

KINGSTON CHURCHES ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

Background to the Post of Part-time Homeless Persons' Activities Co-ordinator

Six Month Contract

KCAH aims to relieve the distress of homeless and potentially homeless people by the provision of services and resources. In addition, KCAH promotes public awareness of housing services and needs. KCAH primarily serves the borough of Kingston-upon-Thames but also surrounding boroughs. The services of KCAH are free, confidential, impartial and independent.

KCAH services and resources include the Housing Crisis Intervention Service (HCIS) and the Access Project. Details of what we do can be found on our website, www.kcah.org.uk

The Kingston Churches Winter Night Shelter

KCAH is the umbrella organisation to the winter night shelter. This was first set up as a pilot scheme for the month of February 2009. Due to its success, the scheme now runs from the beginning of December to the end of February every winter.

A church venue is open each night on a rotation basis to offer warmth, welcome, food and a place to sleep to up to 12 homeless guests each night. Since its inception, over 100 guests have passed through the night shelter scheme. Many have been found more suitable accommodation through KCAH.

Following feedback from the guests that have used the scheme, KCAH is aware that they are grateful for a place to sleep overnight. However, many find the day time frustrating as there is no day-centre in Kingston. They have difficulty filling their time with meaningful activities and are restricted due to their lack of finances. Some can be vulnerable to alcohol or drug misuse and resorting to petty crime.

The Activities Co-ordinator will identify and work with a core group of the Kingston homeless including those who have passed through the night shelter scheme as well as other homeless people in Kingston who struggle to engage with KCAH. The main focus is to organise and offer an activities programme that gives a marginalised group of people the opportunity to engage and participate in events that may make a difference to them while they still face homelessness. The programme will aim to prevent the deterioration of health for people who are homeless and give them a purpose, motivation and self-belief.

The Activities Co-ordinator will have access to contacts with the Churches in the Borough and other faith groups, as well as contacts within the local Health Service, Kingston Council and other voluntary organisations to help make this post a successful one.