

Winter Night Shelter 2020

REGISTERED CHARITY
1143823



Shelter 2020

It is hard to imagine, but FirmFoundation has now managed ten consecutive Emergency Winter Night Shelters in Harrow. Not only has the decade past quickly, but I know many of our volunteers have been with us on this journey from the beginning. So, whether you have been with FirmFoundation from the start, found us recently or are just taking a look at the Night Shelter in 2020 you are most welcome. We continued to be encouraged with the support that we receive.

2020 will be remembered for the COVID-19 pandemic, the period of time when many have been self-isolating, working from home, furloughed, or working on the front-line in hospitals, care homes, delivering goods, working in supermarkets and many other services. It may also be a time of much anguish and grief as the Corona Virus leaves families and loved ones bereaved. The virus also effected the very top of the UK Government with the Prime Minister contracting COVID-19 and required the very NHS he was hoping to stop from being overwhelmed.

People over 70, those with certain pre-existing health complaints particularly those with respiratory conditions and low immunity were at most risk. The advice, self-isolate, often with entire families.

It is against this backdrop that the 2020 Night Shelter, guests, volunteers and staff were faced with. Many of our guests had underling conditions and time spent rough sleeping can also contribute to a lower immune system. Staying in a dormitory setting and without the ability to self-isolate, particularly during the day when the Shelter was not available was not safe. Volunteers and staff also needed to be protected, in March 2020 and ahead of the government advice FirmFoundation took the decision to move our guests into Hotels.

With a small team of volunteers FirmFoundation partnered with groups providing food which was then delivered to the hotels for our guests. The COVID-19 situation is ongoing as this report is being written, what is contained in the following pages is the courageous account of our staff, volunteers and guests. Each one makes us proud and our appreciation to all who have made this possible is immense.

Thank you.



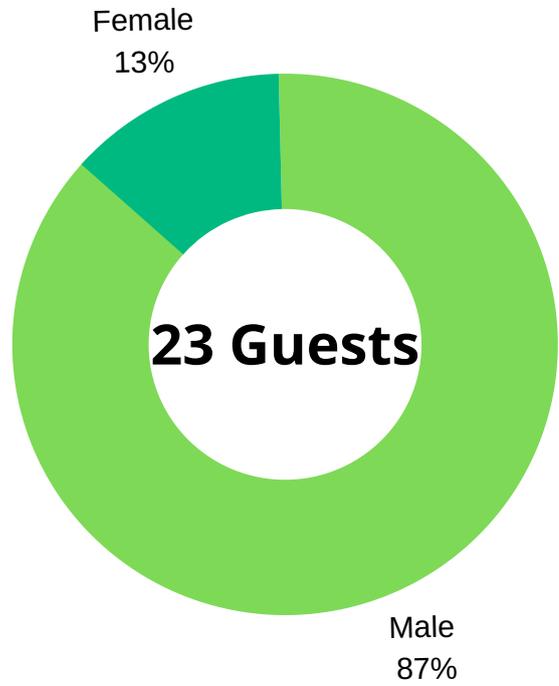
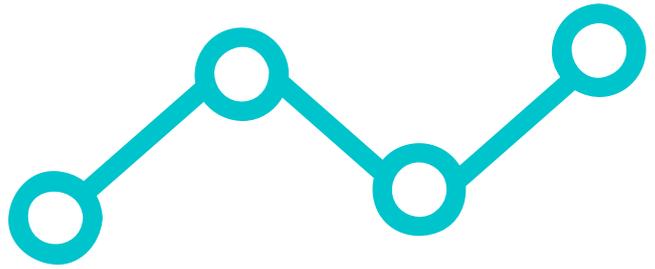
Each year our volunteers give their time, energy and commitment to make our guests feel welcomed and valued. Over 130 of our volunteers have demonstrated once again the difference acts of kindness can make. A huge thank you to all of our volunteers, we are so proud of you all.



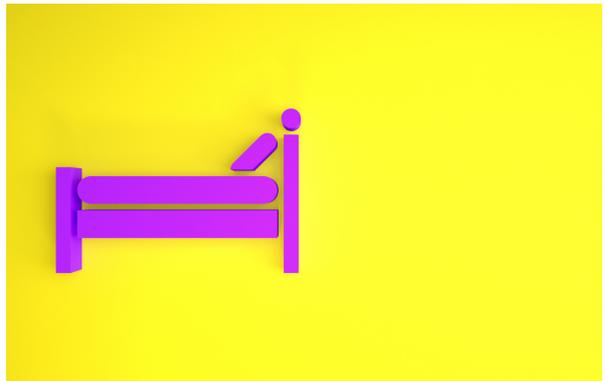
Our thanks once again for Harrow School's support for FirmFoundation



45 REFERRALS



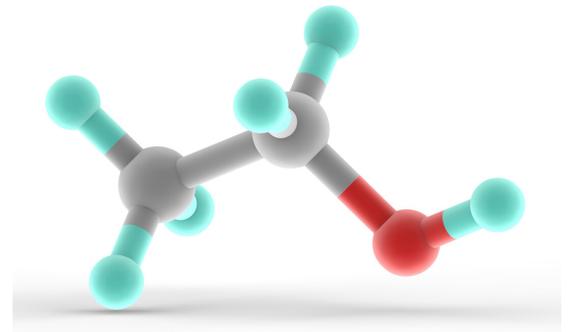
SHELTER EXTENDED AS GUESTS MOVE TO HOTEL ACCOMMODATION





30% OF GUESTS
PRESENTED
WITH MENTAL
HEALTH ISSUES

30% OF GUESTS
PRESENTED
WITH ALCOHOL
OR DRUG ISSUES



10 GUESTS
HOUSED
43% OF THE
SHELTER

COVID-19



FirmFoundation move guests into Hotels

As the COVID-19 pandemic expanded the challenges increased for the Shelter our guests, volunteers and staff.

On the 18th and 19th of March 2020 we moved our guests to Hotels.



**'FirmFoundation is in my heart...I feel normal again and sleeping in a bed'
Michael (Guest)**



**'I have suffered a few strokes...but now I am in a lovely home with FirmFoundation.'
Peter (Guest)**



**'I didn't think that I would still be around. But now I can see a future'
Mike (Guest)**



**It has been a pleasure working alongside Firm Foundation and getting to know some of guests we deliver food to.
Steve (Volunteer)**



**I volunteered to deliver meals to clients in hotels and other accommodation during lockdown.
Jane (Volunteer)**

Visitors



Bob Blackman MP for Harrow East with some of our guests and volunteers (4th in from the right)



The Jaspar Foundation awarded FirmFoundation with a grant and then volunteered!

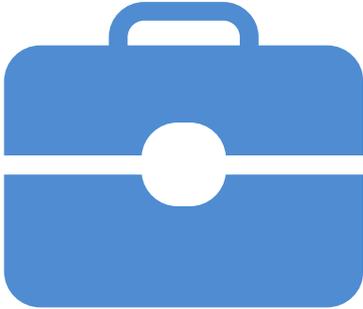


Giovanna Pasini from the Pret Foundation visits the Shelter

Councillor Jeff Anderson serves our guests at the Shelter



Case Studies



50 year old male with a number of health conditions came to FirmFoundation's drop in from homeless services and entered the Night Shelter. FirmFoundation moved this gentleman with others to hotels in response to COVID-19 and from there FirmFoundation arranged a viewing with one of our partner landlords and he was accepted. Receiving a starter pack and assistance with finance he was able to move into accommodation.



A 45 year old male experiencing mental health issues closed himself off, after rent arrears he was evicted. Staying at the Night Shelter was a positive experience and he gained supported accommodation at Hope Place with FirmFoundation.



56 Year old male was referred to FirmFoundation. Recovering from a stroke he was able to stay at the Night Shelter. He was then placed at Grace House which is FirmFoundation's supported accommodation.



A 49 year old male with mental health issues was referred to the Night Shelter from the probation service. FirmFoundation helped him to claim benefits and has moved into Grace House - FirmFoundation's supported accommodation.

Supporters

All Saints Church
All Churches Trust
Beatrice Laing Trust
Charities Trust
Culver Church
Elmfield Church
Harrow Athletic CL
Harrow Lions Club
Harrow on the Hill WI
Harrow Quaker Meeting
Housing Justice
Holy Trinity Wealdstone
Kings Church
London Catalyst
London Diocesan Fund
New Life Bible Church
Persula Foundation
Pinner Baptist Church
Pinner Methodist Church
Pinner Free Church
Pret Foundation

Rayners Lane
Baptist Church
St Albans Church PCC
St Johns Church
(Stanmore)
St Lawrence Church
St Mary's Church
St Michaels Church
St Paul's Church
Six Crown Street
Souter Charitable Trust
Stanmore Baptist Church
The Pinner
Association of Churches
The Jaspar Foundation
Waitrose Ltd



Housing Justice



Conclusion

This year's Night Shelter has presented some surprising challenges. During the past couple of years our female Shelter has been able to offer spaces to individuals with complex needs. Occasionally, this had meant people returning to the Shelter in subsequent years. As we have focused on mental health we have been successful in assisting our clients with appropriate services and accommodation. Not only were there fewer female referrals this year but those regular guests had seen an end to their homelessness. With reduced numbers in the women's Shelter this year we made the move to hotels at the beginning of February. This reduced staffing costs and the difficulty of having our female sleepover volunteers on standby.

The men's Shelter was more conventional with a reduction in numbers than in 2019.

The most significant challenge came from the Corona Virus. The situation moved very quickly as FirmFoundation assessed the risk and guidance for our guests, volunteers and staff. Once we were clear that we needed to limit the contact between guests and volunteers and that an open dorm was no longer appropriate it was a logical next step to move our guests in to hotels. We did this ahead of the government advice which followed the week after. We also worked with Harrow Council who have met some of the cost of the hotels.

Along-side this, we have partnered with local organisations providing food. This has been delivered by our volunteers to those in hotels and FirmFoundation's supported accommodation.

We have continued to house guests from the hotels, and because of the move to hotels we have effectively been able to extend the Night Shelter well into May 2020.

In conclusion, the move to hotels following COVID-19 was managed quickly and smoothly. The reduced numbers for this Shelter has been welcomed but with some caution. FirmFoundation have continued to focus on mental health and this has led to positive results. 45 referrals, 23 guests and with 43% of the Shelter housed including those with positive outcomes has demonstrated the continuing need for the Night Shelter and the increasing ability of FirmFoundation to meet these challenges.

The final word must once again be to our volunteers, quite simply, there is no Shelter without you!