



 Hackney Winter
**NIGHT
SHELTER**

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

CHAIR'S FOREWORD



One of my highlights of the year so far has been the Hackney Half-Marathon in May. From a purely personal point of view, completing that meant that I was properly back running after a lot of injuries. More importantly, Hackney Winter Night Shelter was able to raise

about £20,000 towards the ever-rising challenge of finding a way out of homelessness for all in need in Hackney. This fundraising was a big community effort: some of the 60-odd people who ran for us were long-standing supporters, others were new; some were regular runners, others making a huge special effort on the day; some raised hundreds of pounds, others swung buckets on the day to collect coins from spectators.

What united us all, runners and supporters, was the knowledge that too many other Hackney residents are having to spend the night on the street or the buses, and a determination to do something about it. This year, again, we have provided a bed for over 100 people over the course of the season, many of them for several weeks, and helped two-thirds of them to move on to more suitable accommodation.

This is down to the hard work and commitment of our small group of staff – Kate Higgins, Conor Cregan, Bri English and Izzy Mulholland. It's equally down to the many hundreds of volunteers, across 14 different venues, who, each night of the week do everything from making up camp beds to cooking breakfast and doing that in such a way that – so far as we can – guests are served what they would like, rather than what we happen to have that morning. After Christmas, when we have two venues on the go each night, there can easily be 30 volunteers involved each night. That again is the community coming together to help fellow citizens going through a tough time – and doing so without the sunshine, fanfare, and steel bands which go with the Half-marathon. I'd like to thank everyone who got involved.

Our other main fundraiser is the comedy night at the Hackney Empire, the Belter for the Shelter.

One of the comedians who generously gave their time for free, Dane Baptiste, said that one reason he did our gig was that we weren't a charity that just wanted to keep itself in being. Absolutely – we would be delighted if there was no longer a need for us. But until that time comes, we will continue working to get the Hackney community to help its less fortunate members. Do get in touch if you'd like to be part of this growing drive.

Andrew Hudson, Chair of the Trustees of Hackney Doorways (Hackney Winter Night Shelter)

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OUR MISSION AND VALUES



Hackney Winter Night Shelter is operated by the charity, Hackney Doorways. We have been opening our doors to vulnerable homeless people in the borough since 1996.

Our mission is to help everyone in need in the borough to find a route out of homelessness. This is in addition to providing food and shelter throughout the coldest months of the year for people who would otherwise be sleeping rough.

Hackney Doorways is led and managed by a committed group of Trustees and a small staff team. A large number of volunteers from all walks of life support the work of the charity, and their contribution is highly valued. Without them, the shelter would not exist.

We have three core values:

SUPPORTIVENESS

We support guests with more than a nourishing meal, a bed and a warm welcome. We also offer personalised support to each individual to help them rebuild their lives

This can include working with local services and housing providers to find people more stable accommodation. It can also involve helping with travel costs so they can attend important appointments or help with buying essential items for moving into a new home.

INCLUSION

We welcome guests from any and all backgrounds, offering support based only on their needs and our ability to meet them. This inclusive approach extends to our staff and volunteers too.

COMMUNITY

We can only do all of this with the generous support of the local community - people who volunteer at the shelter or support our work in the office; those who organise and take part in fundraising events; people who run marathons and half-marathons, cycle incredible distances or help us out at festival stalls; as well as everyone who buys a ticket for our fundraiser Belter for the Shelter, buys a raffle ticket, a mug or a bag. Support from a number of corporate partners also means that we can do much more than we could on our own. Without this huge community contribution, the night shelter could not operate.

HOW THE SHELTER WORKS



Hackney Winter Night Shelter operates over the coldest five months of the year, from the beginning of November through to the end of March, and aims to offer not just a safe and warm place to sleep for people who are sleeping rough or at imminent risk of sleeping rough, but also to help each of our guests find their route out of homelessness.

Hackney Doorways, the Charity that operates the night shelter, is managed by a board of trustees, most of whom have also volunteered in the shelters, which gives them a unique insight into its day-to-day running.

Host venues, all church halls so far, are each used for one night of the week (seven before Christmas and 14 after). The rooms are set up by a group of volunteers – who make up beds, prepare and cook nutritious and filling meals and make the shelter as comfortable and homely as possible. Guests are welcomed by our volunteers into a convivial atmosphere and become part of a community made up of mainly local people.

After spending the evening relaxing, playing games, watching TV, reading books and newspapers or engaging in conversation, our

guests are able to get a good night's sleep in a warm bed. In the morning, a hearty breakfast is served to prepare people for the day ahead, with our guests leaving around 8am. Our volunteers continue to clear up the rooms, do the laundry and general housekeeping. The shelter then moves on to the next venue.

Over the Christmas period, for one week our guests stay with Crisis so that our venues can be returned to their hosts for the busy festive season and advocate workers, co-ordinators and volunteers can enjoy a short well-earned break.

Our ultimate aim during a guest's stay with us is to help each person find a route out of homelessness, and wherever possible to secure a more permanent move-on option for them. We do this in a way which reflects their own wishes and their circumstances. Part of it may be to support them in other ways: for example signposting to health treatment, helping guests access benefit entitlements, offering a postal address for important correspondence, liaising with landlords and housing departments, or referring people to appropriate services for debt, legal or immigration advice, or drug and alcohol services.



OUR SHELTER VENUES

In 2017-18 the night shelter was open from the beginning of November to the end of March.

Every night over the five months (apart from Christmas week when guests are at Crisis) we opened a main shelter which could accommodate up to 15 people. Between January and March we operated an additional dormitory in other venues, which meant that we could accommodate more guests and offer the shelter for up to 25 people each night.

The venue hosts from across Hackney for the 2017-18 Shelter were:

- Dalston Methodist Church, Richmond Road
- Frampton Park Baptist Church, Frampton Park Road
- Green Lanes Methodist Church, Green Lanes
- New Testament Church of God, Cricketfield Road
- Open Doors Baptist Church, Downs Road
- Our Lady of Good Counsel, Bouverie Road
- St. Anne's Church, Harnsworth Road
- St. Barnabas, Shacklewell Row
- St. James the Great, Lower Clapton Road
- St. John at Hackney, Lower Clapton Road
- St. Luke's, Homerton Terrace
- St. Mary's New Rooms, Church Street, Stoke Newington
- St. Michaels and All Angels, Lansdowne Drive
- St. Paul's Church, Stoke Newington High Street
- Stoke Newington Baptist Church, Stoke Newington High Street
- The Round Chapel, Powerscroft Road, Clapton

Most of our guests are referred to us through a variety of agencies with whom we have strong and well-established links. These include Crisis, the Greenhouse, North London Action for the Homeless, Hackney Migrant Centre, Spitalfields Crypt, Providence Row and many other local charities and organisations.



OUR TRUSTEES - MEET ANDREA DANIELS

Taking the plunge to become a Trustee for Hackney Winter Night Shelter is one of the most rewarding things I've done. Like many people I had supported homeless charities and individuals when and where I could, but I wanted to do something more practical and use my professional skills to help the local community where I have lived for nearly 20 years.

Hackney Winter Night Shelter works on the front line, helping and supporting guests to find a route out of homelessness. Rooted in the community and drawing on resources, people and skills from across the borough, it shows how people can come together to support those in need.

Since joining in 2016, everyone at HWNS has been welcoming, supportive, full of ideas and ways we can grow the charity and its work. As the trustee responsible for our marketing and communications, we've been reaching out to organisations and people across the borough who can help us get our message across, bring in those much-needed funds and working with other like-minded organisations to support those in need in Hackney.

“EVERYONE IS SO COMMITTED TO HELPING OUR GUESTS IN WHATEVER WAY THEY CAN.”

It's wonderful to see so many committed volunteers and businesses working pro-bono to help us and testament to the spirit of Hackney and its people.

Becoming a trustee was a new challenge for me personally, at times tough but ultimately a very rewarding one. For someone used to marketing departments and press officers, rolling my sleeves up and getting stuck in has resulted in a few too many late nights and weekends, but I wouldn't trade it for anything.

We are always on the look out for more trustees to support the team at HWNS. I would encourage anyone thinking about it to go for it – you won't regret it.



The Board of Trustees meets every month, apart from August. Those who served during the year were:

Andrew Hudson, Chair

Sarah Watson, Treasurer

Sarah Young, Company Secretary

Luke Bruce, Strategy and Projects

Andrea Daniels, Marketing and Communications

Sara Cottingham, Safeguarding and External relations

Niul Dillon-Hatcher, Policies and Practices

Jane Ratford, Volunteers

Peter Blackwell, Fundraising and Events

OUR VOLUNTEERS - MEET JANE



“I COULD SEE THAT MY EFFORTS WERE MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO THE COMMUNITY”

Working on our big events has been an eye-opening experience seeing the amount of people who are dedicated to HWNS. We are mostly volunteers with busy lives, so it can be challenging at times, but greatly rewarding to work with so many caring people. The generosity of our volunteers, and local business and organisations who support our events, is enormous.

In the last two years, we've raised over £50,000 for HWNS in events like 'A Belter for the Shelter' - our infamous comedy night, and one of the highlights of my year has been cheering on our runners (over 60 of them!) at the Hackney Half Marathon.

- Jane Smith

“We are mostly volunteers, so it can be challenging at times, but greatly rewarding.”

I started volunteering with Hackney Winter Night Shelter in the 2016 season, helping out with the morning shifts in my local shelter. I moved to London in 2011 and had noticed a steep increase in the number of rough sleepers all over the city in the past 5 years. It was getting to the point where on my way to work I would see between 10-15 people who had clearly been out in the cold for some time, and things were only getting worse. I really wanted to help but I wasn't sure how, so when I came across HWNS I jumped at the chance to volunteer.

At first it was a bit of challenge to do the early mornings, especially in the winter, but chatting with the guests and volunteers made things easier and I could see that my efforts were making a difference to the community. After moving south of the river, I wasn't able to volunteer in the shelters any more, but the opportunity to join the new Events Team came up and I thought that this was something that I could definitely help with.

Hackney Winter Night Shelter depends on the partnership between a very small staff team - a shelter manager, two advocate workers, and a part-time administrator - everyone else from co-ordinators and cooks to trustees and fundraisers is a volunteer.

Our volunteers are from all walks of life. They not only run the shelters, but they create the welcoming and convivial atmosphere that our guests experience when they stay with us.

Volunteers remain fundamental in every way to maintaining the shelter for as long as there is a need.

GUEST CASE STUDIES

(We have not used the real names of our guests to protect their identity).

JOSEPH

A 64-year-old man originally from the Caribbean, Joseph was referred into the night shelter by the Council's Housing team. Despite being eligible for the Council's support due to his age and poor mental health, he was unable to access this because he couldn't prove his settled status in the UK. Joseph was entitled to British citizenship since he arrived in the UK before 1973 (the Windrush generation), but had no documents to prove it.

As a result, Joseph had been homeless for four years on and off the streets. Our Advocate Worker signposted him to get free immigration advice where he was advised to gather documentation to prove his immigration status. Joseph and his worker started to collect documents.

Whilst Joseph was staying at the shelter, his benefits were cut because he was deemed no longer fit for work. He was told he should reapply for benefits but was unable to do this as he was asked to provide documents confirming his UK status. After four months of liaising with the Department for Work and Pensions, Joseph was no closer to getting his benefits paid. He was still at the shelter and without any money at all.

However, when the news broke about the plight of Windrush people who had the right to stay in the UK but couldn't prove it, Joseph was able to access housing services. His Advocate Worker went with him to the Council and he was accommodated on the same day. Joseph and his advocate worker met up with his MP who worked to get his benefits reinstated.

Joseph is now staying in temporary accommodation provided by Hackney Council and is waiting to be placed in longer term Council accommodation. He is in receipt of his benefits and is challenging the delay with a law firm in Stratford.



LEWIS

Lewis was referred to the shelter by Providence Row in Tower Hamlets. His money ran out and he could no longer pay for the backpackers hostel that he had been staying in. He was about to sleep rough for the first time. When Lewis arrived at the shelter he was very quiet and withdrawn but happy to have somewhere to stay. It took about two weeks before he could open up and tell our advocate workers that he had walked out of his home after an argument and was reported missing. He was drinking heavily and secretly cutting himself.

With his permission we were able to contact his family and let them know he was safe. He returned to his see his family for a visit but felt that he needed to live on his own for a while. Lewis stayed at the shelter for two months and then moved into supported accommodation with St Mungo's. He has taken steps to address his issues with alcohol and is now attending well-being workshops at Hackney Mind. He has started educational classes at Crisis Skylight and is doing well.

Lewis still has good and bad days but he now has a network of support and knows where he can go to get the help he needs when he is feeling down.

OUR GUESTS AND THE PEOPLE WE HELPED

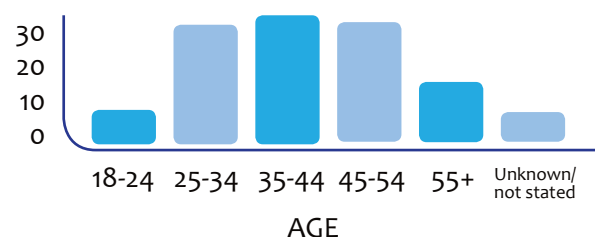
In the five months November to March, we received more than 200 referrals to the Night Shelter. We worked with 123 people in total, of whom we accommodated 102 in the shelter for periods lasting from a few days to several months.

GENDER

84 Male 39 Female

TOTAL: 123

AGE



GUEST ETHNICITY



7	White British	2	Mixed Ethnicity (White & Black Caribbean)
2	White Irish	5	Asian / Chinese
30	Other White (including EEA nationals)	6	Other ethnic groups
11	Black British		
10	Black Caribbean		
29	Black African		

TOTAL: 102*

*People who stayed in the shelter only.

PRIOR CIRCUMSTANCES

Of the 123 people that we worked with, 43 were currently rough sleeping or returners to rough sleeping, 54 were either new to the street or about to be made street homeless. 26 were “hidden homeless”, which included sofa-surfers and people who were sleeping in their cars, on the night buses, in empty garages, in hospital A&E departments or, in one case, on the landing of an apartment complex.

SUPPORT NEEDS

Many of our guests had either physical or mental health conditions:

Mental Health Issues



Physical Health Issues



Learning Disabilities



Alcohol Misuse



Drug Misuse



■ Yes
 ■ No
 ■ Unknown

Note – some may have issues with both drug and alcohol use, but they are included separately here.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE

We are not able to accept people who are currently using Class A drugs and/or who may have serious substance misuse issues, as the shelter is unable to support their needs. Advocate Workers signpost people to access treatment or into other services that are better equipped to support them

OUR IMPACT

During the autumn and winter of 2017-18, we accommodated **102** people in the night shelter.

We were open for **151** nights and filled **2,738** beds achieving a **90%** occupancy rate.

Our volunteers prepared, cooked and served over **5,000** nutritious meals, including catering for guests with special dietary needs.

We helped **69** guests to move on successfully to more permanent accommodation.

MOVING ON

18	■	Supported Housing*
14	■	Other Temporary Accommodation
9	■	Private Rented Sector
9	■	Hosting Service for Migrants
5	■	Returned to Country of Origin
2	■	Unsupported Accommodation (private hostels, Housing Associations)
3	■	Accommodated by Local Council
3	■	Night Shelters and Other (semi-permanent)
2	■	Asylum Support Accommodation
2	■	Accommodated Through Employment
1	■	Rehab (addiction)
1	■	Reconnection to Family

TOTAL: **69**

*Lea Bridge House, Purple Door, St Ignatius, Peter Bedford, St. Mungo's, Metropolitan Housing, etc.

As well as helping people to secure move-on accommodation, our advocacy team helped guests to:

- Secure welfare benefits
- Challenge DWP decisions
- Access ID documents
- Register with GPs and other health services
- Attend important appointments
- Conduct job search activities
- Access training or employment
- Get help with issues such as domestic violence and abuse, mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, debt problems, access to food banks, signposting to legal and immigration advisers

A small discretionary assistance fund helped people to pay for:

- Travel costs to interviews and important appointments
- Move-on packs containing essential items and equipment for a new home
- Tools or workwear to start a new job
- Clothing
- Emergency items such as toiletries or sanitary wear.

In a few cases, the fund was able to help towards private rent deposits.

One important aim of our Advocate Workers is to help build the confidence of our guests so that they can progress and manage independently in the future.

CASE STUDIES

SOFIA AND LUCA

Sofia and her partner Luca are Italian citizens who came to London to find work. The Haringey Migrant Support Centre referred them to us because they had been made street homeless after being illegally evicted by their landlord. They had just found out that Sofia was pregnant and Luca was struggling to find a permanent employment. He is a highly trained chef but could not speak English.

The advocate workers supported Sofia to access medical treatment and provided funds to both of them for bus fares. Luca quickly found employment in an Italian Restaurant in the Barbican but was working long hours. They realised it would make sense for Sofia to return home to stay with her family in Italy. When Luca received his first month's salary, he moved into accommodation with some of his co-workers.

In the early summer, we heard that Sofia has had a healthy baby girl and is preparing to return to London to reunite their small family.

JULIETTE

Juliette, a woman in her mid-40s was referred to us by Hackney Council. Juliette had previously been living with her mother in Hackney. However, their relationship gradually broke down and she was asked to leave the family home.

In the past, Juliette was a receptionist but she had been unemployed for two years. She was lonely

and felt hopeless, without many options, having no friends or family to turn to.

Juliette was offered a place at the night shelter to ensure she didn't sleep on the streets. While she was at the shelter she worked with the advocate workers to look for accommodation. Not long after, she was placed in supported accommodation in Hackney. There she was able to settle and meet new people. Juliette's regained confidence enabled her to apply for jobs and she was offered a job as a receptionist at a GP surgery.

When her time was up in the supported accommodation, Juliette came back to Hackney Winter Night Shelter to ask for support. Our advocate worker worked with her and together they found a permanent flat in a local housing association.

“When you stay in a shelter you have a lot of time to think about your circumstances (in fact all you do is think about your circumstances). I kept thinking ‘how have I come to this point in my life?’ It’s a fact - being homeless doesn’t discriminate. You meet all types of people with unique circumstances.

The ironic thing about going through this very challenging time in my life was I don’t think I would have achieved what I have achieved now, if I didn’t become homeless unexpectedly.”



FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

This year, led by our incredibly dedicated and hard-working volunteer Events Team, Hackney Winter Night Shelter was able to organise two events that were not only enormously enjoyable, but also raised significant funds for the Charity.

HACKNEY HALF MARATHON

In May, 60 amazing runners took part in the challenging Hackney Half Marathon to raise money on behalf of Hackney Winter Night Shelter.

Runners from amongst our supporters, volunteers, trustees and a team from the Hackney Gazette all ran the 13.1 miles around the borough, cheered on by thousands of spectators. Starting at Hackney Marshes and weaving their way through beautiful green spaces, passing Hackney Downs, Hackney Empire, Broadway Market, Victoria Park and the Olympic Stadium, and of course, running past so many of our shelter venues, the runners did an exceptional job in raising much needed funds for us.



BELTER FOR THE SHELTER

Our major fundraiser, which has been taking place for a few years now, is a comedy night at the Hackney Empire, which was enjoyed by an audience of over well over 1,000 people. Arranged and compèred by Stewart Lee and Daniel Kitson, this year's show raised over £20,000 for the night shelter.



“Comedians get asked to perform at, and organise, lots of benefits for lots of charities. Stand-ups are a relatively stress free, low-impact wing of showbiz and we don’t ask for anything more

than beer and crisps in return for our efforts. But most good causes seem insurmountable, sadly, and your efforts barely make a dent in the problem.

Hackney Winter Night Shelter, however, aims each year to provide a set number of beds for a set number of rough sleepers for a set period in my long term home borough, where increasing gentrification perhaps masks the very real problems of many of its residents. And every year that we comedians do the show we see and hear from all sorts of people whose lives the Shelter and its dedicated volunteers have helped to turn around. With the organisational support of Hackney Winter Night Shelter, Daniel Kitson and I have compèred and programmed, respectively, the Belter for The Shelter show every year since it started, and I do it out of pure selfishness.

The audience is great, the venue is a beautiful Frank Matcham Victorian variety theatre, and the benefit offers a rare chance to see immediate and satisfying results from doing something as simple as giving up an evening to make people laugh.”

- Stewart Lee



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

OUR FUNDING AND HOW WE SPEND OUR MONEY

Compared to last year, we saw an increase in total income received (£153,087 in 2016-17; £163,663 in 2017-18). Donations and fundraising increased by 54% over the previous year, while we received fewer grants this year, amounting to £56,650 compared to £83,412 last year.

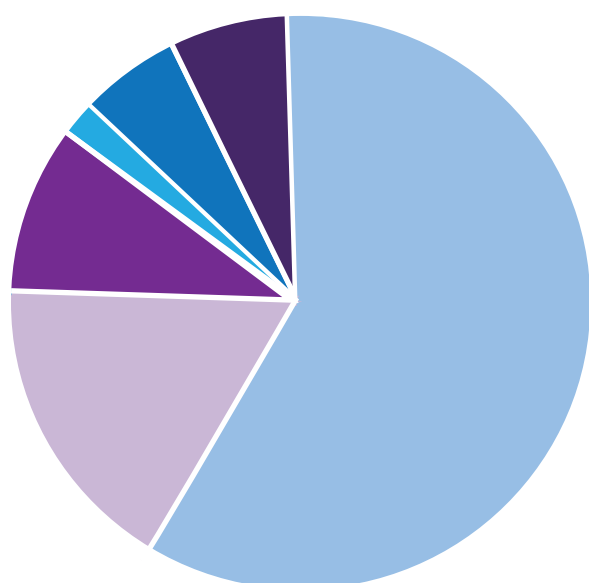
Donations and fundraising events remain our most important sources of revenue and we are grateful to everyone who contributes to this.

Expenditure increased from £133,578 (2016-17) to £171,346 (2017-18) including increased staff, operational and equipment costs and fundraising costs. We also increased spend on our Guest Assistance Fund, which supports our guests with travel costs, clothing and other essential items such as move-on packs to help them equip a new home, according to their individual needs.

Net expenditure was £7,683.

HOW WE SPEND OUR FUNDS

Our largest expenditure item is staffing and associated costs, which represents 58% of our expenditure and a large proportion of our spending is directly guest-related.



58%	Employee Costs
21%	Equipment and Operating Costs
11%	Heating Grants
1%	Administration
4%	Assistance Fund
5%	Fundraising Costs

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	2017-18	2016-17
	TOTAL FUNDS	TOTAL FUNDS
Incoming resources		
Donations and legacies	106,965	69,485
Charitable activities	56,630	83,412
Investments	68	190
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	163,663	153,087
Expenditure		
Raising funds	9,021	383
Charitable activities	162,325	133,195
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	171,346	133,578
Net income (expenditure)	(7683)	19,509
Reconciliation of funds		
Total funds brought forward	111,486	91,977
Total funds carried forward	103,735	111,486
Expenditure		
Employee costs	99,602	
Equipment and operating costs	35,632	
Heating grants	18,250	
Administration	1,420	
Assistance fund	7,421	
Fundraising costs	9,021	
	171,346	



THANK YOU

We would like to thank all of the following, whose contribution makes the Shelter possible:

- Every single one of our enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers and co-ordinators, who welcome our guests and make their stay as comfortable as it can be, participating in the running of the shelter, cooking delicious and hearty meals, making the beds, welcoming and generally sharing their time with our guests.
- The church hosts who let us use their halls free of charge.
- Everyone who makes an individual donation or has set up a direct debit for regular giving
- Jane Smith, Courtnee Archer and the volunteer events team for giving up so much of their time to organise our major fundraisers

Our principal funders during the year:

- Hackney Parochial Charity
- Hilden Charitable Fund
- Isla Foundation
- The Pret Foundation
- West Hackney Parochial Charity

Those who donated money, goods or services, made us their Charity of the Year or raised funds on our behalf:

- The Alexandra Trust
- Argus Media
- Big Yellow Storage
- Five Points Brewery
- Girdlers Company Charitable Trust
- Grace Church Hackney Trust
- Greggs Foundation
- Jackson Coles
- Jollie Socks
- Kindness Bags
- The Leech Fourteenth Trust
- London Diocesan Fund
- Ministry of Justice staff
- The Olive School
- SEGA
- Yonder Collective
- Zetteler

- Richard Young, Nick Troth and their colleagues at Arup, for carrying out fire risk assessments at our venues pro bono.
- Two GPs who worked with our guests
- Stewart Lee, Daniel Kitson and the comedians who give us their time freely for our event, Belter for the Shelter and make it such a lively and entertaining evening. Our thanks to all of them: Bridget Christie, Michael Legge, Kevin Eldon, Kevin McAleer, Dane Baptiste and Eleanor Tierna.

Those who made monetary and in-kind contributions to individual shelters:

- St John the Baptist Catholic Church for running costs
- Nikki Crichton for running a Supper Club
- Harris Family for laundry costs
- St. Chads towards running costs
- An anonymous donor for supper costs
- Christine Lewis, Wendy
- The cooks who donate the food
- Dalston Darlings WI for a bowl of fruit every week
- Queensbridge School Mums for sandwiches every week
- E5 Bakery for bread each week
- NE London Guides for socks, scarves and gloves
- Tiff Howick for socks sold at her shop
- Susan and Sally for regular gifts
- Neighbours who drop in with gifts
- Voodoo Ray's Pizza
- Horizon Laundry Services
- Mossbourne Academy Sixth form

People who take part in our fundraising events, running marathons, buying raffle tickets, bags or mugs and who raise funds on our behalf in a myriad of ways!

We would like to thank and acknowledge everyone who contributes, many of whom live and work in the local community: from individuals and small business owners, to large corporates and of course, our many partners and stakeholders.

Apologies if we have missed the name of any donor - this is unintentional - we really do appreciate and value everything that people give to us.

OUR BEAUTIFUL LAUNDERETTE



Sue and Chanel have been working at the launderette on Upper Clapton Road for a combined 27 years.

It's a sociable place that people frequent for more than just a hot wash. "They say you can come here for problems, nursery, advice, gossip," says Sue.

The launderette has been looking after Hackney Winter Night Shelter's laundry for over five years. In January the shelter introduced a new initiative that allowed its guests to use vouchers to go to the launderette and wash their clothes, a move designed to offer guests some independence.

It coincided with one of the most brutal winters that Britain has witnessed in decades, which saw many of its homeless face unprecedented freezing conditions.

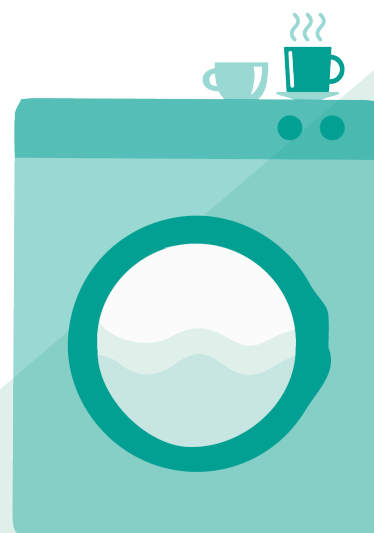
While visiting the laundrette during this time, guests say they found more than just their own independence. They found a welcoming environment where they were offered hot drinks, there was someone to talk to and, crucially, it was a place where they didn't feel judged.

One guest says: "When we came here we were homeless and at times you can feel like maybe you smell, maybe you look homeless. But these guys were really sweet and used to offer me a biscuit and hot chocolate".

"I used to come in here take my clothes off and sit in my shorts as I only had one pair of clothes at the time, and they wouldn't judge me or anything what else can you ask for. The whole 'no judgement' was a really big thing", they said.

Sue and Chanel say that this interaction with the night shelter's guests challenged their perception of what a homeless person looked like. "Until this year I didn't realise how many professionals actually use the [shelter] service," said Chanel.

"We've seen chefs, shop workers, bricklayers, all sorts of people from all walks of life. I was really surprised. When they say you're one pay cheque away from homelessness, it really is true."



FUTURE - AREAS OF FOCUS 2018-19

Over the coming year, we will be developing our longer-term strategy to ensure that the Charity is sustainable in the future.

Our key areas of focus for the year are to:

- Ensure that the services we provide meet the needs of our guests in the most cost-effective way
- Review, develop and streamline our systems and processes
- Review how we measure our impact and evaluate our work
- Improve volunteer training and support, and create new volunteer roles
- Continue to strengthen our community links, engaging more corporate supporters, local businesses, faith and community groups
- Raise our profile in Hackney and beyond, which will include a new website and increased social media presence



Registered office
Room 3, The Old School Rooms
Round Chapel, 2 Powerscroft Road
London E5 0PU
Tel: 0208 533 8308



www.hwns.org.uk



info@hwns.org.uk

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Hackney Winter Night Shelter is the operating name of Hackney Doorways.
Registered Charity No. 1139183

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