R Hall
Former Pastoral Assistant,Harborough Anglican Team
Former Housing Support Worker & Receptionist, Crewe YMCA, Cheshire

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