



Project Manager's Introduction

Dear prospective volunteers,

It is fantastic that you are interested in helping us support young and vulnerable people in Cheshire. Nightstop is a way of volunteering from your own home, at times which fit in with you and we can arrange training on a one to one basis as well. You will offer your spare room for 1-3 nights at a time to young people in great need, providing an evening meal, breakfast in the morning and most importantly, a listening ear. You can host as often or as little as you wish.

We have volunteer host families and drivers across Cheshire and since going live in March 2009, our volunteers are fast approaching having provided 800 bed nights for young people. All our Hosts have repeatedly told us how polite all the young people who have stayed with them have been, that they left the bedroom and bathroom spotless, had a great sense of humour, were intelligent and very grateful. Some young people have even bought thank you cards for hosts. The trust that hosts give means an awful lot to young people. One young man who stayed on the scheme said that he did not think that there were "people in the world like his host, who helped other people". Other young people have said that they would like to become hosts when they are older.

We have helped young people from many different types of backgrounds. Many have come straight from living with their parents and return back home after some time out. Others have been homeless for a while and some have sadly been sleeping rough before coming to Nightstop. We helped one young 18 year old who had been working for a large company for two years, had a perfect work record and was about to graduate from his college course. An argument with his mother led to him being asked to leave home, from this he stayed with friends and then ended up on the streets. His employer tracked him down when he stopped turning up for work. He stayed with a Nightstop Host for one night who encouraged him to think about his options. With support he contacted an aunt who agreed that he could come and live with her.

The power of a warm bed and someone to talk to for a night or two when you are in a crisis situation is vast. Nightstop helps young people to find solutions to their own problems. For some young people, who have grown up in abusive and neglectful homes, being in a host's home is the first time that they have experienced what a supportive family environment can be like. One young girl was amazed that her host spent time with her children and that she took them to the cinema etc, as her own mother had never done anything like that with her.

Young people have told us that “when someone trusts you, you give that trust back to them”. As hosts, you are doing an amazing thing by taking young people you don’t know into your home, and the young people “get that”!

One young man who had been sleeping rough in a car following family breakdown said that his time with his host family was “one of the happiest in his life”. He even bought his host a roast chicken as a thank you present. He moved from Nightstop into a local hostel and continues to do well.

Hosts have told us that they get as much from hosting as the young people do. The young people can be great company and hosts have learnt things from them on some occasions! One young man fixed the computers of the two host families that he stayed with!

There is always support for you 24 hours a day as a host, but we rarely get hosts needing to call us. The only issue that sometimes arises is that a young person is a bit upset and worried about the future and wants to talk to a professional about finding longer term accommodation.

We give our volunteers tools for self development, including follow up calls after placements, regular home visits, supervision sessions and comprehensive training. Our volunteers are one of our most valuable resources and we want you to feel valued and inspired.

This Guide gives you all the necessary information to start on the journey of becoming an excellent volunteer for us.

From me to you, a very Special Welcome to Forum Nightstop Cheshire.



Claire Litherland **Project Manager (0774 008 0715)**

Fact Sheet – what our volunteers do for young people

- Volunteer hosts provide one to three nights of accommodation by offering their spare room.
- Young people only stay for the night and leave the house when you do. Young people are never to be left alone in the house.
- You will make sure the spare room has a bed / sofa bed and is a welcoming space for a young, provide a basic evening meal and breakfast in the morning and access to washing facilities and generally make them feel welcome in your home.
- You will be there as a listening ear if a young person needs to talk but also let them have space to themselves to think and rest.
- All young people placed are 16+ and you are not expected to take on a parenting role or to become responsible for the young person
- We cover what to do if a young person fails to arrive or you want them to leave for any reason in the assessment and training process.
- We provide 24 support via a telephone line for our hosts and also give you numbers for Housing and Social Work out of hours services.



Rob Jones from Knutsford recently became a Host. “I feel I am doing something really worthwhile” he explained. “I was a bit apprehensive the first time but knowing all the young people are risk assessed is reassuring. Plus, it was new to the young person too and a mutual respect developed”. Arriving tired and hungry at Rob’s, young people receive a warm welcome, pizza and a film in the evening, hot bath, tea and toast in the morning. “Hosting fits perfectly around work and spending time with my own two children, who live with their mother. It’s about meeting basic needs for food and shelter. Once a young person is fed and feels clean and cared for they are then able to open up and talk about their situation.”

- Volunteer drivers help us to transport young people to and from host families and also to appointments with housing and social work teams.
- We call you on the day and ask you if can take a young person somewhere, so it’s very flexible and we try to fit in with your route to work etc.

FACT SHEET – how it works!

- Nightstop works in partnership with Housing Solutions Teams and Children's Services at Cheshire West & Chester and Cheshire East.
- For any young person who is homeless, the first step is for them to go to their local Housing Solutions Team.
- A housing office will then take the young person's details and try to find a solution to their homelessness.
- Young people are normally homeless as a result of family breakdown (arguments with parents).
- The Housing Officer, alongside social workers, may try to mediate between the young person and the parent. They may assess that the young person is at risk of violence or abuse if they go home or either side may be reluctant to reunite. If this is the case, the Housing Officer will look at what types of accommodation will suit the young person. The main option available is a hostel but there are often waiting lists. Plus, if a young person is young and vulnerable a hostel may not be the best solution for them. In either of these situations, Housing will then contact Nightstop.
- Nightstop staff take down all the young person's details, including why they are homeless and a full risk assessment (we check for criminal convictions, alcohol and drug use and take up at least one reference from a professional person eg a social worker, teacher etc) on the young person's character.
- If we are satisfied that the young person would be safe to place in a volunteer's home, we then make calls to host households to see if they are available that night. If they are, we tell them all the information about the young person and they make their own decision on whether they are happy to have them to stay.
- We try where possible to match young people with volunteers who live in their local area and who they have something in common with. For example, one young girl wanted to become a geography teacher and we were able to place her with a host who was a retired geography teacher! If you are a single female you might only want to have females to stay and we only place males with single male carers.
- If the host agrees to offer a bed to the young person, we then ask the host what time they can come round. Young people normally arrive at around 5/6pm but if hosts are out for the evening or are working, we can arrange for the young person to spend time with a friend and then come round late evening time. We also agree the time that the young person will leave in the morning. Young people arrive by a variety of transport. When you first start to host, a Nightstop staff member will bring round your first placements to get you settled in. For experienced hosts, young people come by taxi, bus or walk.
- The next morning, the young person leaves at the agreed time and will normally be returning to housing or perhaps going to try and talk things through with their family. If a young person cannot return home and there are no hostel beds available we may be in touch in the afternoon to see if you can have the young person back for another night.
- A young person can stay a maximum of three nights with a host.

NIGHTSTOP VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PROCESS

To become a volunteer, the first step is to contact us by telephone or email to express interest. We will then send you an application pack to complete and return to us (details are at the end of the form).

We will then be in touch to arrange an informal meeting (preferably in your home if you are applying to become a host) to talk more about the scheme and the assessment process.

The assessment process takes about 6 to 8 weeks and involves 4 home visits and the complete of a Disclosure & Barring Service check. You will also be asked to provide two references and we will also carry out a medical check with your GP. Training is delivered within the home visits and one 2 hour session held at our office in a group with other volunteers. Our training is on a rolling programme and held at times to fit in with your work and family commitments.

Assessment Process

Household contacts Nightstop about volunteering via telephone or email. If by telephone, take down number, email and where they live.
Nightstop then sends Application Pack (by email where possible) containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form (including request for GP check) • Equality and Diversity Form • Volunteer Information Pack • Information sheet on DBS check
Household returns application forms by email or post to The Lock. On receipt, Nightstop makes contact to arrange first visit. Also send off for medical check and take up references via telephone.
<p>Visit One</p> <p>General discussion/getting to know you/me: tell me all about you and I'll tell you about us/scheme. Enhanced Disclosure Form [DBS] left with applicant(s (or, ideally, completed at this visit if applicants happy to proceed)</p> <p>Agree date for second home visit.</p>
<p>Visit Two</p> <p>Building your personal profile</p> <p>Carrying out accommodation assessment tick sheet</p> <p>Explaining insurance arrangements & give copy of standard ltr to insurance company and insurance waiver</p> <p>Collecting & completing DBS & check supporting personal documents.</p> <p>Send of DBS to HR at Forum HQ immediately following this visit.</p> <p>Agree date for third home visit and book induction / training session.</p>
<p>Visit Three</p> <p>Joint visit with experienced host from local area</p> <p>Meeting any other family members e.g. children, grandparents etc and find out their views about Nightstop.</p>
<p>Panel (3 Forum Staff members consider your application)</p> <p>Post Panel Visit</p>



FORUM HOUSING

it's all about you

APPLICATION TO UNDERTAKE VOLUNTEER WORK

Due to the nature of the Association's work, all successful applicants have an enhanced CRB check carried out on them. The Association complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and a copy is available on request for applicants. It is important to note that having a criminal record will not necessarily prohibit a person obtaining a position with the Association.

Surname:

First Names:

Titles:

Date of Birth:

Address:

.....

Home Telephone: Work Telephone:

Have you had any previous contact with the Association? YES/NO

If yes, please give connection:

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POSITION OF: Volunteer Work

Apprenticeships or training you have completed.

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Please list any other skills which may be relevant to the work

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Give details of your work history over the last five years.

Name of Employer	Date		Brief Details of Duties	Reason for Leaving
	From	To		

(N.B. Documented proof of qualifications will be required if application is successful)

What are your leisure time interests? If you have held any posts of responsibility in connection with these, please give details.

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References:

Please give the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two persons who would be willing to offer you a reference.

1.

2.

Medical check -State of physical and emotional health

Please provide name and address of your GP in order that we can undertake a basic medical check that you are fit and healthy to be a volunteer.

The Association adopts a policy that requires a police check to be carried out, because of the specific nature of the work undertaken with Young People.

I do/do not consent to a police check and medical check with my GP being carried out.

Signature:

Date:

Please return this application form to:

Forum Nightstop Cheshire
Market Wells Foyer
13-15 Price Street
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 6HA

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

What is your gender?

Male Female:

How would you describe your ethnicity?

- A White:
- British
- Irish
- Any other White background Please indicate: _____
- B Mixed:
- White & Black Caribbean
- White & Black African
- White & Asian
- Any other Mixed background Please indicate: _____
- C Asian or Asian British:
- Indian
- Pakistan
- Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian background Please indicate: _____
- D Black or Black British:
- Caribbean
- African
- Any other Black background Please indicate: _____
- E Chinese or Other Ethnic Group
- Chinese

Any other Ethnic background Please indicate:_____

F Prefer not to say

To which age category do you belong?

17	<input type="checkbox"/>	18 – 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	26 – 35	<input type="checkbox"/>
36 – 49	<input type="checkbox"/>	50 or over	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Do you consider yourself to have a Disability?

Yes Don't know

No

If you answer 'Yes' to the above question, please give brief details (including Registration Number if applicable):

Do you consider yourself a member of the LGBT Community? (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender)

Yes Prefer not to say

No

How would you describe your religion/beliefs, if any?

Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Faith	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please Specify: _____	
		-			
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Declaration

For the purposes of compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, I hereby confirm that by completing this form I give my consent to Forum Housing Association processing the data supplied above in connection with monitoring compliance with its equality and diversity obligations and policy. I also agree to the storage of this information on manual and computerised files.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Print Name: _____