

Stories News and Views

Redditch Nightstop Annual report 2009



Nightstop Win Prestigious Award!

Redditch Nightstop has been awarded Best Charity/Volunteer project award by the National Lottery awards.

The award recognised the hard work and dedication of Nightstops team of staff and volunteers, and the positive impact that they have had on the local community.

The recognition from the local and wider community helped Nightstop win the award through the voting system. This support makes the award all the more special for the team, so a big thank you goes out to all those involved in Nightstop and supporting Nightstop.



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A Word From Alistair Plumber Nightstop Chairman



This has been the most successful year to date for Nightstop, we have been awarded two major grants as well as winning a fantastic award. The award was a staggering achievement considering how small an outfit we are, the staff really slogged their guts out to get the support from the local community that helped us to win.

We have also been working on a number of new projects and developments including supporting young people in their own home as well as increased education, aiming at preventing homelessness.

As Chair I would like to express my thanks to the new committee members this year, in particular Michael who has helped on a number of accounting fronts assisted by Ray.

I must not forget the growing numbers of volunteers without whom Nightstop would not be the success it is.

I would like to say hello to Claire Steed and goodbye to Catherine. Personally I would like to say a big thank you to Catherine for her efficient recording of the committee meeting minutes.

Lastly I would like to say a very special thank you to Gill, Rebekah, Susan, Sarah, Susan and Julie for their tireless work and commitment.

Volunteering for Nightstop



My name is Jackie Hill and I have been volunteering for Nightstop for four years, working in the office, photocopying and typing out various items for the staff. Looking back to when I first started, things have changed a lot, new office and new staff, school work and mediation, so things have moved on a lot. The things that have stayed the same are the ethos of the organisation and the friendliness of the staff. I really enjoy my day at Nightstop and am glad to be part of the team.

Jackie Hill



A Trustees Perspective

It is a privilege to be a trustee for Redditch Nightstop. So much hard work goes on to ensure that at a vulnerable time of their lives, young people have a roof over their head. It was wonderful to win the Woman Magazine Community Award for the Big Lottery – we were up against tough competition and it was fantastic that the general public voted us as the winner.

We obviously couldn't do the work that is done without the support of The Big Lottery and Tudor Trust. These funds keep us going and enable the staff to support vulnerable young people.

There are many volunteers and staff who work tirelessly for the organisation. Gill Groom is the overall coordinator who inspires and leads a fantastic team.

I am looking forward to another successful year as a Trustee of Redditch Nightstop.

Kimara Sharpe

Five Minutes With... Gill Groom

Gill is project manager for Redditch Nightstop and has been there for 9 years.

What are the most satisfying aspects of your job?

Knowing that you are making a difference in peoples lives. Being able to encourage folk and to put a smile on their faces. "Kind words are like honey, they cheer you up and make you feel strong" *Prov 16 v24*. Did I also mention my pay packet.....!?!

Where would you like to see Nightstop this time next year?

An office in the Carribbean would be nice! Seriously, as long as we are continuously developing to meet the needs of young people and responding to homelessness issues within our community I believe we shall be in the right place.

What is your favourite film?

West Side Story. I went to the pictues five times when I was a teenager to see it. Now I have 'grown up' I go to Stratford to watch Romeo and Juliet.



How Nightstop helped me get into University



In February 2008 I applied to university to study for a degree in social work. I didn't get a place due to my lack of practical experience.

I decided to take a year out to gain more experience, I emailed Gill Groom at Redditch Nightstop to find out about volunteering. I started at Nightstop in June 2008.

Nightstop helped me a lot because it gave me a lot more experience and confidence. The work I did also helped me to understand more about the career I want to get into.

I re-applied to university and had an interview in February 2009, this time I was offered a place.

If Nightstop had not given me all the experience they did, I would not have got into university this year. The staff at Nightstop helped me so much when preparing for my interview and I think they set me up for success at university and in my future career.

Thank you, Hannah Street

Five Minutes With...

Susan Sadler

Susan is a homelessness prevention officer at Nightstop and has been there for 2 years. Her main responsibilities revolve around liaising with schools, pupil referral units, CSV and youth clubs to organise delivery of the homelessness prevention program.



What are the most challenging aspects of your job?

Standing in front of a class of 30 students!

What keeps you coming back to work everyday?

Knowing that you may prevent someone from sleeping on the streets and leaving their family home.

Oh and the rest of the team of course!

What is your favourite book?

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hussain – You should read it!

Connexions Redditch and Nightstop

Connexions is a service offering advice, information and guidance to all 13-19 year olds within the Redditch area. We offer a holistic service to help young people explore and plan to achieve their aspirations. A large part of this work involves identifying barriers which may impact on these being reached and therefore close working relationships with other agencies is an important part of our work.

Nightstop is an integral part of this work with many of our clients benefitting from the excellent working relationship we have established with the Nightstop team. Our information sharing policy means that, with the clients consent, Nightstop are able to make informed assessments of the clients needs and any support required.

Our location within the Kingfisher Centre means that we are in close proximity to the Nightstop office. We are therefore easily able to accompany young people across to the Nightstop office if necessary. Similarly, Nightstop staff will often bring in young people to see us.

In the last year, the development of the mediation service has been an added dimension to the work Nightstop can offer. We have been able to refer a number of clients, who are now receiving additional support for both themselves and family members.

Secure accommodation is one of the basic fundamental needs for any young person and the Nightstop service plays a vital role in helping to address these needs. Our work as Connexions Personal Advisors cannot continue successfully until some stability has been established, the young person feels able to move forward and begin to consider their future options. It is for these reasons that we value and continue to support the work of Nightstop.

Sonia Jhamut
Connexions Personal Advisor



Five Minutes With... Sarah Delaney

Sarah is a homelessness prevention officer and has been working for Nightstop for 3 years. Her responsibilities include supporting young people living alone, with practical activities as well as emotionally.

What are the most challenging aspects of your job?

Getting emotionally attached to the young people, hearing their stories and having to not let hearing them affect me too much. Also motivating people to do things for themselves when they have become so negative about life.

What are the most satisfying aspects of your job?

Seeing people achieve things they didn't think they were capable of. Being part of such a good team.

What is your favourite TV program?

Robin Hood! Panorama and Eastenders



Feeling Useful

My name is Charlotte Shepard and I started volunteering at Nightstop this year.

After starting a new part time job I felt like I had a lot of spare time and wanted to do something useful. I have studied marketing and worked in the industry since leaving university so felt I may be able to put those skills to good use. I looked on some volunteering websites which led me to Nightstop.

I went in and met Gill and the team, they all made me feel very welcome and had a list of things they needed help with. They all made me feel like what I was doing for them was important and valued.

The more I have learnt about Nightstop and the team the more I respect the people who work there and the volunteers and recognise the value of Nightstop in the community.

Although what I do for the organisation is not 'hands on', I still feel I am helping this fantastic and essential organisation in some small way which in turn makes me feel very proud.

I hope that I will continue to be involved with Nightstop for a long time to come.



Five Minutes With...

Julie Hughes

Julie is a homelessness prevention officer at Nightstop and has been there for a year. Her main responsibilities involve delivering homelessness prevention programs and learning to young people.

How did you begin working for Nightstop?

I gained knowledge of Nightstop while teaching in the community, so I was interested in the post to combine teaching with care in the community.

How good do you feel the support services are for young people in the area?

I did think services in Redditch were as good as they could be, as it is impossible to replicate the support of a balanced family. As I visit more places I am aware that Redditch has no provision for street homeless or people over 25.

What is your favourite food?

Jamaican, Chinese, Italian – well actually most food!



Essential Odd Jobs

There is more that goes into running Nightstop than people imagine and it is so important to have people to call on who can help with just about anything.....

My name is Dave Dowling and Nightstop staff contact me if and when they need jobs completing such as when food that is kindly donated I sort it into sell by date, sorts of food (tinned food, dry food etc).

When Nightstop moved into their new premises I laid the wooden flooring. Last year I helped collect names which helped Nightstop gain the National Lottery award.

Basically I am the odd job man, or to be politically correct an odd job person!



Bromsgrove District Housing Trust

Bromsgrove Housing Trust would like to take this opportunity to praise Nightstop on the excellent work they do with the young homeless people in Bromsgrove. When we make referrals to Nightstop we are impressed by the professional and empathetic way in which they deal with each client. The introduction of host families in our area makes the system much more available and a favourite option for young people.

Redditch Housing Options Team

Redditch Housing Options Team have come a long way in re-moulding their services to provide one that is based on intervention and prevention of homelessness by providing a proactive and innovative service exploring a wide range of housing options tailored to meet individual customer needs.

Additionally the services aimed at all groups of people in housing need and the focus of the service has been on providing an options service to all clients. The homelessness statistics support this view and it is quite clear that there has been a great success in preventing homelessness in Redditch and that this has been particularly high in applicants in the age groups of 25 and under.

A key ingredient to our success is the outstanding partnership work with Redditch Nightstop. Since the introduction of the Housing Options service in September 2007, of the 395 successful homeless preventions, 261 were aged between 18-25 and 26 were 17.

As a result of the commitment from Nightstop and other partners in reducing homelessness, Redditch Borough Council has been granted funding from government to further improve the Housing Options service. The key objective being to identify the opportunities for partner agencies to work together to tackle housing need, lack of skills and unemployment collaboratively through an 'enhanced housing options' program, offering customers greater efficiency and better value for money.

The Housing Options team is proud of this achievement and appreciates the continued support from Redditch Nightstop in the recognition Redditch has received from local and central government.

Five Minutes With... Susan Pemberton

Susan is a homelessness prevention officer and has been with Nightstop for 4 years. Her main responsibilities revolve around emergency accommodation and all that that involves.

What are the most satisfying aspects of your job?

Seeing a young person go through the system, knowing I have done all I can to secure them somewhere to stay, and seeing the young person being thankful for the service that has been provided.

Do you feel it is difficult to switch off at the end of the day?

On the odd occasion, when a young person has come with a disturbing background and I feel they haven't had the love and support they needed from their family.

What is your favourite takeaway?

I don't do takeaways, but I do really enjoy going out for a really nice Thai or Italian meal.



Chris

Chris, 24 became homeless in January 2009 following a period of unemployment. He spent one night sleeping rough, and then remembered he read about Nightstop in the paper, so called in for advice.

Nightstop were able to place him with hosts Ben and Amy, who provided him with a safe place to stay and the first cooked meal he had eaten in a while. Nightstop referred Chris to the YMCA, and after an interview he was offered a place.

He was then placed with Tony, another host, where he stayed for 3 more nights whilst waiting for his flat to become available.

Nightstop provided Chris with food and a starter pack to move in with to help during the settling in period and assured Chris that he could come back at any time in the future should he need support.

Chris is now about to go to Nepal on a voluntary placement with Platform 2 where he will be helping to build a school and teaching English and sports to children.

Chris describes Nightstop as 'an amazing charity the way it helps people who are down on their luck' and looks forward to continuing with youth based voluntary work on his return from Nepal.



A Hosts Perspective

Jackie Greenhalgh and her family have been hosts for about a year now. They first heard about Nightstop during a talk at their local church, the subject of becoming a host kept coming up over a period of time and eventually the family decided it was something they would

like to do. The staff at Nightstop were very upfront and honest about what being a host would entail and offered a great deal of support, Jackie was also able to speak to a current host to get a better perspective. Jackie feels the training she has received from Nightstop has really opened her eyes and given her a greater understanding of many issues.

Before becoming a host, several people told Jackie that she would end up getting more back from the experience than she put in. Jackie feels this is a very true statement and would like to carry on being a host, the experience has opened her eyes to a lot of things, but also given her the opportunity to help.

Five Minutes With...

Rebekah Bott

Rebekah is a homelessness prevention officer at Nightstop and has been there since 2003. Her main responsibilities involve collating information for supporting people, updating policies and procedures and submitting quarterly returns.

What are the most satisfying aspects of your job?

Seeing a young person grow in confidence and self belief once on their journey from homelessness to becoming settled in their tenancy. Knowing you have helped somebody and made a difference no matter how big or small.

How do you manage being a mum and working?

I have great support from my family and from my colleagues!

What is your favourite music?

I don't really listen to music other than the Cbeebies CD in the car or nursery rhymes in the playroom.



Lisa

Lisa was made homeless at the age of 16, Nightstop helped find her a place to live and a place on a college course. After some time Lisa lost touch with Nightstop and the staff, she felt she was in a good position and confident enough to go it alone.

After several years Lisa felt she was in a position where she should benefit from some support once again. She got back in touch with Nightstop and was welcomed with open arms.

Lisa is now staying in the 'Inspire' project, a shared house where the occupants are supported both practically and emotionally by the Nightstop team. The occupants also have the opportunity to support each other.

The 'Inspire' project is a council initiative supported by Nightstop, it offers shared accommodation for people aged 17-25 who are working or in full time education.

For Lisa, knowing she always has the support of Nightstop has helped her move forward with her life. "If it wasn't for them I would still be sofa hopping, I wouldn't have a place to live or be at college. They are my friends as well as my support workers."

What We Have Achieved This Year

260 people have come into the office this year looking for advice or support regarding problems with homelessness, debt, tenancy issues, relationship problems or wanting food parcels.

20 young people have received floating support in their tenancies, helping with budgeting and paying bills, coping with council tax and rent arrears, dealing with agencies, dealing with loneliness, letters, filling in forms, activities and making friends.

We delivered our education program to 631 young people during the period April 08 to July 09. The sessions varied from cinema evenings with an open forum for debate to tailored workshops running over 3 to 4 sessions to meet the specific needs of the learners. We have made every effort to diversify the learning to encompass main stream students, pupils with learning difficulties and young people who are becoming marginalised socially and through education.

10 families have been involved with our mediation services, where we aim to strengthen and rebuild relationships between young people and their families.

And we also offered voluntary/work placements to 6 young people within the project.

A Word From Accounts



After a move in April 2008 from accounts management with a local firm of solicitors, I have thoroughly enjoyed working within the charity sector at Nightstop. It is good to be part of an envisioned and proactive team which has brought me a much greater awareness of the needs of many in our community. I am more than happy to play my part with the Nightstop Management and support team in meeting those needs.

Ray James

Those we are indebted to, staff would like to thank the volunteers and hosts

Tony Pitt
Steve and Felicity Vincent
Ben and Sally Bevins
Ben and Amy Arnold
Julie and Jim Springate
Philip and Jackie Greenhaugh
Sandy McLughlin

Jackie Hill
David Dowling
Hannah Street
Charlotte Shepard
Mandy Robert
Andrea Haynes

The Management Committie

Alistair Plumber
Juliet Horn
Catherine Reynolds
Kimara Sharpe
Michael Walters
Duncan Berry
Jeff Barnard
Kevin Reilly
Claire Steed
Mike Spencer

Funders

Big Lottery
Tudor Trust
Worcestershire County Council
Redditch Borough Council

Independent Assessor

Mr John Higson

Employee of Wolverhampton Voluntary
Sector Council

16 Temple Street

Wolverhampton

WV2 4AN

Staff Contingencies Reserve Policy

Notwithstanding the existence of recruitment, job descriptions, disciplinary, salary review and health & safety policies which are regularly reviewed, the Trustees have instructed that a Reserve be set up which approximates to 25% of the total salary bill as a contingency against a claim on the Trust by a member of staff arising from a dispute.

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