



# GREATER MANCHESTER WINTER NIGHT SHELTER

## Pilot Project Evaluation Report

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## **1. Introduction**

The Greater Manchester Winter Night Shelter (GMWNS) was set up by Greater Together Manchester and the Church of England Diocese of Manchester as a response to the growing problem of rough sleeping in Manchester City Centre. It was a ten week pilot project, run in conjunction with The Booth Centre.

Greater Together Manchester is a joint venture between the Diocese of Manchester and Church Urban Fund, focused on tackling poverty. Greater Together Manchester was founded as a Company limited by Guarantee in March 2015 and is currently in the process of registering as a charity.

An evaluation of the setting up and management of the pilot project has been undertaken. This report sets out the methodology of the evaluation and reports on its findings. It includes the outputs and outcomes of the project, identifies areas for reflection and improvement, and sets out initial proposals for the 2016-17 Night Shelter project.

## **2. The Greater Manchester Winter Night Shelter (GMWNS)**

### **2.1. Homelessness in Manchester and Salford**

In recent years there has been a steady stream of people, made homeless all across the region, migrating towards Manchester and Salford City Centres in search of better support, opportunities and, in some cases, the perception of a steadier and wealthier footfall from whom to receive money and food.

Figures from the October 2015 count undertaken by Manchester City Council suggest that rough sleeping in Manchester has increased by 50% over the last year.

Whilst there are many more day centres specialising in supporting homeless people in Manchester and Salford city centres than in other areas, beyond this there is a real lack of evening provision and little safe, suitable temporary accommodation, as well as a backlog in available move-on accommodation. Local authorities only have a legal responsibility to rehouse those who are considered “priority homeless” and have originated from within their geographical boundaries. There has also been a steady decline in beds provided by the third sector and faith sector.

Many people who end up homeless in the city centres will therefore find themselves sleeping rough, and as a result will be at risk of mental and physical ill health, violence, negative and exploitative relationships, drug and alcohol use and the sex trade. Whilst many will access the services of day centres like the Booth Centre, it is during the evening and night hours that much of the damage is done to people’s health and wellbeing.

Because of the increase in rough sleeping in the City Centre, temporary winter night shelters have been opened in Manchester for the first time in 20 years. In addition to the GMWNS, there are:

- Two temporary shelters for men and women opened by the Council, in Hulme (20 beds) and Harpurhey (25 beds). These were only open to people who are entitled to Council help with housing; EEA migrants are only admitted if they either have a return date, or are considered likely to be able to find work. The Hulme shelter was able to admit couples, people with dogs, and people with more complex needs. These shelters were open from 9pm-7.30am and did not provide a meal.
- A 14-bed shelter provided by the Cornerstones project at Whitworth Park, using both their main building and portable “pods”. It was open from 8pm-8am and provided a bed and a meal, and was staffed by one volunteer and one paid member of staff overnight. Men and women using the Cornerstones day centre could be referred to this, and referrals were based on who their staff believed would most benefit from the accommodation.

### **2.2. The Church and Community Night Shelter (CCNS) Movement**

The GMWNS has been based on the Church and Community Night Shelter movement which already exists in many parts of England and Wales. Housing Justice, a nationwide charity which supports churches and other groups to set up, run and develop these shelters, are fully supporting the GMWNS, and have provided consultancy services and volunteer training.

The CCNS model is a circuit of churches, community groups and places of worship of different faiths and denominations, each taking a designated night of the week to provide shelter on their premises to anything from 12 to 35 homeless guests. Each shelter provides an evening meal, a bed for the night, breakfast each morning and hospitality to people in crisis. The CCNS projects across the country form a loose confederation, but each project is governed and managed differently.

### **2.3. Background to the GMWNS**

The project began as the result of a meeting between the Booth Centre and David Walker, Bishop of Manchester. Greater Together Manchester (GTM) then became involved in the practicalities of setting up some sort of evening and/or overnight scheme.

Initially a permanent shelter was discussed, but this was rejected as being too difficult to achieve in planning terms, and it was decided that the CCNS rolling shelter model would be used. After discussions with Housing Justice, it was agreed that a 3 month pilot scheme should be run.

Several churches were identified as possible venues, but some (e.g. St Ann's Church, Manchester and St Philip's Church, Salford) could not be used because they did not have any sleeping accommodation separate from the worship area, and would therefore have contravened Ecclesiastical Law. The figure of 12 guests was based on the practical capacity of the churches which were involved.

The main concern that had to be addressed was the legal and insurance implications of people sleeping in church buildings overnight. The involvement of Housing Justice was key to gaining approval for the scheme from the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group. Because the Faculty process could have taken up to 6 months to complete, permission for the pilot project was granted through temporary Archdeacon's Licences.

### **2.4. Aim of the GMWNS**

The aim of the project is

*"to develop the culture and practice of Christian hospitality to homeless people that leads to personal transformation, thus providing the foundation for movement away from the streets and towards 'home'."*

In the long term we have to question the societal injustice that people are homeless and sleeping rough, but in the short term practical emergency responses are called for.

The GMWNS provided guests with temporary accommodation alongside the support from the staff and services at the Booth Centre with the aim of resettling them into more permanent accommodation.

The Diocese of Manchester's churches are uniquely placed to provide night shelter to those who are homeless and have fallen through the welfare safety net. They have physical assets in the form of buildings, as well as social assets in the form of people who can provide volunteer help – the two main ingredients needed to provide Winter Night Shelters.

Although the buildings are essential, it is the volunteers who can offer the unique services of friendship, hospitality, care, and a patient listening ear – not always as easily provided by statutory agencies that are trying to juggle funding cuts and pressure to meet outcomes. Volunteers and guests of winter shelters often engender together a feeling of a true community.

## 2.5. Structure of the GMWNS

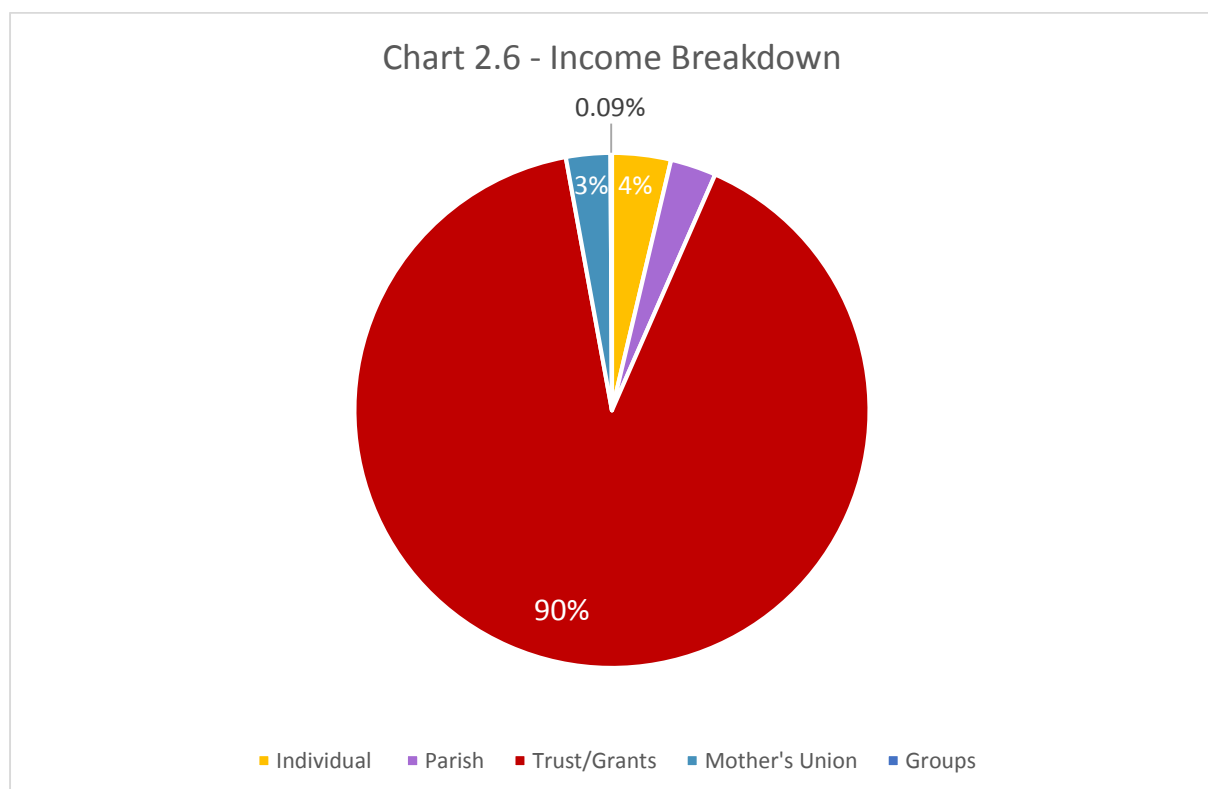
The GMWNS was set up and managed by Greater Together Manchester, which is a joint venture between the Diocese and the Church Urban Fund.

The scheme was set up by the Development Officer from Greater Together Manchester. A part time Project Coordinator was employed for 25 hours per week to coordinate the churches and volunteers, to manage the scheme day-to-day, and to evaluate the project after it finishes. The Project Coordinator has been on call whilst the shelter is operational in order to further support the volunteers in case of emergency.

Each night's shelter was staffed entirely by volunteers, supervised by a Shift Manager and coordinated centrally by the Project Coordinator, with support from Greater Together Manchester, Housing Justice and the Booth Centre.

## 2.6. Funding

The total income for the pilot project was **£22,849.56** (at the date of publication). The breakdown of this income is shown in Chart 2.6.



The largest area of income was trust/grants, as the GMWNS received a grant of £20,000 from the Council for Social Aid at the Diocese of Manchester. The Manchester Mothers' Union also pledged to support the project, donating £600 for the purchase of beds, and have also agreed to continue to support the scheme into the future. Approximately 10% of the income came from groups, parishes and individuals, who kindly fundraised on behalf of the Greater Manchester Winter Night Shelter.

## **2.7. Shelter Provision**

The shelters were open to guests between 6.30pm and 8.30am.

### ***Evening Shift***

At 5.30pm, the eight evening shift volunteers set up beds, tables etc; in some churches this was done by other volunteers earlier in the day. Once the venue was ready to receive guests, a briefing for the night was carried out by the evening Shift Manager, explaining the facilities to any new volunteers and sharing any necessary information about guests.

Guests were able to arrive at the shelter between 6.30-8pm. During this time volunteers welcomed guests and helped them to complete Guest Agreements, prepared food, and joined in conversation and activities with guests.

At 8pm, guests and volunteers sat down together to eat. After the meal volunteers cleared away and washed up after the meal, and had further conversation and activities with guests. "Lights out" was at 10.30-11pm depending on the venue, though the majority of guests went to bed earlier than this.

### ***Night Shift***

At 9.30pm the four night shift volunteers arrived and there was a handover before the evening volunteers left at 10pm. Night volunteers took it in turns to sleep, with two volunteers awake at all times. The Project Coordinator was on call overnight for volunteers to contact for advice or help.

### ***Morning Shift***

The four morning volunteers arrived at 6am, then the night volunteers left at 6.30am, following a handover. The guests were offered cereal or toast for breakfast, and reminded that they could get a cooked breakfast at the Booth Centre. After the guests left at 8.30, the morning shift volunteers put away the beds etc. and left the venue ready for other users by 9.30am.



## 2.8. Policies and Procedures

Policies were based on templates provided by Housing Justice, and covered:

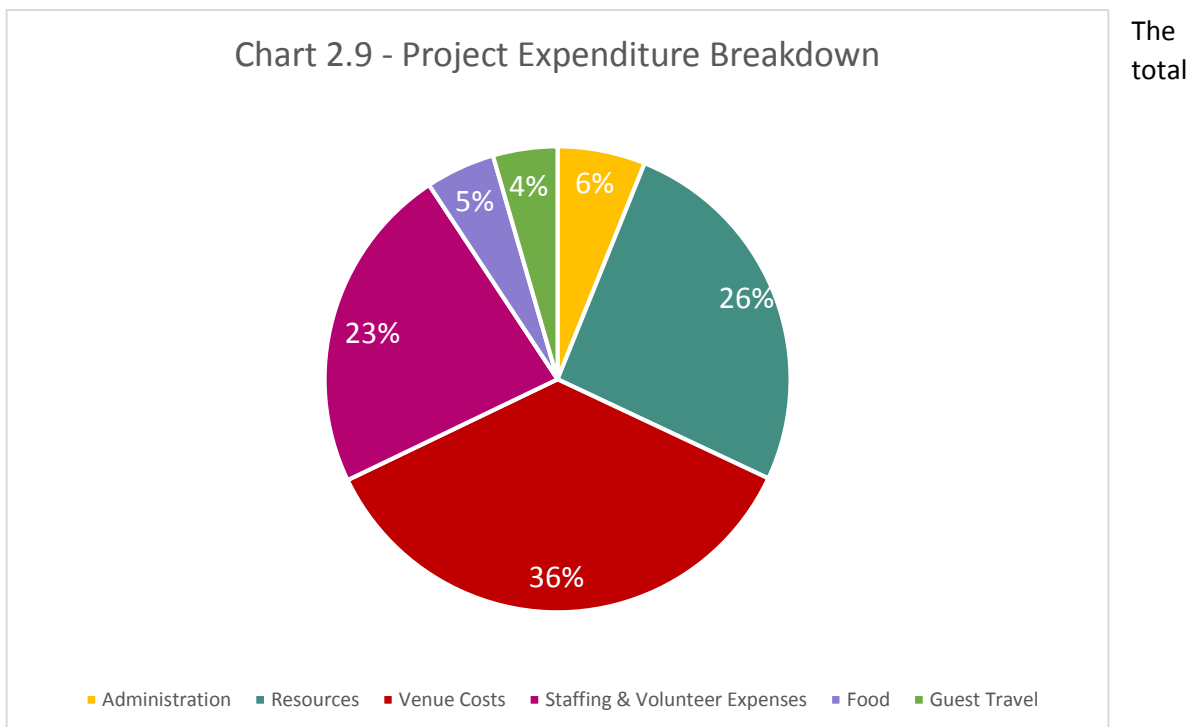
- Referrals
- Health and Safety and Food Hygiene
- Buildings & Fire Safety (including smoking policies, evacuation procedures etc.)
- Volunteers / Personal Boundaries
- Confidentiality and Data usage
- Safeguarding (including no lone working)
- Vulnerable Adults and Children
- Drugs and alcohol
- Violence
- Emergency Procedures (including relevant telephone numbers)
- Complaints
- Staffing/Recruitment

There was a strict “no lone working” policy for volunteers, which avoided the need for DBS checks, and also allowed for ex-guests to volunteer once they had moved on to more settled accommodation. The hope is that, over time, we will help to create a community of ‘ex-guests’ who have all experienced homelessness who can share their experiences and support one another.

All venues had a log book, which included a written record of who is staying in the shelter each night, any incidents or decisions, and volunteer rotas.

## 2.9. Shelter Costs

A breakdown of project expenditure is shown in Chart 2.9.



project expenditure was **£20,811.01** (at the time of publication).

This equates to a cost per night of **£297.30**, or a cost per guest/bed per night of **£24.78**.

As expected, the largest expenditure was the cost of heating the venues that were used in the project. The churches that took part in the pilot were all chosen for their proximity to the city centre, and as such they were all within parishes which are statistically classified as deprived, with limited resources, and more often than not were already engaged in community outreach of some kind. It was therefore agreed that the churches should not have to foot the bill for the additional utilities costs involved in hosting the shelter. For the pilot project it was calculated that it costs approx. £10 per hour to heat and light the buildings, and the project reimbursed the participating churches accordingly. Due to the varying age and architectural style of the churches involved, some buildings were easier to get warm than others, whereas one church (St Cuthbert's Miles Platting) needed to have the heating on for almost 24 hours, and still wasn't adequately warm.

Resources was another area of high expenditure. This category includes beds, bedding, towels, Health and Safety equipment, and other essentials that were purchased centrally and distributed to the churches involved. This expenditure should drop going forward as we now own 100+ beds and bedding sets and each church has their own First Aid kit, mobile phone, sharps container and accident book. Some items may need replacing, but the cost of these should be much lower than the original set up costs.

Staffing costs seem quite high, however we only had one part time member of staff, who was responsible for arranging the referrals from the Booth Centre, the coordination of volunteers and who was an emergency point of contact whilst the shelter was in operation. The shelter running at 12 beds a night needs at least one part time member of staff – especially if we are to begin to take referrals from other centres and services.

Comparatively, very little money (£998) was spent on providing food, as we bought initial supplies in bulk, accepted donations of some food (including meals from Manchester College), and 3 of our churches (4 nights of the shelter) were registered with FareShare. We also received some food donations each week from Pret a Manger. We hope that going forward all our participating churches will be registered with FareShare, who should be able to provide the bulk of the food required by the shelter.

### **3. Evaluation Methodology**

This evaluation has been based on:

#### ***Quantitative Information***

Numbers of guests and their attendance were collected by Venue Coordinators and collated by the Project Coordinator.

Numbers of volunteers and volunteer hours were collected by the Project Coordinator.

Monitoring information for volunteers was collected using a standard form.

#### ***Outcomes***

Information about guests' previous accommodation, their needs, and their move-on from the shelter were provided by the Booth Centre.

Information about outcomes for volunteers were reported by them.

#### ***Feedback***

Feedback from guests was collected through:

- a standard form;
- conversations reported by Venue Coordinators and volunteers; and
- conversations reported by Booth Centre staff.

Feedback from volunteers was collected through:

- a standard form; and
- informal discussions with the Project Coordinator and Venue Coordinators.

Feedback from Venue Coordinators was collected in individual meetings with the Project Coordinator held after the end of the project.

We also held a meeting with the Booth Centre to collect their feedback on the project.

Visitors to the project were invited to give us their feedback. These included Manchester City Councillors, and a visitor from Mustard Tree who is curating the new Homeless Charter for Manchester.

## 4. Venues

### 4.1. Location

GMWNS consisted of a network of churches based within a two mile radius (i.e. walking distance) of Manchester City Centre, each of which hosted the shelter on a different night of the week.

The churches taking part were:

- Monday - Brunswick Parish Church, Ardwick
- Tuesday - St Cuthbert, Miles Platting
- Wednesday - St Clement, Ordsall
- Thursday - Church of the Resurrection and St Barnabas, Beswick
- Friday and Sunday - Church of the Apostles, Miles Platting
- Saturday - St Thomas, Pendleton

St Clement, Lower Broughton, was also intended to be part of the network and to host the shelter on Sundays, but following serious flooding on Boxing Day 2015 they had to withdraw. Sunday night's shelter was moved to Church of the Apostles, and St Clement's volunteers moved to this and other churches.

A volunteer Venue Coordinator was appointed for each church to liaise with the Project Coordinator regarding volunteers and guests, act as a key holder for the premises, and ensure that policies and procedures are followed. During the pilot, all the Venue Coordinators were the incumbent (and/or the curates) of the church in question, except at St Clement's Ordsall, where the incumbent was on sabbatical. The Venue Coordinators were all DBS checked, and attended a training session before the start of the project.

Each venue was provided with a file including all the necessary policies and procedures, and copies of forms. A mobile phone was also provided for each venue to use during shifts.

### 4.2. Layout and Facilities

Each church had, as a minimum:

- Enough space to accommodate 12 guest beds, and for guests and volunteers to eat together;
- A separate breakout room, for volunteer use only, including space for two beds for overnight volunteers;
- Adequate toilet and washing facilities (only one church has a shower); and
- Locks on doors to areas not in use, including the church space.

All but two of the churches have catering standard kitchens.

The six churches differ widely in their age and layout and in what facilities they have, so each was assessed for risks individually. Bespoke health and safety policies, safeguarding policies, lone working policies, food prep legislation and relevant insurance premiums were also developed individually for each church.

### **4.3. Activities**

Activities varied between churches. All churches offered at least board games and playing cards; some also provided newspapers, and/or a radio; three of the churches had a pool table or other tabletop games, and three had television (for watching DVDs). These activities were popular with guests, and helped to create more interaction between volunteers and guests, including those guests without sufficient English to join in conversations.

As well as the activities, some guests helped to move furniture, and join in with the cooking, under supervision from volunteers.

There were also one-off activities provided by volunteers and guests, including musical “turns” and provision of a laptop with internet access.

### **4.4. Equipment**

Camp beds were bought from project funding, and 14 (12 for guests, two for night volunteers) provided to each venue. The project received several donations of bedding, and the rest was bought.

Camp beds were chosen over mattresses because they could be easily stored, and because they allowed guests some storage space under the bed. The beds were purchased online, and unfortunately a significant number (about 22 out of 100) suffered from a manufacturing fault and broke during the project. These are being replaced by the manufacturer.

Significant amounts of packaged food, toiletries, and clothing were also donated to the project. Donations left at the end of the project were donated to other homeless projects.

The venues were also provided with:

- Towels and flannels;
- Health and safety equipment such as first aid kits, air horns, food temperature probes etc.;
- and
- Basic cleaning supplies.

Various one-off items were provided through the project as needs were identified: for example, food safety signs for some of the kitchens, earplugs for guests (after snoring was identified as a problem) and items of kitchen equipment.

### **4.5. Food**

The initial plan for providing food at the Shelter was for churches to supply soup (either through donations, or buying soup and/or ingredients with funds raised). This was to be supplemented with surplus sandwiches provided by Pret a Manger, which were to be collected from their Cross Street shop at 7pm each evening, on five nights of the week. At the start of the project, soup, bread, milk and other basic food was provided by the project until churches were able to make their own arrangements.

By the end of the scheme only one church was still making use of the Pret donation, which was being collected from the MediaCity branch instead of Cross Street. It became obvious fairly early on in the scheme that collection from Cross Street was impractical because it required two volunteers to be absent for a significant amount of time as the guests were arriving; this was due to the normal peak hour traffic, exacerbated by the various roadworks and Metrolink works in the City Centre. Most of the venues also felt that a hot meal was more appropriate during the winter. The churches made the following arrangements for meals:

- Brunswick Parish Church – made an arrangement for Manchester College catering students to prepare a hot meal at no cost, which was collected frozen and then reheated by volunteers.
- St Cuthbert's, Church of the Apostles, and Resurrection and St Barnabas – had volunteers prepare a hot meal on the premises, either during the evening shift or in advance during the day, using ingredients from FareShare (and FoodCloud, which started part of the way through the project). These churches already belonged to FareShare as part of other community food schemes that they were involved with.
- St Clement's Ordsall – volunteers prepared food in their homes in advance and brought it to the venue, using ingredients bought by the Venue Coordinator with project funds. St Clement's was not able to access FareShare food in the course of the project because its kitchen had not had the required inspection.
- St Thomas' Pendleton – collected sandwiches from Pret a Manger, supplemented by soup made by members of the congregation.

#### **4.6. Laundry**

Each church made their own arrangements for laundry:

- At Brunswick, St Cuthbert's and the Apostles, Venue Coordinators did the laundry themselves. The Miles Platting laundry was done at a local Housing Association's laundrette, so drying facilities were available, but at Brunswick the laundry was dried in the sports hall, which was less than ideal.
- At St Clement's and St Thomas', the laundry was done by a rota of members of the congregation.
- The Church of the Resurrection, who already have links with Manchester City FC, were able to have their laundry done by City's contractors at no charge.

#### **4.7. Feedback and Issues with Venues**

The guests found that the venue locations were accessible on foot or by bus from the City Centre. St Clement's Ordsall proved quite hard for some guests to find, but they were able to call the venue (the number being provided on the information sheet) for directions.

All the venues were able to accommodate 12 guests, though at Brunswick Parish Church the capacity of the sleeping area was only 10, so 12 was only achievable by swapping the lounge/dining area with the sleeping area, which was not ideal. Apart from Church of the Apostles, all the venues would have trouble accommodating more than 12 guests comfortably.

The only one of the venues which has not been satisfactory for the project is St Cuthbert's. The size of the space meant that it was very expensive to heat, and was still not really warm enough. The kitchen is also not up to catering standard, though this is not an essential requirement. However, the PCC of this church are very keen to stay in the scheme, and so the incumbent is now working to improve the performance of the boiler, improve insulation as well as potentially converting the disabled toilet into a wet room.

Sharing the Church of the Apostles with the Food 4 All project on Sunday evenings was also not ideal. It meant that guests couldn't have access to their beds until around 7.30, and the large number of people coming and going made it more difficult to keep an eye on guests where necessary. Although the volunteers from both projects dealt with it well, the Venue Coordinator said that she felt that she was short-changing both projects by not being able to give either her full attention.

The kitchen at St Clement's is also not up to catering standard, but their volunteers were able to prepare food at home and heat it up at the venue. If the church was to apply for FareShare food next year, they would need to be inspected.

Meetings were held with all the Venue Coordinators to get their feedback and suggestions for improvement. All felt very positive about the project overall, but were able to offer many constructive suggestions for improving next year's shelter. The main issues raised were:

### ***Congregation and Community***

- Most felt that the project had helped to build links with their local community, as local people who were not churchgoers got involved. However some were disappointed that a lot of their volunteers came from areas a long way from their church.
- Some also found that the project energised their congregation to get involved, including members who had not volunteered before. However in one case, it was reported that the congregation seemed to resent the project, and feel that it was taking up too much of their clergy's attention.

### ***Volunteers***

- They were impressed with the commitment and hard work of the volunteers, and that both Christians and those of other and no faith showed such care and hospitality to the guests.
- In some cases, the project helped volunteers who have their own support needs to contribute and to build their own skills and confidence.
- It was seen as a good thing for the guests to have a mixture of male and female volunteers.
- One venue was concerned that people who volunteered for the shelter might do this instead of volunteering for the other projects (youth groups, coffee mornings etc.) which run at their church.
- All acknowledged the wide range of motivations for volunteers which had to be taken into account, and the particular challenges of working with volunteers. Some felt that training in managing volunteers would be useful.
- There was some concern about boundaries between guests and some volunteers blurring as the project went on, not in terms of personal safety but regarding possible perceptions of favouritism.
- Incidents where volunteers had made decisions without consulting the shift manager (e.g. letting guests in after 8pm) were also mentioned, and the possibility that volunteer training about boundaries and responsibilities might need to be refreshed or updated as the project

went on. Some felt that it would be best to have a first aider on each shift, and that ideally more volunteers would be trained for this before the shelter started again.

- All those who had an ex-guest as a volunteer felt that it was important to develop a policy or guidelines to ensure that this can work well, and to include this possibility in the training for other volunteers.
- All were concerned that there weren't enough overnight volunteers, which meant that they either had to do night shifts themselves, or had to allow for the possibility, which sometimes had an impact on their other responsibilities. A shortage of overnight volunteers also meant that those who did volunteer got less sleep. One venue suggested that, if necessary, agency staff could be paid to cover overnight shifts.
- Suggestions for recruiting more volunteers included:
  - Better initial publicity (they felt that not all churches were reached by Crux or email bulletins from the Diocese);
  - Making more use of students, including having a stall at the Volunteering Fair in Freshers' Week; and
  - Having some volunteers (e.g. retired people) who would take on the night shift every night for a week or two.

All were keen on the idea of "twinning" with churches (of any denomination) or other faith/community venues as a source of volunteers and resources, especially when building on existing links (or those created as part of the pilot project). Businesses could also "adopt" a particular venue as a focus for their contributions.

### ***Venue Coordinator Role***

There was a general agreement that the project had been extremely hard work for the Venue Coordinators, and had had an impact on their other responsibilities, mainly because they had also been fulfilling the role of Shift Manager on one or more regular shifts. Some VCs had been able to delegate the Shift Manager role to volunteers as the project went on and they gained in confidence, and most agreed that they would be able to identify potential Shift Managers from the existing volunteers.

Most felt that more information about the Booth Centre and its work would have been useful to them, as well as to volunteers, especially because some of the guests expressed dissatisfaction with the services provided by the Booth Centre. One venue said that they had expected the night shelter to be more integrated with the guests' daytime support. They were keen on the idea of offering more in-depth training about this to existing volunteers. Some would also have liked more information about the wider strategic work going on (including the Diocese and the City Council) to tackle homelessness in Manchester and Salford.

### ***Venue Organisation***

One venue said that they felt it was necessary to set up the venue (with the help of other volunteers) before the evening volunteers arrived at 5.30. However the venues who weren't able to do this still managed the setting up well.

Most venues made their own arrangements for food, rather than collecting sandwiches from Pret a Manger, which they felt was better for the guests, but created quite a lot of work; even when the food was being provided, VCs had to organise and collect it.



Laundry was also a significant task, even when it was being done by others. However one VC (who did the laundry herself each week) found the time in the launderette invaluable for meeting people from the local community! The venue which had their laundry done by Manchester City FC were very happy with this arrangement, but weren't sure whether it could be extended to include other venues.

All venues agreed that the camp beds had not been robust enough, and probably not comfortable enough, though they appreciated their advantages in terms of being stored easily and provided space for guests to keep their belongings.

### ***Project Organisation***

All referred to the additional work that would be required to run the shelter for 6 months in future, particularly around Christmas and Holy Week. There was a lot of variation in how easily venues were able to fit the shelter around their other activities (including their responsibilities to schools), but in all cases this would be made more challenging if the shelter ran for longer. One venue mentioned the importance of ensuring that the building remained, above all, a church.

Some venues were concerned that not everyone had filled in the Daily Logs regularly, and that useful information about guests (for example health problems, or particular items that they needed) was not passed on. They suggested that direct contact between venues might sometimes work better for particular pieces of information.

They also mentioned that information which they had about volunteers (e.g. who is always late, who is unwilling/unable to do heavy work, who has a particular useful skill) didn't always get passed on to the Project Coordinator. They felt that it was important for the Coordinator to have overall responsibility for organising volunteer rotas, but that this sort of input from VCs would enable them to do this better.

## 5. Guests

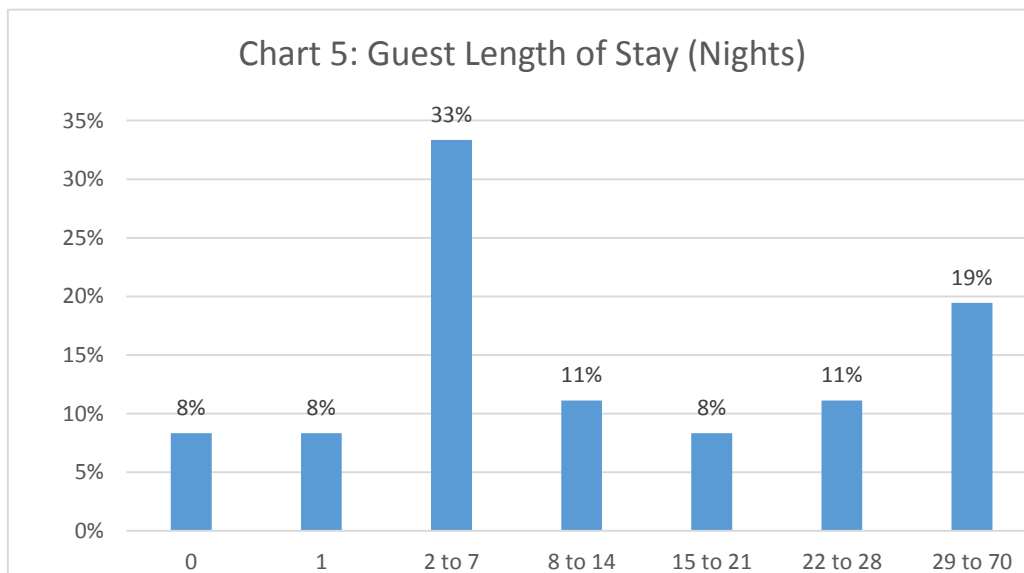
All GMWNS guests were referred by the Booth Centre. They were assessed to ensure that they were at low risk of mental health, alcohol and drug problems, and of violent behaviour. Referral forms with each guest's details were given to the venues via the Project Coordinator.

Guests were given an information sheet showing the location of the venue, contact details, and how to get there on foot and by public transport. This sheet included the Community Code which the guests were expected to follow, and instructions to return to the Booth Centre the following day. If they did not return to the Booth Centre the next day, they were not allowed to return to the shelter that evening. The only exceptions to this were if they had permission in advance; for example, one guest had a number of appointments at a number of venues across Manchester and would not have time to go to the Booth Centre as well, so these appointments were verified and permission was given.

Information about guests' attendance and behaviour were fed back to the Booth Centre via the Project Coordinator.

A total of 733 bed spaces were made available over the ten weeks of the shelter. Of these, 619 (84%) were filled. The spaces not filled were due to guests not attending the shelter after they had been referred.

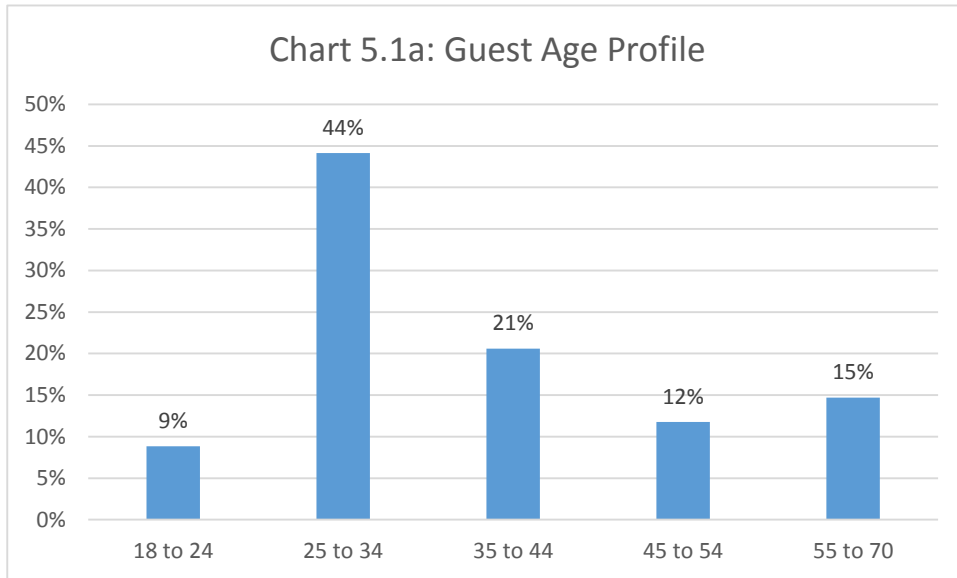
36 individual guests were referred to the Night Shelter. Of these, three did not come to the Night Shelter at all. The number of nights which guests stayed is shown in Chart 5.



## 5.1. Guest Demographics

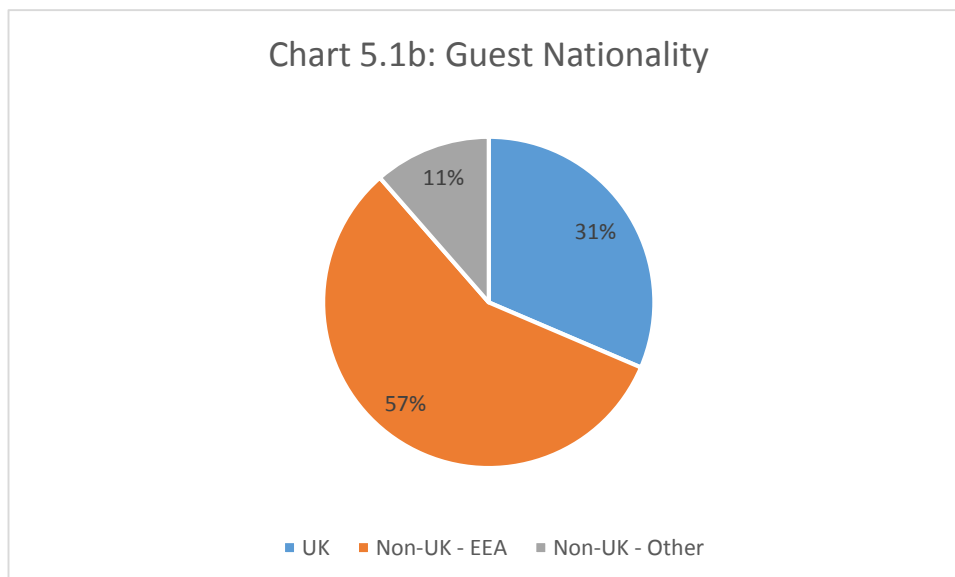
### Age

The age of guests is shown in Chart 5.1a. Almost half the guests were between 25 and 34, with the remaining guests spread fairly evenly between other age groups.



### Nationality

The nationality of guests is shown in Chart 5.1b.



Over half the guests (20) were from the EEA, with 13 different nationalities represented; the largest single nationalities within this group were Polish, Romanian and Lithuanian.

The Council shelters are only able to accept EEA migrants if they have a return date to their country of origin, or if they are considered to have a good chance of finding work. The opening of the GMWNS meant that the Booth Centre had somewhere to refer those people who did not fit these categories. Those of them who have found full-time work will now be eligible for Council shelters and other help with housing. It is also worth noting that a significant proportion of the EEA migrants who came to the GMWNS found work or returned to their country of origin, and the Booth Centre is positive that these outcomes would not have happened if it was not for the 24 hour support provided to them.

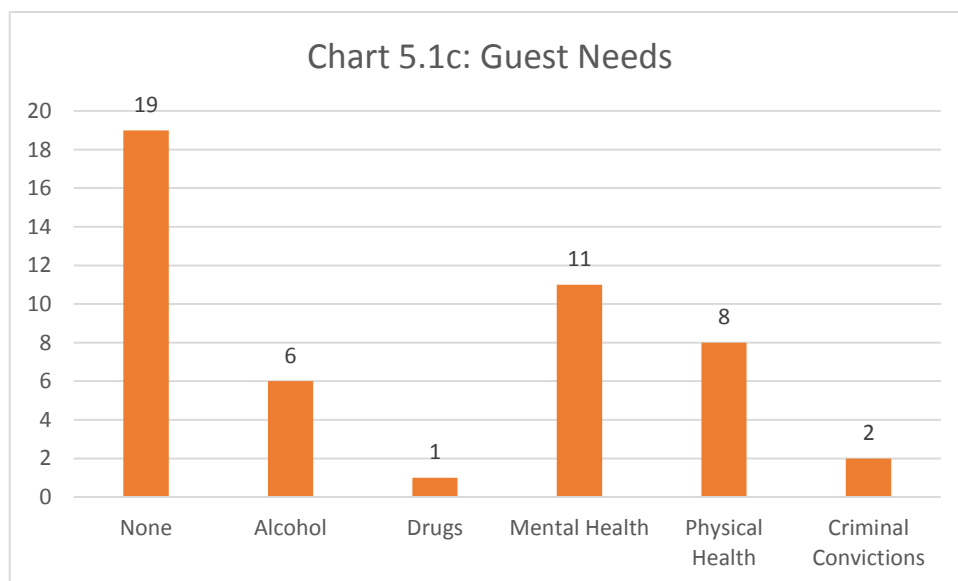
Four guests were from outside the EEA. Of these, two had leave to remain in the UK and two were failed asylum seekers. Normally the failed asylum seekers would be accommodated by the Boaz Trust, however both these guests had been excluded from Boaz because of their previous behaviour. One of these guests was also excluded from the Night Shelter for drug taking, but the other's behaviour at the shelter caused no concern.

### ***Previous Situations***

Of the 36 guests, 14 had previously been accommodated in Council night shelters at Hulme and Harpurhey. They were referred to GMWNS because the Booth Centre felt that it would be a more appropriate setting for them. The remaining 22 had been rough sleeping before coming to the Night Shelter.

### ***Needs and Risks***

Although guests were assessed as being at low risk of drug, alcohol and mental health problems, many of them had support needs. As part of the referral process and CCNS data collection, these needs were categorised as shown in Chart 5.1c. Nearly half of the guests had no identified needs.



Six guests had more than one identified need; in all these cases, physical health was one of the needs.

Two guests had criminal convictions for assault, however these convictions were over 15 years old in both cases. One of these guests also had a recent conviction for burglary. One guest was a domestic violence perpetrator, but had no convictions.

## 5.2. Guest Behaviour and Incidents

The vast majority of the time, guests enjoyed their time at the shelter, showed great respect for the volunteers and other guests, were happy to comply with the rules, and expressed gratitude for what was being provided. Some were slightly anxious during their first night or two, but as their stay progressed they became visibly more relaxed, and seemed to feel "at home" in the shelters.

Over the ten weeks of the shelter, two incidents occurred which required completion of an Incident Form and resulted in the guest involved being permanently excluded from the shelter:

- On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, a guest took a legal high (Spice) in the toilets at the venue. He vomited and collapsed, and was looked after by two volunteers who were familiar with the effects of the drug through their work at the Booth Centre. He had recovered by the morning, but at the next night's shelter was found to have an empty Spice packet on him.
- On January 31<sup>st</sup>, a guest who had been allowed into the shelter drunk argued with a volunteer (who he already knew from the Booth Centre) and threatened him.

There were also several more minor incidents:

- A guest was also not re-referred to the shelter after January 24<sup>th</sup>, because he had come to the shelter drunk and was being loud and slightly aggressive. The situation was exacerbated by the presence of another drunk guest (who was permanently excluded the following week).
- A guest was excluded from the shelter for one night on January 17<sup>th</sup> because he was drinking outside the shelter.
- A guest came to the shelter with a bottle of wine; he was allowed to stay after the wine had been locked in the office.

There were also some incidents of sexually suggestive language from a guest directed at volunteers, and one of racist language between guests.

All these incidents were dealt with calmly and sensibly by Shift Managers and volunteers, in some cases with support from the Project Coordinator.

It is notable that all but one of the significant incidents involved alcohol, and that all took place at the weekend, when there is no daytime provision for guests. At the beginning of the project, volunteers were keen not to exclude guests, and gave some drunk guests the benefit of the doubt. After these incidents, volunteers became stricter about letting guests in drunk, and after discussions, the Booth Centre made sure that only one guest at a time with possible alcohol issues was referred to the shelter.

A positive aspect was that when, after the incident on 31<sup>st</sup> January, the volunteers apologised to the guests for the incident, the guests showed great understanding, and concern for the wellbeing of the volunteers.

### 5.3. Feedback

Guest feedback was collected in conversations with volunteers and at the Booth Centre during the project. A meeting was also held at the Booth Centre where users of all the night shelters (GMWNS, Council shelters and Cornerstones) were invited to give discuss their experiences.

We received two letters from guests thanking the volunteers, which are included in Appendix 1 of this report.

Feedback from guests was overwhelmingly positive, especially when compared to the Council shelters.

*“I like [the] project because [of] good people and good food.”*

*“I will miss it here, it is a good place.”*

*“[I liked] the total degree of support and hospitality”*

*“Very comfy – definitely the best shelter.”*

*“I felt very good – very good people and very good community.”*

*“Like chalk and cheese compared to other shelters...perfect.”*

The most valued aspects of the project were:

- The longer hours of the project compared to the Council shelters

The guests greatly appreciated being able to come to the shelter early in the evening (6.30pm, compared to 9pm for the Council shelters). At the feedback meeting the most common complaint about the Council shelters was that guests had to leave very early (7.30am) and had a significant amount of time to wait before daytime provision was available. GMWNS guests appreciated being giving breakfast and being able to stay in the shelter until 8.30, when they could go straight to the Booth Centre, which opens at 9am.

- The feeling of safety

This enabled guests to get a good night’s sleep. The lack of safety, and instances of theft and violence, was the main reason which people gave for not going to the Council shelters. Some people said that they felt safer sleeping rough, especially when they could sleep in view of CCTV cameras, or away from the City Centre.

- The welcome and “family feeling” provided by the volunteers

Guests said that this made them feel “more human”. The relationships which built up when guests stayed for a significant amount of time meant that volunteers were able to do small things for them, for example helping them get a mobile phone, and giving them some cold

sore cream. These relationships also meant that shelter volunteers were able to adapt the shelter rules to help guests where appropriate; for example, letting guests arrive late when they were working.

Guests greatly appreciated being given dinner and breakfast, and were very complimentary about the food that was provided.

They also felt that having some volunteers who had been homeless in the past was valuable, because it meant that they could talk to someone who understood their position.

Initially, some of the guests found it difficult to deal with the shelter being at a different venue every night, however those guests who stayed more than a week adapted to the system, and at the end of the project we only had one complaint about it. The Booth Centre felt that guests were willing to put up with this relative inconvenience because they knew that they would be made welcome and looked after when they got there. The main disadvantage to the system which guests identified was not being able to leave their luggage at the shelter during the day, though as the project progressed some venues did allow this.

It was clear that guests appreciated the chance to relax, chat, watch TV and play games with the volunteers. However, both volunteers and guests felt that they could have been able to use this time more profitably, in getting help with:

- learning English;
- looking for work;
- finding permanent accommodation;
- claiming benefits; and
- everyday tasks such as opening bank accounts, registering with GPs etc.

These services are all provided by the Booth Centre, however, to quote a volunteer, “Some guests have been disgruntled by the lack of help they feel they are receiving from the Booth Centre.” Their comments have been passed on to the Booth Centre.

## **5.4. Outcomes**

### ***Housing***

The following outcomes relate to the guests’ housing situations when they left the shelter (or at the end of the shelter).

Of the 33 guests who came to the shelter, two have not returned to the Booth Centre, and we have no information about their current situation. We know of outcomes for the remaining 31, which have been reported to us by the Booth Centre:

- 2 moved to private rented accommodation;
- 2 moved to accommodation which is provided as part of a job;
- 2 were provided with Bed and Breakfast accommodation by the Council;
- 7 were given places in hostels;
- 6 moved to “sofa surfing” with friends or family;

- 1 moved to a Council shelter;
- 6 returned to their country of origin (within the EEA); and
- 2 returned to a Local Authority where they have a local connection (and are therefore eligible for help with housing).

This leaves 6 guests who had to return to rough sleeping when they left the project. These are:

- the two failed asylum seekers, who cannot be accommodated by the Boaz Trust, as referred to in Section 5.1;
- three EEA migrants who are not eligible for Council shelters unless they are able to find full-time work; and
- one guest who is entitled to Council support with housing because of his disability, however he is unwilling to engage with the Council because of previous bad experiences with them.

All these guests are still attending the Booth Centre during the day.

At the date of publication of this report, one of the EEA migrants in this remaining group had been successful in finding a job with accommodation outside Manchester.

### ***Employment***

Two of our guests already had work when they came to the shelter.

Eight guests, all of them EEA nationals, found full-time employment during their time at the shelter. This means that they become eligible for benefits, including housing benefit, which can enable them to find accommodation. In two cases, accommodation was provided as part of the job, and in one further case his employment meant that he was able to get a private rented flat.

Two further guests found casual/ temporary work.

As the project progressed, shift managers were able (at their discretion) to let guests arrive late if their working hours made it necessary. Volunteers also helped guests to ensure that they were up in time for work, and were able to have breakfast before they left even if this was before “official” breakfast hours. This made it easier for guests to stay in employment.

### ***Volunteering***

One of our guests returned to the project as a volunteer, after he had been found a place in a hostel.



## 6. Volunteers

Volunteers for GMWNS were recruited from across the Diocese. Advertising was through:

- The churches involved;
- The Diocesan website and *Crux* magazine;
- A GMWNS website and Twitter feed; and
- Radio interviews with the Bishop and with one of the Venue Coordinators.

Volunteers were also recruited through Manchester and Salford Volunteer Centres, and the University of Manchester.

They were invited to volunteer for one or more weekly shifts:

Evening – 5.30-10pm

Night – 9.30pm – 6.30am

Morning – 6-9.30am

They could also volunteer to support the shelter by preparing food off site, doing laundry, or fundraising.

We had a very high standard of volunteers, from many different backgrounds, with a wide range of experience and social and personal skills. The vast majority were extremely committed to the project, and many took extra shifts, invited friends to volunteer, and fundraised for the project.

Our feedback from volunteers suggests that almost all of them had a positive experience of volunteering, and word of mouth from current volunteers and positive feedback is likely to be key in encouraging more people to volunteer for future years.

### 6.1. Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

#### ***Recruitment***

Before the shelter opened on 11 January, there were 154 enquiries from individuals about volunteering. Of these, 113 registered as volunteers, with 41 enquiries not resulting in registration.

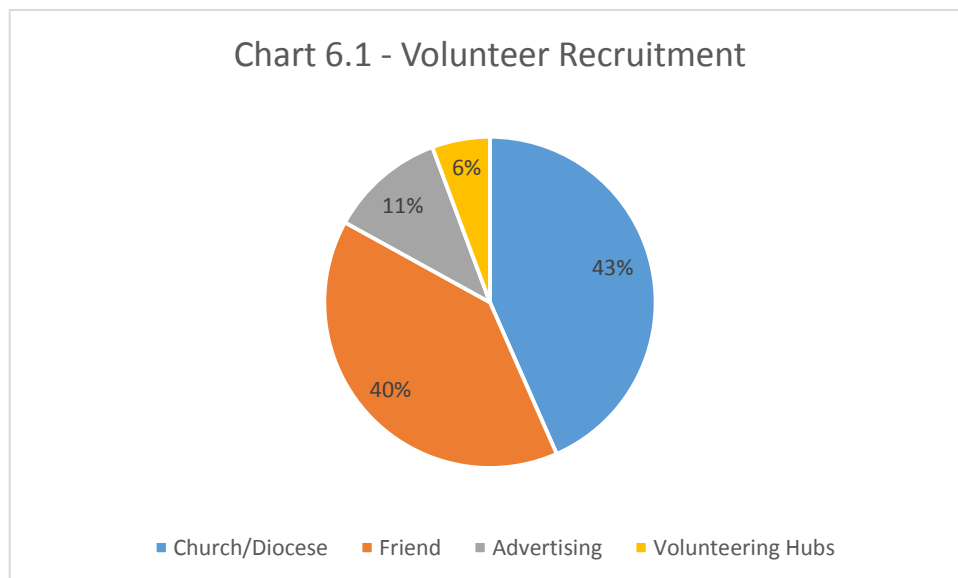
New volunteers came forward throughout the project, mainly through word of mouth recommendations from existing volunteers. By the end of the project there had been 186 registered volunteers.

Volunteers who only helped with cooking or laundry off-site were not formally registered. In all cases these were recruited through the churches involved.

Communication with almost all volunteers was easy by text and email, however when recruiting and communicating with volunteers it was important to include those not on email or mobile phone.

Chart 6.1 shows how volunteers heard about the project.

Of the volunteers who completed our feedback form, 41% had heard about the project through the Church or Diocese. A further 38% found out about it from a friend, or through their existing volunteering. Only 11% found out about it through the project website or Twitter feed, and 6% (3 volunteers) came through volunteering hubs such as MCV or Community Central.



### ***Training***

The volunteers who had been recruited at the start of the project were invited to attend one of two training sessions (daytime or evening), delivered by Emma Neill of Housing Justice and lasting approximately 1 ½ hours. This introduced volunteers to the project’s ethos and its practical aspects, and covered homeless policy, personal safety, and conflict management.

Volunteers who were recruited after this were given the same presentation by the Project Coordinator, in groups or singly, before their first shift.

### ***Commitment***

The majority of volunteers committed themselves to one shift per week, either for the whole 10 weeks of the project or for the majority of it, though some undertook as many as three or four shifts per week. Some volunteers were unable to commit to a regular shift because of other commitments, but volunteered when they were able, or were available for the Project Coordinator to call on as needed. We also had a several volunteers who were nurses (or similar), and so the Project Coordinator worked with them individually to fit their volunteering around their shift patterns.

### ***Coverage***

We did not have enough night-time and morning volunteers to meet the levels recommended by Housing Justice and to allow for volunteer absence, and in fact barely had enough to enable the shelter to operate. There was too much reliance on a small “core” of overnight volunteers to call on in case of absence, and the Project Coordinator did four overnight shifts in the course of the project because no-one else was available to cover for them. This is not sustainable if the shelter grows.

Having only three volunteers on a night shift, rather than four, also meant that volunteers had less sleep, which made it still less likely that people would volunteer if they had commitments the following day.

### ***Retention***

Over the life of the project, eight volunteers didn't arrive at their first assigned shift and didn't respond to follow-up contact. Three volunteers initially dropped out temporarily because of illness, and did not return or respond to contact.

A further 18 volunteers formally withdrew from volunteering before the end of the project. The reasons given were:

- Illness or family illness (6)
- Work or study commitments (6)
- Childcare problems or family commitments (3)
- Not specified (2)

Only one volunteer stated that she had withdrawn from the project, after one shift, because she hadn't enjoyed the experience.

### ***Absence***

A total of 20 volunteer shifts were lost due to planned holidays.

63 further shifts were lost to other volunteer absence. Reasons given were:

- Unexpected commitments (29)
- Illness (22)
- Work (8)
- Snow (4)

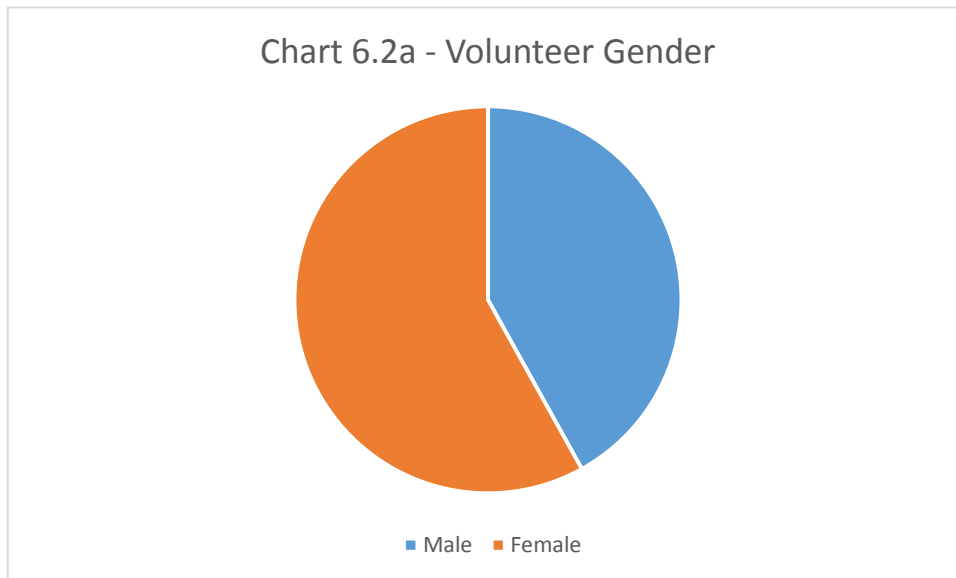
Assuming the entire project consisted of 980 volunteer shifts, this only amounts to 2% of shifts lost to holidays and 6% lost to other absences. However these absences sometimes had a significant impact because of the lack of overnight and morning volunteers, as discussed above.

Almost all volunteers gave appropriate notice if they were not able to come to their shift.

## 6.2. Volunteer Demographics

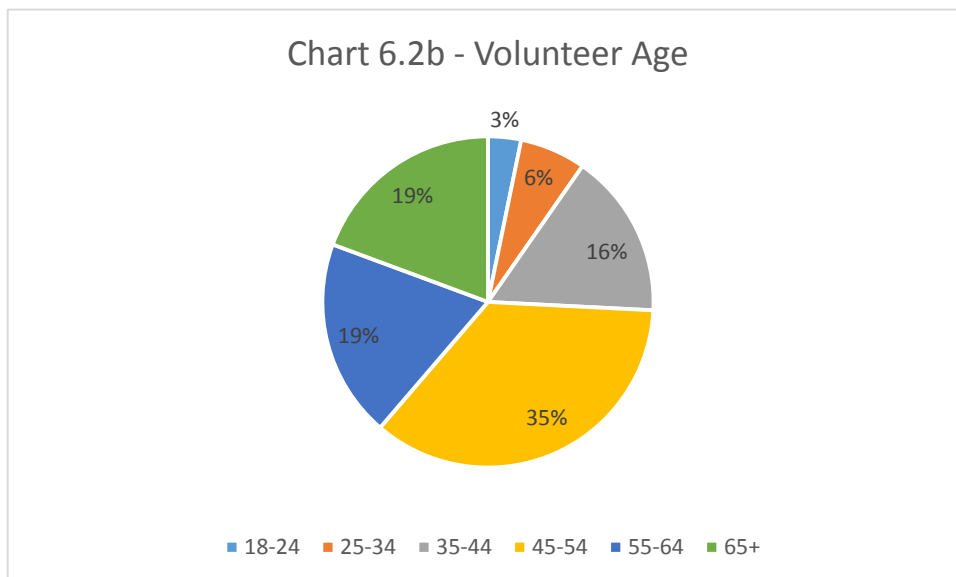
### Gender

Chart 6.2a shows that 42% of volunteers were men, and 58% were women.



### Age

Chart 6.2b shows the age of the volunteers. 90% of the volunteers were over 35, with almost 75% over 45. The largest age group represented was 45-54.



### ***Ethnicity***

About 70% of the volunteers who completed the monitoring form identified themselves as White British or English. Other ethnic groups represented in small numbers were White Irish, Asian British, Other White, Mixed, and Arab.

### ***Religion***

About 50% of volunteers who completed the monitoring form identified themselves as Christian. One volunteer identified themselves as Muslim, one as a Buddhist, and one as Other. 16% said they had no religion, and 22% did not state their religion.

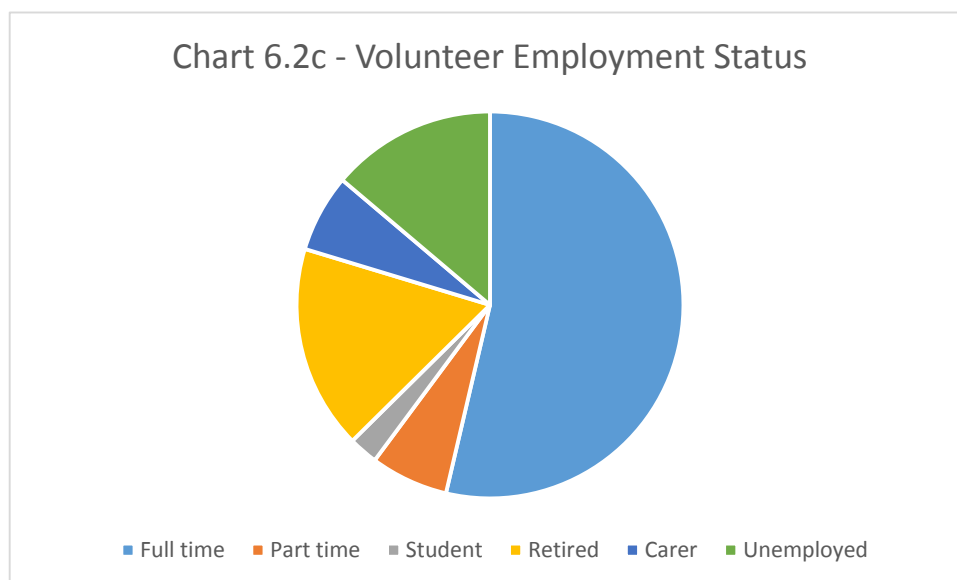
### ***Previous Experience and Skills***

18% of volunteers had previous experience of working with homeless people (voluntary or paid)

Volunteers had a wide variety of useful practical skills and experience, including social care and medical, counselling and support, music and cooking. Most importantly, they brought the personal skills needed to make guests feel valued and listened to.

### ***Employment***

Chart 6.2e shows the employment status of volunteers. Because the Shelter shifts were outside normal working hours, a large number of workers (53% full time, 7% part time) were able to volunteer for evening shifts.



There were also significant numbers of retired (17%) and unemployed (14%) volunteers. It should be noted that these groups include people who already do a significant amount of volunteer work and have other demands on their time. The majority of overnight volunteers came from these two groups, which is important given the shortage of volunteers for these shifts.

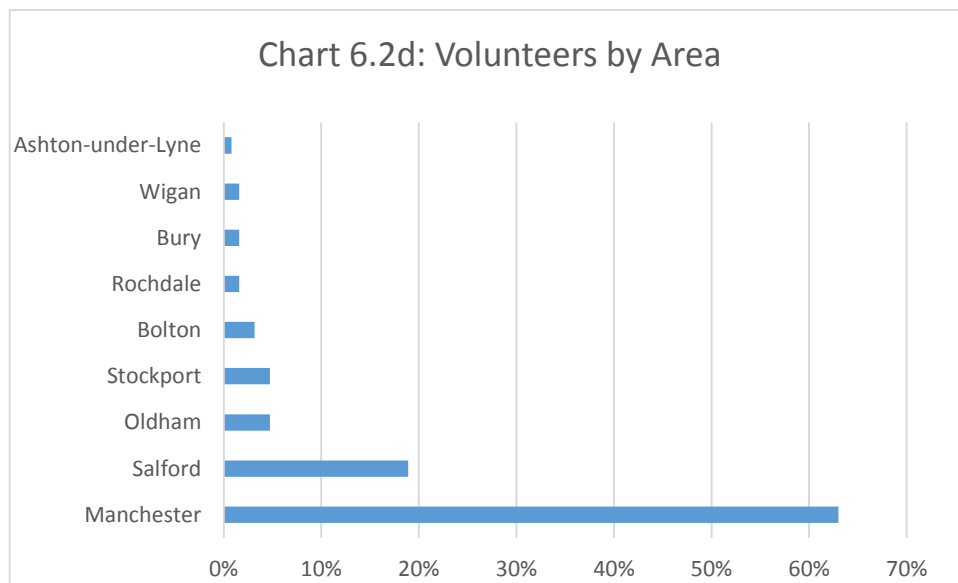
It is worth noting that overnight shifts do not really fit in with the lifestyle of people who work fulltime and this is one of the contributing factors to the difficulty in recruiting overnight volunteers.

4% of volunteers are full-time carers (almost all for children) – again, the fact that the Shelter shifts were in the evening made it possible for these volunteers to take part.

Only 2% of the volunteers were students, in spite of the University of Manchester being included in our recruitment. This needs to be addressed in next year’s volunteer recruitment, as students are likely to be more flexible than many workers and may be able to take on overnight and morning shifts. We intend to have a stand at the Manchester University Volunteering Fair in 2016, which is held at the beginning of autumn term, and we hope that this will help in attracting additional student volunteers.

### **Area**

Chart 6.2d shows the areas from which volunteers came. As could be expected, the majority came from Manchester, with the next largest group coming from Salford. The volunteers who travelled furthest (a married couple who also volunteer at other overnight homeless projects) came from Hindley in Wigan.



### **6.3. Volunteering by Former Guests**

During the pilot project, one former guest returned to volunteer at the shelter after he had found a place in a hostel, for the last four weeks of the shelter.

He volunteered at four of the venues. The Venue Coordinators involved were willing to allow this because they were keen to support guests, however they did raise some concerns, because there had been some minor problems with this guest’s behaviour. We discussed this with him and agreed that he would be considered to be a “probationary” volunteer. It was also agreed that he would not

be considered as a volunteer in terms of the “no lone working” policy, and that he would not have unsupervised access to the locked rooms within the venue.

In fact, no problems arose with this guest’s volunteering, though the VCs agreed that his presence had created an extra responsibility for them, and his presence as a volunteer did not seem to bother the other guests. However, he did drop out before the end of the project.

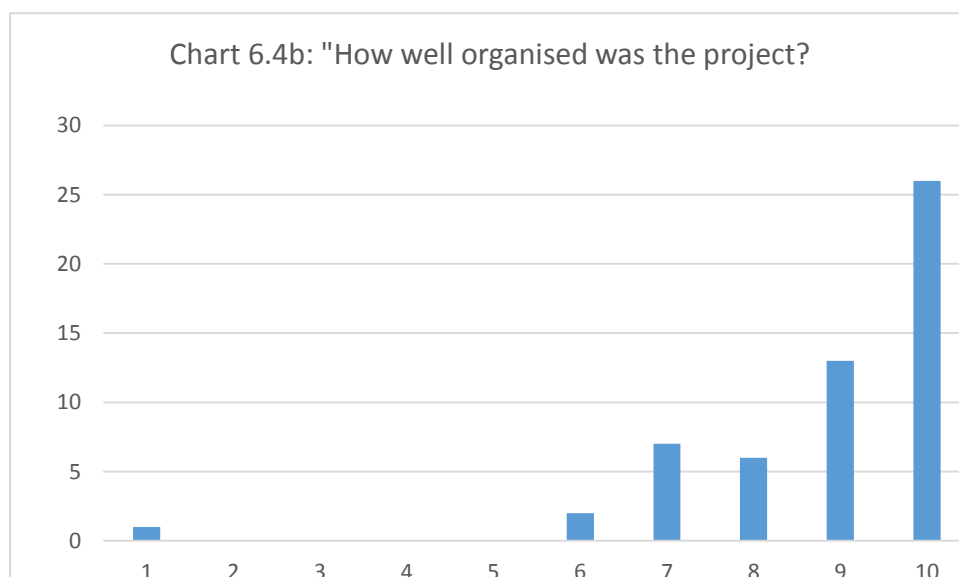
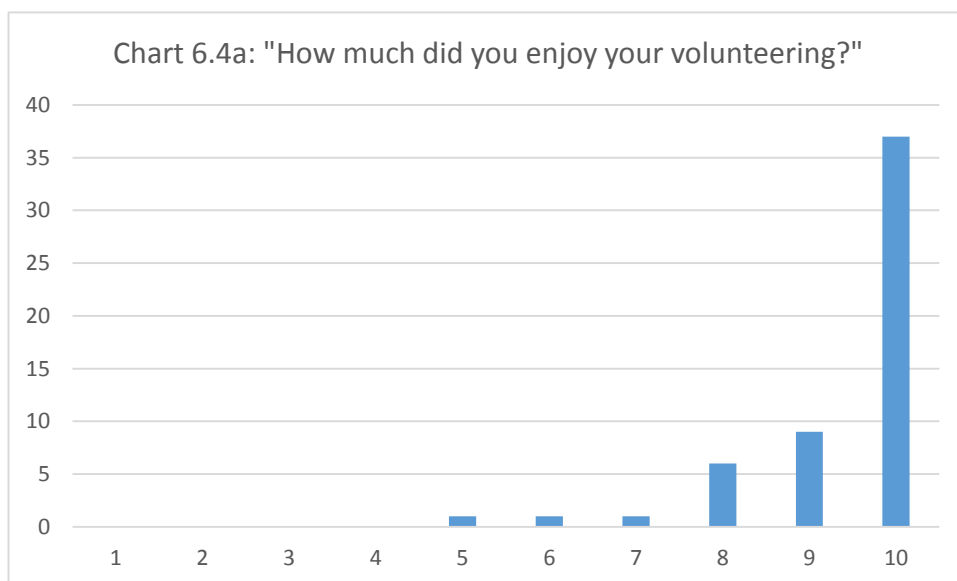
#### 6.4. Volunteer Outcomes and Feedback

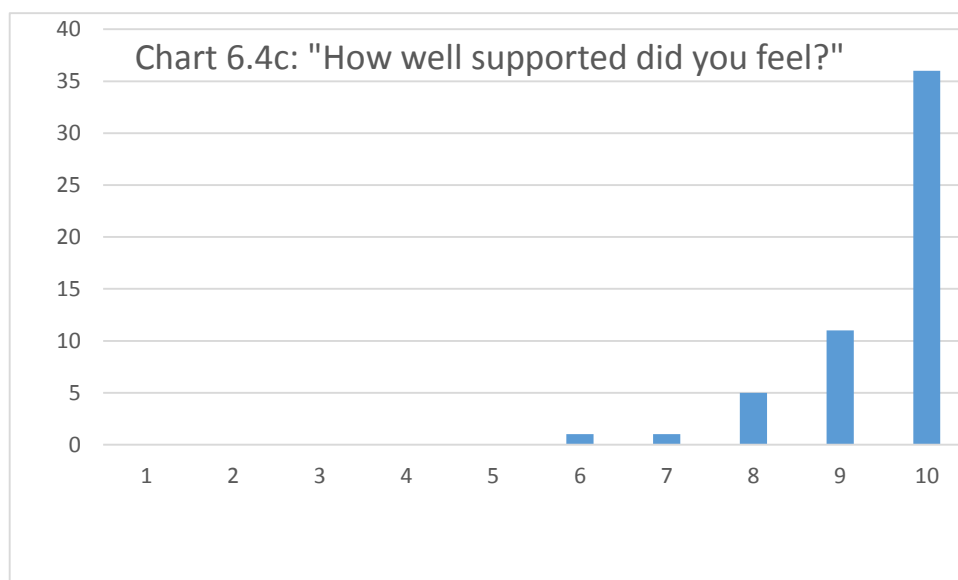
The project involved an estimated total of **5,700** volunteer hours, including non-shift volunteering such as cooking, cleaning and laundry. The monetary value of this time, based on the English median wage in 2015 (£13.20ph) is **£75,240**.

##### **Feedback**

We have collected volunteer feedback through standard forms, and through informal conversations. Almost without exception, the feedback we have had from our volunteers has been positive.

We used a scale of 1 (not at all) to 10 (very much) to rate volunteers’ experience of the shelter. The ratings given are shown in Chart 6.4.





These charts demonstrate that the majority of volunteers enjoyed the project, felt well supported, and found it well organised. Their suggestions for improvements to the project are discussed below.

All the volunteers who responded said that they were interested in volunteering again for next year's shelter.

### **Volunteer Comments**

Volunteers' expectations of the project were exceeded in many cases:

*"Much lower key than expected."*

*"I was a little nervous about it but it was so relaxed"*

*"More relaxed than I expected"*

*"I was worried that the atmosphere might be awkward, but this was never the case."*

They found the experience of spending time with the guests was easier than expected, and in some cases it challenged their preconceptions of homeless people:

*"If I am honest, I found the guests easier to support than I imagined."*

*"I was a bit worried about the guests before I came but was surprised (hate to admit it) to see that they are just normal people like me who need some assistance."*

*"[I appreciated] understanding why people are in the situations they are, and being more open minded about why"*



*"It was nice to realise how "normal" homeless people were."*

*"I learnt a lot about people's different situations and met a lot of good people"*

*"I met some really lovely guests who were very friendly and incredibly interesting people."*

*"It opened my eyes to issues faced by those who are homeless."*

Volunteers enjoyed building relationships with guests over time, and seeing guests support each other:

*"[I enjoyed] watching the bonds build between the guests and seeing real friendships forming"*

*"It was nice to see people being people and focusing on commonalities"*

Volunteers were proud to have been able to help the guests:

*"[The best thing was] just seeing the guests relax, having fun and hearing their laughter."*

*"[I enjoyed] the knowledge that the guests were not sleeping rough and they spent the night in a very comfortable place."*

*"I enjoyed being able to help and support guests in a small way"*

*"I really feel I've made a difference to some of the young men"*

One volunteer commented on how much more rewarding this volunteering was than doing a soup run, where she was providing homeless people with food and conversation but then having to leave them on the street, which she found quite distressing.

They greatly enjoyed seeing guests' progress:

*"It's great when people don't turn up and you find out it is because they have moved on and managed to get on their feet."*

*"It has been sad to see them go but great to hear that they no longer need our support."*

They also enjoyed meeting other volunteers:

*"Loved meeting...the other volunteers, found out about why they volunteer and about their church."*

They found the experience personally fulfilling:

*"I feel so enriched by this experience"*

*"Meeting the guests and other volunteers has been a humbling experience."*

*"This has definitely changed me and how I look at people"*

The majority of volunteers felt that the project was well organised:

*“This is the most well organised volunteering that I have been involved in.”*

*“Well organised and well run.”*

They also felt that they had been well supported:

*“I felt confident in the roles I was given to do”.*

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

Volunteers were keen to offer suggestions for how the shelter could be improved. The project’s response to these is detailed in Section 8.

The majority of volunteers (82%) said that they found the training suitable and helpful. This included those who had been trained at their first shift. The following comments were made, some of which contradict each other:

- The training overemphasised potential risks;
- Volunteers need to be aware of possible problems;
- The training could have been in more depth;
- A volunteer didn’t feel prepared for drug/alcohol problems that she encountered (see Section 5.2)

Many volunteers echoed the views of guests, that guests would appreciate help with English, finding jobs and accommodation, etc. They wanted to find out more about the Booth Centre and its work, and to be able to pass on information to guests, such as alternative shelters for guests who were excluded from the GMWNS.

They also made the following suggestions about venue organisation and services:

- Better washing facilities;
- Allow guests to come in earlier;
- Use the same church several nights running;
- Coordinate meals to avoid duplication on subsequent evenings;
- More comfortable beds;
- Involve the guests in the preparation of food;
- More shoes and clothes, toiletries etc. for guests.

The suggestions made by the largest number of volunteers involved extending the shelter, either for a longer time or to admit more guests (including women). Many volunteers also suggested that providing somewhere for guests to go at weekends was very important.

Suggestions regarding the organisation of volunteers included:

- Better advertising to attract more volunteers and donations; many of our volunteers only heard about the project relatively late. One suggestion was to assign communication champion volunteers to promote the project through social media.

- Recruiting volunteers with expertise in areas such as employment and benefits, or IT and ESOL teaching, who could help the guests and teach them skills.
- Rotation of volunteer jobs/roles, so that particular jobs aren't done by the same volunteer/s each week (some volunteers felt that jobs had been assigned for the duration of the project, rather than for each shift);
- Having experienced volunteers "buddy" with new volunteers. (This was suggested by the one volunteer who left the project, after one shift, because she hadn't enjoyed it. At that time it wasn't possible to do this because none of our volunteers were experienced.)
- Recruiting more overnight volunteers, including the possibility of paying for overnight cover. More than one volunteer who had covered all three shifts felt that this was too long, however others felt that it was OK.

### **Outcomes**

Many good relationships were built between volunteers over the course of the project. Volunteers who have experience working with other homeless projects were able to share their experience, and build links between their organisations.

Many volunteers asked about other volunteering opportunities after the end of the project, a list of which has been compiled and distributed by the Project Coordinator.

Several volunteers are attending the Booth Centre's regular volunteer training (which covers topics including accommodation, drug and alcohol awareness, EEA migrants, and signposting) to help them improve the service they can offer to guests at next year's shelter.

We are also looking at how we might develop a funding stream that will allow for us to access the extensive range of training offered by Homeless Link.

Most of the volunteers who are regular churchgoers have said that they will be "spreading the word" at their churches to encourage others to volunteer and fundraise for next year's shelter.

One volunteer is undertaking a fundraising walk along the Great Wall of China in October 2016, to raise money for the two charities she volunteers for, one of which is GMWNS. A friend of another volunteer is undertaking a charity run in aid of GMWNS, and another has persuaded her hairdresser to hold a fundraising day.

At least one volunteer, who is not a native English speaker, said that her English had improved as a result of volunteering.

At several of the churches, members of their congregation or community who have support needs of their own were able to volunteer with supervision. In particular, Brunswick Parish Church involved several people from their daytime drop-in sessions:

*"For me one of the things that stands out from the project is the way in which some of the people who attend our daily drop-in got involved as volunteers. They are without work and more importantly much work experience so being engaged in project like this has built their confidence in many ways. One volunteer who has been learning Russian had the chance to speak to a native Russian speaker for the first time which he found extremely enjoyable and encouraging. Because some of our volunteers lacked experience of working with homeless guests we arranged for them to concentrate their efforts to preparing the food, serving and clearing away. They all did a fantastic*

*job. They proved reliable and were able to work well as a team. This for me has been one of the tangible outcomes of the shelter.”* – Mike Corcoran, Curate and volunteer shift manager, Brunswick Parish Church

## **7. Views of other organisations**

### **7.1. Booth Centre**

The Booth Centre are very happy with the way the project has worked.

- The shelter has provided extra capacity to keep people off the streets, and they have been able to refer people to it who are not eligible for Council shelters. The daily contact between the GMWNS Project Coordinator and Booth Centre staff meant that that any issues could be easily resolved.
- They felt that the safe and relaxed nature of the shelter helped to mitigate some of the guests' stress, and made them better able to engage with services during the day. For example, one Booth Centre staff member noted that they referred one of the centre's worst alcoholics in the centre to the GMWNS but that his behaviour was dramatically improved as he was removed from the group that was encouraging his behaviour and was in a better, more caring environment.
- They have noticed that some guests' English has improved because they have had the chance to practise their conversation.
- Sharing information between the shelter and the Booth Centre (for example guests' problems with bus passes) made it easier for them to address guests' needs.

### **7.2. Visitors to the project**

Jez Green from Mustard Tree visited the shelter at St Cuthbert's church as part of his work on a Homeless Charter for Manchester. He said that the shelter was "run with passion and excellence".

Cllr Sandra Collins, who also visited the shelter at St Cuthbert's, felt that "It was well organised, very friendly. Good food, marvellous volunteers. Professionally run. Clean and warm. Other provisions were provided on the night I was there i.e. toiletries, which I thought was great."

A curate visiting the shelter at Resurrection and St Barnabas said that when people were sitting around the table eating together, he couldn't tell who was a guest and who was a volunteer.

Councillor Garry Bridges, who also visited the shelter at Resurrection and St Barnabas, "...was struck by the fantastic attitude of the volunteers at the shelter and the rapport that volunteers had with the young men who were staying. Everyone was very friendly and the relaxed atmosphere created a very welcoming environment."

## **8. Areas Identified for Improvement**

Our experiences during this project, feedback from guests, volunteers and Venue Coordinators, and discussions with the Booth Centre, Boaz Trust and Cornerstones have enabled us to identify ways in which the shelter could be improved in future years.

Running the shelter has also flagged ways in which homelessness provision can be developed in order to better support the work of the shelter. This includes the desperate need for provision during the day on weekends. The majority of “problems” we had with guest behaviour were at the weekend, and was attributed to the lack of safe spaces and activities available during the day and so the guests were more likely to drink or take drugs.

The key to this process will be to find a balance between the rules which protect the safety of volunteers and guests, and a flexibility which allows us to support guests better.

### **8.1. Weekend Provision**

The most important issue that was identified by both guests, volunteers and organisations, was the lack of any weekend daytime provision for homeless people. Being able to provide this would make a huge difference to guests and other homeless people. However, very few church buildings, or indeed other faith or non-faith venues, are available for use during the day at weekends.

As a first step, it would be worth discussing this idea with other venues and faith groups around the City Centre, to identify any venues that might be suitable. In some cases it might be possible to provide a lunch, for example, rather than a full day’s provision. It may be that some of the Anglican Churches that could not be used as overnight provision due to the restrictions of Ecclesiastical Law could be used as daytime provision on the weekend.

Part of the reason that church venues may not be available at weekends is because they generate income by hiring out their space at these times. It might therefore be possible for them to offer provision if funding was available to hire the space, so this should be investigated. However for many churches this is also a way of connecting with their communities, so they might still not consider it a suitable solution.

### **8.2. Venues**

It has become clear during the pilot project that St Cuthbert’s is not a suitable venue for the shelter. It is very expensive heat but is still cold, and its kitchen is not up to catering standards. However, the PCC and congregation are very keen to be involved in the scheme in the future and are looking at ways they can improve their church building to make it a viable venue.

Having the shelter sharing space with the Food 4 All Project at the Church of the Apostles was also less than ideal, however this was a short term response to the unavailability of St Clement’s Lower Broughton, and would not be expected to happen next year.

There would be the possibility of St Clement’s Ordsall having access to food from FareShare if its kitchen can be inspected and classed as satisfactory (not necessarily to catering standard). This should be investigated, as it could help to reduce the amount spent on food for this venue.

Ideally, all venues should be signed up to FareShare so as to make the project more sustainable and to help combat food waste.

For a six month project, the burden on venues could be reduced by having two “sets” of venues, each hosting the shelter for three months.

### **8.3. Guest Numbers and “No-shows”**

Although we would theoretically be able to accommodate more guests with the same number of volunteers, none of the churches would be able to accommodate more than one or two extra beds, and Brunswick Parish Church already struggled to fit 12. Any increase in the number of beds would therefore need to be made by recruiting further venues to duplicate provision on each night. However, we would only do this if we could recruit a second complete ‘batch’ of venues so that there is constant provision.

As the project went on, many volunteers expressed concern about the number of beds not being slept in, and asked that some form of “standby” arrangement be made for if a guest notified the shelter that he wasn’t coming. Some volunteers also suggested that a guest who fails to turn up without notice, say, three times, should forfeit their place (the Boaz Trust night shelter has this policy).

In the majority of cases, the empty beds were due to guests not arriving after having been referred (for various reasons); having been given a place by the Booth Centre but leaving before they had been given the details; not being able to find the venue; and being delayed and assuming they wouldn’t be allowed in. Of these, only the last two issues can be addressed by the GMWNS.

Many homeless people, even those with relatively few needs, lead chaotic lives, and some degree of unreliability should be expected. In addition, an important part of what makes the GMWNS special is being able to be flexible if it helps to support guests. We should discuss possibilities with the Booth Centre, but it is hard to see how a “standby” system would work without sacrificing flexibility. Our discussions with the Boaz Trust, who have been running a rolling shelter for many years, suggest that it is not feasible, but it would be worth speaking to other similar schemes across the UK who have been running for a number of seasons to see how whether they have been able to combat this problem.

### **8.4. Equipment**

Volunteers who have slept overnight on the camp beds have said that they are not comfortable, and they are also very noisy when the occupant moves. Many of the beds are already looking quite worn and may not last for another six months’ use. However, there are advantages to having beds raised off the floor (avoiding draughts, and creating personal storage space). If mattresses were used, it might be difficult for some venues to store them when they are not being used. We should investigate how other shelters deal with these issues, and consider alternatives.

At the beginning of the project, there were problems with the maps, postcodes and public transport information that was provided to guests and volunteers. These were largely resolved during the course of the project, but before the start of next year's project it is important that these are fully addressed, based on our previous experience.

## **8.5. Shelter Organisation**

The pilot project has enabled us to assess the importance of different project rules, and to see which of these can be relaxed in the interest of serving the guests better. In particular:

### ***Shelter Times***

Volunteers felt very strongly about guests having to wait outside the shelter for it to open, and about having to "throw guests out" early in the morning, especially at weekends when they have nowhere to go.

It would be hard to vary the official hours of the shelter, because many evening volunteers come straight from work, and the majority of the venues need to be cleared for daytime use.

However, at several of the venues, the setting up and some of the food preparation was done before the official start of the evening shift, which meant that it was hard to see a reason why guests shouldn't be allowed in earlier than 6.30. Provided that the venue has been set up, and all volunteers are present and have been briefed, venues should be allowed to let guests in earlier. It is very important that the volunteer briefing is done before guests are allowed in, partly for safety reasons, and partly because it may involve disclosing confidential information about guests which other guests shouldn't hear.

Similarly, if volunteers are willing, guests may be allowed to stay after 8.30, depending on how much work there still is for volunteers to do (guests may be able to help with some of these tasks). Some volunteers mentioned that they didn't like having to make the guests get up early. They should not be allowed to stay once volunteers start leaving, and the "no lone working" policy needs to be in force at all times. We must also be sympathetic to any other regular activities that may happen in each of the venues (including regular church services) and the safeguarding ramifications this may have.

It should also be possible to let guests arrive late at the shelter to fit in with their working hours, provided that they notify the venue or Project Coordinator. The Booth Centre need to be made aware of this policy officially so that they can pass it on to guests. This may also help to reduce "no-shows". However, we must be careful that guests do not take advantage of this and that latecomers are only admitted with prior agreement.



Other issues that need to be addressed in shelter organisation are:

- Ensuring that volunteers understand and enforce the “zero tolerance” stand on guests coming in drunk. The volunteers who were involved in incidents with drunk are likely to accept this, but it should be emphasised to new volunteers.
- The volunteers who prepared the meals at one of the venues suggested that venues should tell each other what meals they are planning, to avoid duplication. This would be a simple way of providing a better service to guests, but might be difficult if several of the venues are all getting food from Fareshare and end up with the same ingredients.
- Some guests got involved with food preparation, which they enjoyed. This can be encouraged.
- Several volunteers suggested that there weren’t enough shoes, clothes and toiletries for guests. This can be addressed both by seeking more donations, and by being more specific about what we need. We may need to look at a way to better distribute donations and potentially find a system in which the referral agent can notify GMWNS regarding specific items needed (e.g. shoes in a particular size or a new winter coat) so that we can try to get the items to the relevant venue.
- The use of Pret a Manger for surplus food was generally considered not to have worked. The experience gained in the pilot project, and a longer lead time before the next shelter, should enable venues to find other sustainable ways of organising food.

It is important that the Guest and Volunteer Lists, which include some personal details, should be kept by the shift manager at all times, and should not be seen by guests. In one case, a guest used information from the Guest List to disparage another guest, and one guest contacted a volunteer using a phone number which he had got from a Volunteer List without her permission.

### ***Services***

Many guests and volunteers said that services such as ESOL and IT classes, help with housing, benefits, and job searches, should be available to guests during shelter hours. In the case of ESOL/IT and job searches, this should be encouraged. In many cases our current volunteers would be able to help with these, and other volunteers with specific skills could be recruited. Job searches would probably also require access to computers and the Internet; at the moment only three of the six venues have Internet access. It may be possible to raise funds for this, as the facilities could benefit other venue users during the day.

We should discuss the possibility of providing extra help with housing and benefits with the Booth Centre; in many cases this would require specialist knowledge that our volunteers may not have, and it would be important not to duplicate applications and processes. There would still be scope for our volunteers to help guests to fill in forms or apply for PRS housing, as well as things like opening bank accounts and registering for health services.

### ***Record Keeping and Communication***

Where Daily Logs were filled in, and information on guest and volunteer attendance was shared, it improved the organisation of the shelter and the service to the guests. The importance of sharing information in this way should be emphasised in training for Shift Managers and Venue

Coordinators. In the pilot project these two roles were usually done by the same person, but if this is not the case in future, the responsibility for filling in Daily Logs and returns would need to be clarified.

## **8.6. Venue Coordinators**

For the pilot project, all the Venue Coordinators were the clergy of the church involved. There is no reason why this needs to be the case; at the Boaz Trust night shelter, the VCs are church members who have started off as ordinary volunteers and then been “promoted” to VC. This model could be used by GMWNS in future years.

The role of Venue Coordinator should also be separated from that of Shift Manager where possible. This is discussed further in Section 8.7.

The Venue Coordinator’s role could also be split to reduce the burden on individuals; at the Boaz Trust night shelter, a volunteer other than the VC has responsibility for organising rotas for cooking and laundry.

Venue Coordinators, like volunteers, have been offered more in-depth training from the Booth Centre. They should also be offered First Aid training if possible. Training in Volunteer Management for VCs should also be considered.

## **8.7. Volunteers**

### ***Volunteer Numbers***

By the end of the project, there was a pool of evening volunteers large enough to meet cover all the evening shifts, even in cases of unexpected absence. Venue Coordinators were also able to identify volunteers who were willing and able to act as Shift Managers, which helped reduced the burden on the clergy.

However, there were not enough night-time and morning volunteers to meet the levels recommended by Housing Justice and to allow for volunteer absence; in fact there were only just enough to enable the shelter to operate.

### ***Recruitment***

Existing volunteers are likely to be a significant source of new volunteers – many have said that they will go back to their churches and encourage others to volunteer, and some have done this already.

Several volunteers suggested “twinning” churches from outside the city centre with shelter churches, to create a larger source of both volunteers and fundraising. This would be a good way of involving churches which can’t host the shelter because of their location, particularly if it could build on links which already exist (some of which have been made during this year’s project). The Venue Coordinators were very positive about this idea, and would be able to identify possible partner churches.

The Mothers' Union have been incredibly supportive of this scheme and we may need to use their networks better in order to recruit additional volunteers.

More flexibility is needed during initial recruitment – when people who had enquired but not volunteered were contacted, some said they had thought they had to commit to a regular weekly shift. Regular weekly shifts should be encouraged because, based on feedback from existing volunteers, there has clearly been great value in the long-term relationships built up between guests and volunteers. However people need to be given the option of occasional, standby, fortnightly or monthly shifts, and of regular shifts for part of the project. This will be particularly important if the project is to run for six months.

This will lead to more work in creating volunteer rotas, but is likely to mean a larger number of volunteer shifts overall, and creates a larger pool of potential standby volunteers to cover absences.

Enabling less frequent volunteering may help to increase the number of volunteers able to do overnight or morning shifts. We need to focus on recruiting for these shifts, for example by targeting shift workers, retired and unemployed people, and possibly students (who are underrepresented among our volunteers). The Volunteer Fairs which the Universities hold at the beginning of autumn term would be a good starting point for this. There may also be some employers who are willing to give their employees time off or flexible working to help them cover these shifts. Businesses who have formal volunteering schemes for their employees may be able to help with morning shifts.

The recent introduction of the new Homelessness Charter for Manchester, under the Homelessness Partnership, means that more businesses are being asked to engage with the issues surrounding homelessness and find ways in which they can support the work being undertaken by charities. It may be that we can tap into this in the future.

The vast majority of existing volunteers have said that they want to volunteer again at next year's project. The Venue Coordinators and Project Coordinator should identify suitable volunteers willing to be Shift Managers as part of the planning for next year. This will help to reduce the burden on the clergy by separating the role of Shift Manager from that of Venue Coordinator, which probably still needs to be done by someone with knowledge of the building, area and congregation.

### ***Roles***

Volunteer recruitment in the pilot project necessarily focused mainly on shift volunteers. However there is scope in future for breaking down volunteer roles, some of which would be outside shift times, and being more specific in recruitment (for example recruiting people specifically to cook or collect food from Fareshare, or to create and manage a rota for laundry at a particular venue). This would give potential volunteers more certainty about their commitment and could enlarge the overall number of volunteers by enabling people who don't want to be shift volunteers to still be involved. This may also require additional coordinator hours.

Based on guest and volunteer feedback, we should also try to recruit people with specific skills to help support guests with English, IT, job searches etc.

## ***Training***

Almost all volunteers were satisfied with the training they received. After their volunteering, however, many have said that they would have liked:

- Drug and alcohol awareness training;
- First aid training (Venue Coordinators have also raised this);
- Information about the work done by the Booth Centre; and
- Details of other services which might be useful to guests.

The Booth Centre hold regular training sessions in Drug and Alcohol Awareness, Mental Health Awareness, Accommodation, and Signposting, and they have said that our volunteers can attend these. A timetable for these has been sent to all existing volunteers so that they can attend them before next year's shelter.

We will also look as ways of providing, and funding, First Aid training for volunteers who are interested (possibly with priority given to potential Shift Managers).

We should explore the possibility of the Booth Centre giving an overview of their work as part of next year's volunteer training. However, we need to make sure that we don't overburden new volunteers with training.

It may be feasible for existing volunteers (with the support of GMWNS) to set up their own constituted group, and apply for small amounts of funding for training sessions, visits to other projects, etc. This would enable them to keep in touch with the project when the shelter isn't running and help with volunteer retention. It could build on networks which already exist (for example, the volunteers at Resurrection and St Barnabas set up a Facebook page to coordinate meal provision between them).

It may sometimes be appropriate (possibly at the discretion of the Venue Coordinator or Shift Manager) to "refresh" the volunteers' training during the project, or update it as they become more experienced, particularly in terms of maintaining boundaries with guests.

## ***Volunteering by Former Guests***

A policy needs to be formulated to make sure that we can support former guests by letting them volunteer, while addressing any potential problems which might arise. We will seek advice from Housing Justice on this.

## **9. Proposals for 2016-17 Winter Night Shelter**

Proposals for the 2016-17 shelter are currently being developed by Greater Together Manchester, incorporating the improvements identified in Section 8 of this report. We are meeting with the providers of other night shelters, including Cornerstones and the Boaz Trust, to look at other ways of improving our provision.

We would propose to run the shelter for between 4 and 6 months over winter 2016-17, at seven venues, as well as offering some kind of weekend daytime provision. We will also consider identifying another seven venues (possibly including different faith and community venues as well as churches), which would enable us to double the number of beds provided. At present we would expect these all to be close to Manchester City Centre, though in future years we will hope to look at opening schemes in Trafford and Rochdale.

We will investigate the feasibility of taking guest referrals from other organisations as well as the Booth Centre.

We are identifying additional sources of finance and are hoping to raise the funds to allow us to run for 6 months. As set out in Section 6.4, several of our volunteers have already organised fundraising events for next year's shelter. We are also talking to Manchester Metropolitan University's Events Management students about being one of the charities that would benefit from their fundraising events.

Appendix 1: Letters from Guests

8/3/2016.  
ST CLEMENTS CHURCH

Hi PAT,  
JUST A SHORT NOTE TO TELL YOU IN AS REGARDS  
MY SITUATION.

AM VIEWING A STUDIO APARTMENT IN CHOLTON  
ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON AT 2 PM AND AFTER AM  
STARTING A NIGHT PORTERS JOB IN ROCHDALE  
AT 11 PM SO UNFORTUNATELY WILL NOT BE  
SLEEPING OVER THIS WEEK.

I WANT TO THANK YOU AND ALL CONCERNED  
AT ST CLEMENTS FOR THE WAY YOU HAVE TREATED  
AND LOOKED AFTER US ON OUR WEEKLY  
WEDNESDAY VISITS TO YOUR CHURCH.

I REALLY CANNOT PUT INTO WORDS THE  
FEELINGS I HAVE REGARDING THE WAY YOU AND  
THE REST OF THE GANG HAVE LOOKED AFTER AND  
CARED FOR US. THE CONCERN, TOLERANCE AND  
ABSOLUTE LOVE YOU HAVE SHOWERED ON US WILL  
LIVE WITH ME FOREVER AND FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY  
HEART I THANK YOU.

ONCE I KNOW WHERE I AM I WILL BE AROUND TO  
VISIT, BUT AGAIN THANK YOU.

NB THE STUFF I HAVE LEFT BEHIND IN YOUR LOCKER,  
PLEASE KEEP IT FOR ME AND I WILL COLLECT AS  
SOON AS POSSIBLE. WITH LOVE.

This guest asked to remain anonymous; his name has therefore been removed.

Hi, I write this post for say thank you  
for every things, you are asome and I'm  
Realy happy to have meet this people here.

I ~~left~~ Manchester today (saturday) at  
leave  
3 p.m for go Keswick and start a new  
life far far ~~away~~ to the problemes.  
then I say again thank you for  
every things.

Philippe.

**At the date of publication, Philippe is still working at the hotel in Keswick (along with one of our other guests), and has been promoted.**

**The hotel where he is working has approached the British Hospitality Association to develop a scheme to encourage more hotels to recruit homeless people.**