



West Yorkshire Destitute Asylum Network

WYDAN Night Shelter – Summer Newsletter

A Slow Start to the Season

As we began the new season, the shelter started off quite slowly—something we've grown accustomed to over the years. During our second week, we welcomed our first referral: one guest who stayed with us alone for about a week before being joined by others. Since then, numbers have continued to fluctuate, at times dropping to just a few guests and then rising again until the shelter is nearly full.

Through all these changes, our volunteers have remained flexible, patient, and incredibly supportive. Thank you for adapting so readily to the needs of the moment.

Celebrating Leave to Remain

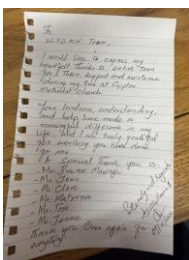
A true highlight this year has been seeing **two of our guests receive Leave to Remain**. While we often support people as they move onto Section 4 or Section 95 accommodation, it's far less common for us to witness permanent residency being granted while they are still part of our shelter community.

This has been a wonderful achievement and a real source of joy for everyone involved.

One of these guests, **AA**, expressed his gratitude so deeply that he has now joined our volunteer team. This is incredibly special—not only because of his appreciation, but because AA now brings lived experience that resonates meaningfully with current guests. He can offer encouragement, understanding, and hope in a way only someone who has walked the same path truly can.



A Message of Thanks



We also received a moving note from a guest who has recently moved into Home Office accommodation. He wanted to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported him during his stay at WYDAN.

A Wonderful Gathering – Saturday 21st February

We were thrilled to host a gathering on **Saturday 21st February**, and it was very well attended. In a beautiful show of gratitude, the men living in the houses prepared all the catering themselves—creating a selection of delicious dishes to thank not only the cooks but also the shift volunteers who make the shelter possible every day.



The gathering had an unexpected but very welcome outcome: **four attendees were so inspired that they signed up to volunteer with us**. We are excited to welcome them into the team after they complete their training sessions. We've also encouraged them to stay afterwards on their training evening to join the guests for dinner, providing a warm and natural introduction to the community they'll be supporting.

We still need a couple of Lead Volunteers to help with the shelter, it is slightly more work than a usual volunteer role but so much more rewarding as you interact more with the guests. If you or someone you know may be interested please contact Katrina.

Gardening Club & English Lessons with Sunflower

We have been delighted once again to see **Clare from Sunflower** continue her wonderful work with the Gardening Club, supported this year by **Jenny**. The guests greatly enjoy these sessions—especially watching the herbs they've grown being used in meals prepared at the shelter. It brings a sense of ownership and pride that means so much.

Alongside gardening, Clare also runs an **English class** during the club. This combination has been a fantastic opportunity for guests to improve their language skills while learning something hands-on and therapeutic. The evenings always end with a friendly game of **bingo** or **Jenga**, which never fails to lift spirits and bring plenty of laughter.

A lovely development has been seeing several men who now live in houses choosing to come back on **Wednesday evenings** just to join the gardening group. Their return speaks volumes about the sense of belonging these sessions create.

A word from Sunflower Clare.

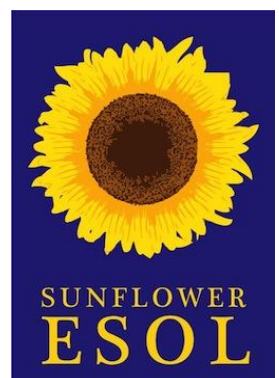
Sunflower ESOL Gardening Group at the Winter Night Shelter 2025-26

Sessions completed - 15 of 17

Guests who have engaged with the group - 28

Average weekly attendance - 7

This winter at the gardening sessions we have been busy with plenty of activities. We have planted miniature daffodils indoors and enjoyed watching them grow - no flowers yet but won't be long. It has also been lovely to see the bulbs that we planted out in the grass around the shelter last year come up outside. We have sown coriander and mint and spent time propagating the Chinese money plant and spider plant babies. In preparing meals for the



guests we have been pleased to use chillies that were sown in January 2025 by previous guests and basil leaves that were sown in other Sunflower ESOL groups last autumn.



We have talked about what a plant needs to grow, how to care for house plants over winter and how to take cuttings. Alongside all of these activities has been the opportunity to develop reading and writing skills and of course lots of practice of speaking and listening in English.

Highlights of this winter season

- regular attendance by men in the WYDAN houses joining the guests in the shelter
- playing bingo weekly - lots of good humour
- seeing the men working really hard on their reading and writing
- people sharing personal experiences of growing things and becoming animated and joyful as they do so

Volunteer Support & Rota Challenges

Over the past few weeks, we've been facing a growing challenge with **late cancellations and late arrivals for shifts**. When this happens, it often leaves the Lead Volunteer or other team members scrambling for last-minute cover—sometimes right up to the moment the doors open. As you can imagine, this puts real pressure on the team and can make it harder to keep everything running smoothly.

We fully understand that life throws curveballs at the most inconvenient moments: illness, family needs, work changes — these things happen to all of us. What keeps the shelter going, even on the hardest days, is the **continued commitment and generosity of our volunteers**.

Every shift you show up for helps us keep the shelter safe, calm, and welcoming for the people who rely on us. When someone can't make it, the ripple effect is real — but so is the impact of your dedication.

Thank you for everything you do. Your time, your compassion, and your reliability are what allow us to continue offering a warm, supportive space to those who need it most. We are deeply grateful for each of you.
