

#### **4. NIGHT SHELTER VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES**

1. Our role is to help create a safe, welcoming, friendly, non-discriminatory and non-judgemental night shelter.
2. Destitute asylum seekers are given very few rights. **Confidentiality** is a fundamental right which we can give our guests. Please do not divulge any individual information about any of our guests. To protect guests' privacy and safety, please do not take any identifiable photographs of guests. It helps spread understanding of the asylum situation if you talk to friends and colleagues about what you are doing at the shelter. However, please keep confidentiality about individuals. (If you believe a guest is at risk to themselves or others, please tell the Lead Volunteer, who will take the matter further.)
3. Another aspect of confidentiality is that we do not ask the guest about personal or family details or where family lives. If a guest raises these issues, and wants to talk about them, that is fine. It helps to remember that guests constantly get asked many personal questions by the authorities.
4. Guests may want to ask you about your host building/religious group and may enjoy understanding who their hosts are. However, let the guests raise such issues. If politics or religion is raised, proselytising or trying to convert a guest is never acceptable.
5. Guests all have caseworkers who give them advice and arrange counselling. Please avoid giving advice. You can suggest agencies to attend if a need arises. There is a directory of local services in the Handbook.
6. We encourage an atmosphere of mutual tolerance amongst the guests and it is a good idea to intervene if an argument develops.
7. We are strictly an alcohol-free and drug-free organisation for all guests and volunteers. We are not authorised to provide medication for our guests.
8. Your own and other volunteers' personal information such as address and phone number should not be shared with the guests, to protect your privacy.
9. We do not carry out DBS checks on our volunteers, so you are asked to avoid being alone with a single guest. This protects both volunteer and guest.
10. Personal relationships are not permitted between volunteers and guests.
11. If you are unable to cover your 'shift' please inform your Lead Volunteer well before the shift so that alternative cover can be arranged.
12. Each volunteer is expected to assist in the day-to-day running of the shelter: to ensure guests leave on time in the mornings; are reminded what time to return; tell you if they intend to return after 7pm or not at all that night. Please check that the guest has the night shelter phone number. If guests are returning to the shelter, they can leave their belongings, but should take important valuables and documents with them. We cannot accept responsibility for these.
13. If we give gifts of clothing, or other items, we only do so on the basis they are equally available to all guests.
14. We need to learn from you what works (and what doesn't work). So, please fill in the General Log book making a note of how things have gone or suggestions. Your entry will also communicate the current situation to volunteers on the next shift.
15. There are several policies affecting the running of Night Shelters. Please read and familiarise yourself with WYDAN'S policies, in particular the Health and Safety Policy and Checklist; the Vulnerable Adults Policy; and the Shelter Food Hygiene Policy. They and other policies are in the Handbook.