

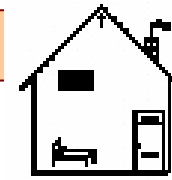


Winchester Churches Nightshelter

Offering Help and Hope to the
Homeless

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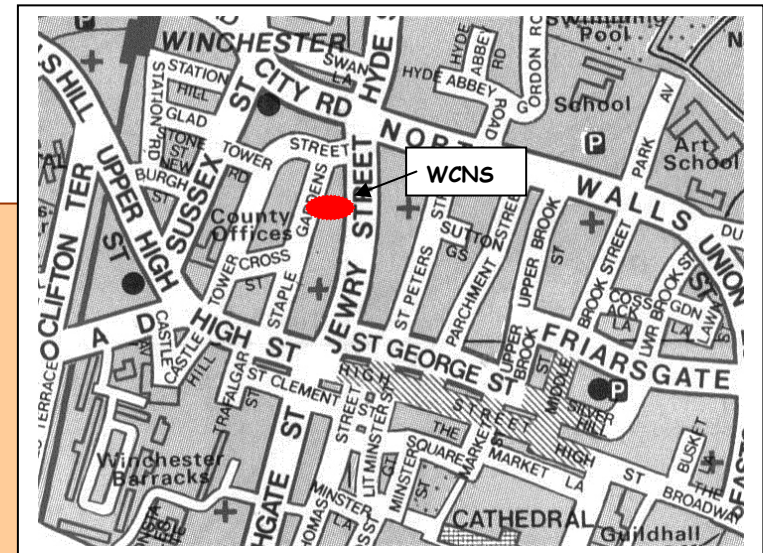
Website:
www.wcns.org.uk



Winchester Churches Nightshelter

Information & House Rules for Guests

Please make sure you have a copy of our other booklet too:
'Support, Services & Information Booklet'. It offers
guidance on services available at WCNS & across Winchester



Last Updated: November 2008



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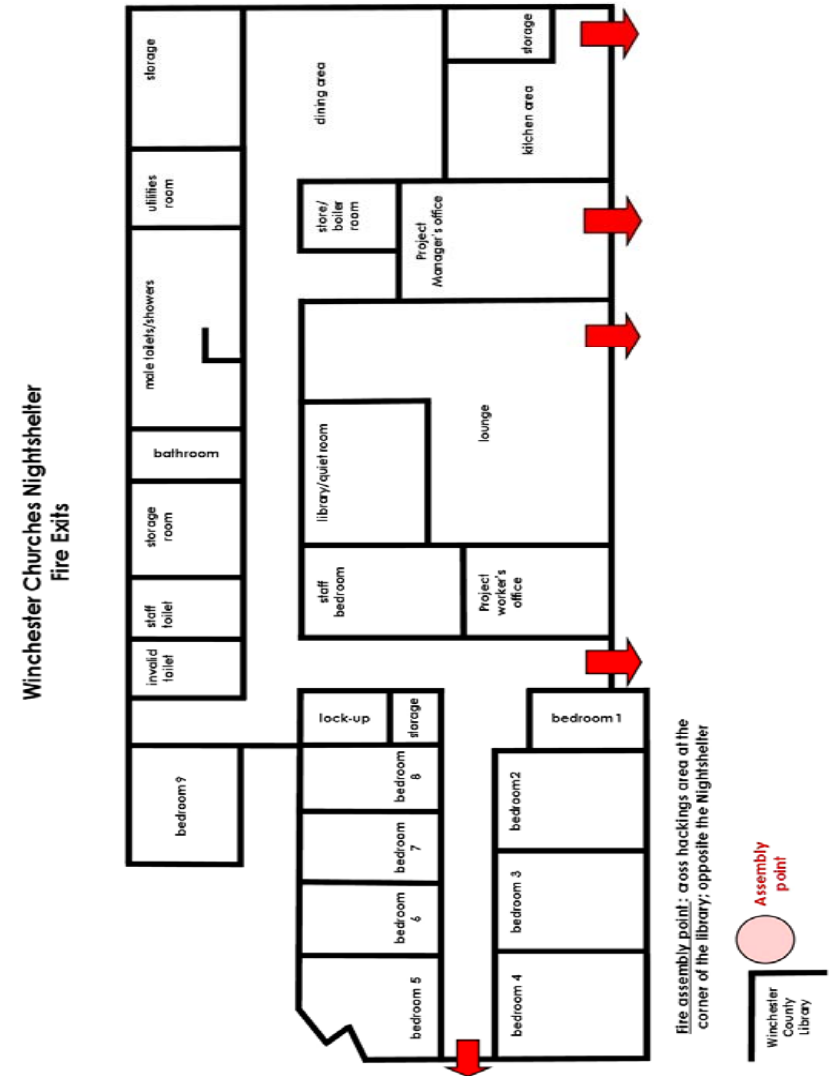
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Fire Drill

Plan of WCNS – with fire escapes marked



PLAN OF WCNS – with FIRE ESCAPES MARKED





FIRE & EVACUATION

On arrival at WCNS you will be shown where the fire exits are and it will be explained to you what to do in case of a fire. Please ask the Duty Supervisor if you are unsure of any details. You should make sure you are familiar with the evacuation procedures and the fire exits.

If you discover a fire you should immediately sound the fire alarm and notify the supervisor or other staff.

FIRE DRILL PROCEDURE

A Fire Drill is performed monthly during a duty shift by a different Supervisor on a rota system.

When the main fire alarm sounds or a member of staff rings the hand bell, ALL guests, volunteers, visitors and staff must leave the building in an orderly fashion by the nearest marked Fire Exit.

The Assembly point is in the car park by the Library (as per fire plan).

Only Staff should tackle the fire using the fire extinguishers, fire blankets or equipment provided and then only if safe to do so.

They must not put themselves or others at risk and must ensure that their actions do not contribute to the risk of fire or fire spreading. If in doubt, the building must be safely evacuated and the fire brigade called on 999.

The duty Supervisor will then instigate a head count using that evenings 'sign in' sheet to check that all those 'signed in' are present.

Nobody will be allowed back into the building until the 'all clear' has been given by the duty Supervisor.



WELCOME

Welcome to Winchester Churches Nightshelter (WCNS). We hope to make your stay as comfortable as we can and offer you as much help and support as possible. We try to offer all our guests a fresh start in life. This booklet is designed to provide you with details about the Nightshelter and the services available to you during your stay. Please read it carefully and if there is anything that you do not understand, please speak to the Duty Supervisor (evening) or the Manager (9am-2pm).

WCNS Support, Services & Information Booklet

Please make sure you also have a copy of our other WCNS booklet which gives important details of the Support, Services & Information available to you at WCNS and at other organisations in Winchester. Please ask the Duty Supervisor if you do not yet have a copy.

Staying at WCNS

We provide all our guests with a bed, evening meal, breakfast, a bath, toiletries, clothes washing facilities, computer access, a shared lounge with TV, a safe and comfortable environment, and care and support during your stay with us. WCNS currently has 15 beds. 12 beds offer full support until we can find guests long-term accommodation to suit their needs (ideally within 3 months). Our 3 'crash beds' allow guests to stay up to 14 nights, gaining as much support as possible during that time.

We ask all our guests, whether staying in one of our 'crash beds' or a 'full support' bed, to take full advantage of the services offered by our 'Floating Support' outreach team which is a vital part of our service (see p5). We also have a number of 'House Rules' which we require you to follow for your own welfare as well as that of other guests – these are outlined in the following pages and will be explained by the Duty Supervisor. WCNS has a staff of seven: Manager–Michele; Administrator – Liz; Kitchen Supervisor – Karen; 4 Supervisors (who manage the Shelter when open during the night)– Carole, Phill, Ed, and Dave. More details can be found in our Support & Services booklet.



Admissions Procedure for New Guests

Admission for new guests is between: 6pm – 9pm. Entry times are strictly kept. There are 9 bedrooms with 15 beds, and any free beds which have not already been allocated by referrals earlier in the day will be allocated to new guests between 6pm-9pm. WCNS follows a strict equal opportunities policy: people of any race, sexual orientation or faith are very welcome. Unfortunately no dogs or other pets can be admitted due to lack of facilities and space.

Following a 'Risk Assessment' by the Duty Supervisor, and providing you fulfil particular WCNS entry criteria (copy available on request), you will be welcome to stay. On admission you will receive a 'Welcome Pack' (with the 2 WCNS information booklets and toiletries), and be offered a hot drink.

As a new guest you are required to complete various documents on arrival relating to the support services you will receive during your stay at WCNS from floating support and staff (eg care & support plan forms). All new guests are also required to sign an agreement allowing WCNS to disclose and check details with other appropriate agencies.

Paying towards your stay

You are required to pay £2 per night for your stay, regardless of age or status. You can pay on arrival each night or in advance daily or weekly.

If you are in paid employment, you need to pay £10 per night on the door. Any guest who starts work whilst at WCNS will pay £2 per night until their first pay day when they must pay £10 per night. If you are not eligible for Housing Benefit or you have a temporary or no National Insurance number, you will be required to pay £10 per night on admission. If you have previously left WCNS with a debt, you will not be readmitted until the debt has been paid. The Manager and staff are not at liberty to give loans of any description but they are there to help so please do ask them about where to go for crisis loans or other help.



Guests Complaints Procedure

WCNS is committed to ensuring that all complaints from guests are taken seriously. Below is an abbreviated version of WCNS complaints procedure – if you would like a copy of the full complaints procedure, please ask a member of staff.

Guests should make any complaint to a member of staff at WCNS (not a volunteer). Details of all complaints will also be forwarded to the WCNS Manager to be recorded in a central register. In the normal course of events, the Manager will seek to resolve complaints informally. If, after an informal meeting with the Manager, the complaint is not resolved to the guest's satisfaction and the guest wishes to take the matter further then they should put the complaint in writing to the Manager, who will then reply in writing. If this still produces no resolution then the Manager will commence the Formal Complaints Procedure as outlined below:

Stage 1 - Formal meeting with Manager plus one Director (other than Chairman): The guest will be given the opportunity to explain the problem, and then to receive a response from the board within 14 days of their written complaint being acknowledged as a formal complaint. Notes of the meeting will be made which will be agreed by all parties & signed within a further 7 day period as a correct record of all in attendance at the meeting. A copy of the signed notes will be given to the guest. The guest will be kept informed of any decisions made and/or action taken within a maximum of 14 days of the date of the meeting.

If the guest is still not satisfied, they may proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 - Formal meeting with two Directors (not including those involved in Stage 1). Similar procedure then follows as stage 1.

Stage 3 - Formal meeting with Chairman & two Directors,

Guests should report directly to the Manager any instances of abuse or neglect from any staff member, volunteer or other guests. You may be asked to confirm any allegation or complaint in writing.

See full Complaints Procedure document for full details of stages 2 & 3.

All documentation relating to formal complaints will be kept on file.



KEY WCNS POLICIES

Health & Safety Policy

WCNS takes its responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation very seriously in order to provide a safe working environment, a safe system of work and a safe environment for our guests. Please see the WCNS Health & Safety Policy on the noticeboard. We regularly review our working practices, including the general environment for our guests, to ensure that best practices are adhered to or adopted and that safety hazards are identified and accidents so far as reasonably practicable are avoided. If a guest has any concerns over Health and Safety they must report them to any Supervisor or the Manager, and the Health & Safety Officer (Dave) will also be informed.

Accidents & First Aid

All accidents and near misses must be reported to a member of staff and then on to the Medical/First Aid Officer (Carol) who will ensure that any necessary preventative measures are introduced. **All accidents must be recorded in the accident book. All supervisors are First Aid trained.** If any employee or guest becomes ill whilst at WCNS and requires medical attention, a doctor or the emergency services will be called or the individual will be taken to Accident & Emergency at the nearest hospital.

WCNS Equality & Diversity Policy

WCNS is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and treating everyone fairly in employment and in access to service provision. Staff seek, through their actions, to uphold WCNS' Equal Opportunities Policy and ensure that discrimination does not occur. WCNS monitors the ethnic origin, gender and disability profile of staff and of Guests.

If you wish to see a copy of the full WCNS Policies, please ask a member of staff.



DURING YOUR STAY AT WCNS

Opening Times for Guests

WCNS is open for overnight accommodation between 6pm – 8.30am. All guests must arrive and be admitted by 10pm (nobody will be admitted after 10pm). Any special approval for late admission has to be given by the Manager or Supervisor in advance and noted in the Log.

Once admitted, you may not leave the WCNS before 6am the following morning. If you choose to leave WCNS, you will not be allowed re-entry again until the following night.

You must leave WCNS by 8.30am each morning unless you are meeting the Manager or Floating Support workers and this has been pre-arranged by the Manager.

Support & Advice At WCNS

This is an essential part of our service. If you are a new guest, please ask the duty supervisor any questions and see the Manager for full details in the morning.

Floating Support Team At WCNS

Our 'Floating Support' outreach team from A2Dominion (funded by Supporting People), attends WCNS three mornings a week for individual appointments with guests. We ask all guests to have regular appointments with a Floating Support advisor (if possible, try to see the same advisor each time). They will work with you on a support plan and, along with the WCNS Manager and staff, can provide you with:

- help finding a place in long-term accommodation to suit your needs
- support and advocacy for housing, employment, personal finance etc
- opportunities to develop your independence and skills, to prepare for independent living in permanent housing;
- connections to other support, advice & learning services in Winchester eg health care, drug and alcohol advice, adult education etc.



WCNS Manager

Michele Price, the WCNS Manager, is available for advice each weekday morning (9am-2pm) in the office or by appointment (please note that the Nightshelter and office is closed from 2-6pm). The Manager will liaise with our Floating Support team and outside agencies in order to help you with 'move on' accommodation or other matters of concern.

WCNS Supervisors

Each night one of our four Supervisors manages the Nightshelter. The Duty Supervisors can help you with any support and advice you need during your stay, and arrange for you to see the Manager.

Other WCNS Staff & Volunteers

During your stay you will also meet WCNS Administrator (Liz) and WCNS Kitchen Supervisor (Karen). In the evenings, you will also meet volunteers who help as cooks, evening helpers and overnighters. Although these individuals may not have any formal training, we hope you find everybody friendly and willing listeners if you wish to talk.

Drug & Alcohol Free Shelter

WCNS is a drug and alcohol free Shelter. No one will be admitted if under the influence, or suspected to be under the influence, of either. The WCNS Supervisor breathalyses all guests prior to entry (an alcometer reading in excess of 0.50 will mean that guest cannot be admitted).

Staff are authorised to undertake random tests or searches of people or belongings on entering WCNS and during their stay. Please be aware that if WCNS staff are suspicious of any unusual activities anywhere inside WCNS or by any guest, then staff may enter any room (including toilets) to check the situation and may also search any personal belongings or persons. If a guest refuses or fails a test, or is found in possession of alcohol/illegal drugs, they will be asked to leave WCNS immediately.



closed.

The Trinity Day Centre

Drop-in Day Centre for Adults...someone to listen & a place to be.

St. Paul's Hill Winchester SO22 5AE

Office Tel: 01962 842827 Drop in/Clients Tel: 01962 622220

Open: 10.00am – 1.45pm Monday to Friday; staying open until 4.00pm for rough sleepers & people staying at WCNS

The Trinity Centre (closely linked to WCNS) is a direct access day service for people experiencing the effects of poverty, mental or physical health problems, substance misuse, unemployment, homelessness, family/relationship break-down and social exclusion. The facilities are free. Usually about 50 people attend the day centre. People are accepted as they are - with the exception of those presenting as aggressive or excessively intoxicated.

The Trinity Centre provides:

- Free lunch
- Advice, information and support - especially on housing and benefits (a Floating Support advisor is on hand too)
- Healthcare including Mental Health Services
- Counselling, and Complementary Therapies
- Adult Education Classes (2-4pm) – cookery, art, IT, music, sport etc
- Laundry, and bath and shower facilities
- Needle Exchange
- Access to Legal Advice
- Recreation – sports opportunities developing soon.

The Trinity Centre and WCNS link closely together, with many WCNS guests attending Trinity during the day. Trinity provides important Health Care Services, Housing Advice Service, and Adult Education opportunities suitable for WCNS guests.



possible).

- During your stay, you can take advantage of the full services of Floating Support, as well as the support and advice from WCNS staff.
- You may be able to move from a short-stay crash bed to one of the 12 full support bed places. Guests selected for moving from a crash bed into the full support beds will be at the discretion of the Manager (with Supervisors' recommendations) and not necessarily on a 'first-come-first-serve' basis.
- If you leave a crash bed for any reason (including 2 week stay being complete), then you can only return to a crash bed after 28 days (although if a full support bed becomes available you may be able to take-up that place).
- Crash beds can be allocated to anybody that meets WCNS's usual entry policy (ie agency or self- referrals, on the door guests, and others).

SUPPORT & SERVICES

WCNS Support

See page 5 for details of the support available to you at WCNS during your stay with us.

Other Services & Support in Winchester

Our other WCNS booklet focuses on all the Support, Services and Information available to you at WCNS and at a large number of other services in Winchester and beyond. Please make sure you have a copy of this booklet, it includes important information and contact details for Housing opportunities, advice and support centres for employment and educational opportunities, counselling, substance misuse support etc.

We have included on the next page details of the Trinity Day Centre as this centre is particularly closely linked to WCNS and offers a range of valuable services and support to WCNS guests in the day when we are



Facilities

At WCNS you will be provided with hot drinks, an evening meal, a bed, bath/shower, clothes washing facilities, and a 'help-your-self' breakfast.

Meals

A 2-course evening meal is served in the dining room once prepared by the volunteer cook – usually between 7:30 – 8:00pm. A meal will only be served to guests staying overnight. No food is to be taken out of the dining area (eg. into the lounge or bedrooms).

Breakfast of toast and cereal is provided on a 'help-yourself' basis' in the dining area from 6.45am, but will not be available after 8:00am.

Bedrooms

Beds are to be made by guests every morning. Please do not leave any items on the floor but place on the bed or in trays to allow cleaning of the floor. Bedrooms must be kept tidy and a guest may be excluded for repeatedly ignoring this rule. Please store your personal effects in the storage provided in your room. **If you are not returning to the Shelter, all your personal items must be removed from your room; you can ask for these to be stored for up to 28 days as long as you can arrange a time to collect them as soon as possible.** After 28 days items not collected will be disposed of or donated elsewhere.

Morning 'wake-up call' is at 7:00am and guests must complete their breakfast and toiletries by 8:30am, as the WCNS closes at this time.

Smoking is allowed in bedrooms (p11) but not the consumption of food. The Duty Supervisor is responsible for enforcing this rule. Drinks can be taken into bedrooms but please return cups to the tray in the Lounge first thing in the morning. Guests are asked not to congregate in one another's bedrooms and are not allowed in bedrooms of the other sex. Rooms are for the use of guests allocated to them.



Relaxation Areas

The Lounge and the Library are provided for the guests to use until 'lights out' (11.00pm). Please be appropriately dressed at all times. No smoking is allowed in the lounge, library or any public areas.

A computer is provided for guests to use in the lounge area. Please let the supervisor know if you would like help using this.

The library is a quiet room for reading and relaxing in peace.

The television can be used according to the choice of the majority in the lounge. The television will be switched off at 11pm in line with 'lights-out' when the lounge will be closed.

Laundry

WCNS provides facilities for the washing and drying of your clothes free of charge in a separate Laundry Room. **Please complete your laundry before 11.00pm at the latest.** The laundry facilities are available on a rota basis, under the direction of the Duty Supervisor who will also make sure that you know how to use the machines properly and will provide you with washing powder. You may also hand-wash your clothes in the sink provided. Please keep the laundry area clean, tidy and safe. Guests are responsible for the safekeeping of their clothes & belongings at all times.

Please do not put trainers into the washing or drying machines.

A ceiling-mounted clothes rack is provided where your clothes may be left to dry overnight after being washed. **Any clothes left by guests in the Laundry Room will be kept until the evening shift for guests to collect but if not claimed will either be disposed of or added to the clothing store.** This will apply equally to clothes or belongings left lying around the building, other than bedrooms. If the laundry facilities are abused in any way, the Duty Supervisor may temporarily close the Laundry room.



LENGTH OF STAY - WCNS BEDS POLICY

'Full Support Bed' Guests

- We have 12 full support beds. To stay in one of these beds you must engage fully with the Floating Support team during your stay: they will provide you with a support plan and help moving forward.
- Floating Support and WCNS aim to help you prepare for independent living and to move on into more permanent accommodation as quickly as possible (ideally within 3 months of arriving at WCNS).
- **We ask all guests to actively seek alternative accommodation, and to sign on to the homeless and housing registers within 2 weeks of arrival at WCNS.**
- WCNS is a first stop for the homeless, and the only such facility in Winchester or nearby. We have great demand for our bed spaces and whilst all our beds are full we have to turn away many who are vulnerable and need emergency shelter. If we can help find our guests suitable long-term accommodation, with their best efforts too, as quickly as possible then we can also offer this service to a larger number of people in need.
- **If you are offered an 'appropriate' bed in more permanent accommodation, then we ask that you do take up this offer or leave WCNS within 1 week.** 'An appropriate bed' is defined as a bed that is offered to you via your Floating Support worker or WCNS Manager or which you have applied for yourself.

'Crash Bed' Guests – Up to 14 Nights Stay

- **If you are in one of our 3 'crash beds' you can stay up to 14 nights and must then leave to make way for new guests** (these short-stay beds aim to offer as much help as possible to as many homeless as



Areas out of bounds for Guests

Guests should not be in the Manager's office, Duty Supervisor's office, or the Overnighter's room, except when being assisted by a member of staff. Guests are not allowed in the kitchen area for any reason.

Warnings & Exclusions

After 2 verbal warnings (for breaking any house rule), a guest will then receive a written warning from the Manager for any 3rd violation of any house rule. **If a guest violates any house rule on a 4th occasion, the guest will then be asked to leave and will be excluded from WCNS for 6 months or more.**

Supervisors and the Manager have the authority to exclude a guest who is unwilling to co-operate or is breaking house rules, and they have the authority to issue warnings. In consultation with the supervisors, the Manager will determine whether a formal warning or exclusion should follow. Exclusion can be for 6-months or permanently. (see p12)

Dangerous Objects/Weapons

It is an offence under the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 to possess, in a public place, an offensive weapon without lawful authority. **On entering WCNS, all guests must declare any weapons or objects which might be used as weapons, and hand them to staff for safe keeping.**



Bathing & Toiletries

Bathroom facilities are available to guests on a 'first come first served' basis. The bathroom is kept locked when not in use – the Duty Supervisor will open it for you on request. WCNS usually has a limited range of toiletries for use by guests.

Supplies

WCNS keeps a limited range of clothes and other items for guests. Supervisors can supply items to you on request (bath, hand, and face towels remain the property of the WCNS and should be handed to the Duty Supervisor at the end of the guest's stay).

Whilst at WCNS the Manager, if requested, can issue you with a Basic Bank Voucher for clothing (Winchester Basics Bank is nearby and is a charity which gathers donations of food and clothing to give to those in need). On departure from WCNS, if requested, the Manager can issue you with a Basics Bank Voucher for clothing and also food. No vouchers are issued by WCNS to non-residents.



House Rules

Nights away / Nights out / Exclusions

Guests staying in one of the 'crash beds' will not be allowed to spend nights out during their stay – if a guest in a 'crash bed' fails to turn up one night then the bed will be considered vacant and may be filled by a new guest the following day/night.

Guests staying in one of our 12 'full support' beds are allowed up to 2 nights staying elsewhere every 4 weeks if they wish – these nights *must* be pre-booked and recorded with a Supervisor or the Manager. Any night out taken without a Supervisor's or the Manager's prior permission will result in a guest receiving a verbal warning. Only under exceptional circumstances, discussed and agreed in advance with the Manager or a Supervisor, may a guest stay away for more than 2 nights per 4-week period. This rule is in place due to the very high demand for our bed places and we do not like to leave beds empty when we have to turn away so many people in need of a bed.

If a guest simply fails to turn-up for their bed one night, without having given any notice to the Supervisor or Manager, then the guest's bed will be reserved for the following night but they will receive a verbal warning. If the guest fails to turn up for their bed on another occasion (not in succession), they will receive a 2nd verbal warning. On any 3rd occasion the guest will receive a written warning, and **if a guest fails to turn up to occupy their bed for a 4th time their bed will be given to a new guest.**

If a guest fails to turn up for 2 nights in succession, it will be assumed that the guest has left and their bed will be given to a new guest.

If a guest fails to be admitted to WCNS for more than 2 nights in a row due to eg failing the Alcometer test on the door, then it will be unlikely that this guest will be able to keep their bed. The decision about exclusion will be made by the Manager in consultation with Supervisors.



Smoking

Under the national Smoking law **no one may smoke in any public area of the Nightshelter, or within the immediate area outside.** You are not allowed to smoke in the lounge, library, toilets, kitchen, dining room or any other public area. **You are allowed to smoke in your own bedroom but please take care** and observe health, safety and fire rules and be sure to extinguish all cigarettes and be considerate to others.

Visitors

Guests are not allowed to bring visitors into WCNS.

Personal Belongings

No more than two holdalls per guest will be accepted into WCNS. **Any personal belongings left behind by a guest will be stored for 28 days maximum and then disposed of.** No large items can be stored. WCNS does not accept responsibility for the loss or damage of any personal belongings during your stay. We suggest you use the 'Lockup' facility and lodge any valuable items with the Duty Supervisor for safekeeping. This is a limited facility, as space is restricted.

Medicines

You must tell the Supervisor about all medication you are taking or have in your possession. During your stay you should leave any prescribed medication in the safekeeping of the Supervisor who will store them in the secure Drugs Cabinet. You are responsible for taking your medicines as prescribed.

Abusive, Violent & Anti-social Behaviour

No one who is violent or abusive will be admitted. Repeated anti-social behaviour, such as loud noise, harassment of others, or inappropriate dress, is not tolerated and will result in warnings or exclusion. If a member of staff receives any complaints or comments about poor behaviour by a guest towards any of our volunteers or other guests, the guest will be asked to explain. **Any abusive or inappropriate comments to anybody at WCNS may result in a warning or a guest being asked to leave.**