



a bed for the night

Reading Churches Night Shelter

2020 Volunteer Manual & Declaration Form

Existing Volunteers



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In association with



Reading Christian Network and Reading Street Pastors



Reading Borough Council and St Mungo's





Introduction

Training requirements

By general consensus it has been agreed that volunteers who have already had experience of B4N **do not** need to go through full training every year.

To prepare existing volunteers with previous B4N experience for B4N 2020 we will be running shorter one hour **refresher training sessions** which are **recommended for those who received the full training 2 or more years ago**.

As has been the case in previous years it has been agreed that all existing volunteers will be asked to read this '*manual*' which is based on the **report** from last year.

Please therefore:-

1. Read the following document.
2. Print and sign two copies of the form at the end and send one copy to FCG to say that you have done so (or scan and email admin@abedforthenight.org.uk).

Some basic reminders

Obligations and risks

You will have already signed a **volunteer agreement** that states that you will **abide by the rules** of the shelter. It is essential that you understand that many, if not all our guests, are vulnerable and/or dangerous.

St Mungo's provide Faith with detailed backgrounds on all our guests. However do not inform all 300 of our volunteers of personal data.

By way of illustrating the dangers, over the two years we have given a bed to a **murderer**, a **paedophile**, any number of **violent offenders**, not to mention numerous **burglars** and **shop-lifters** and many **drug users!**

We therefore put in place **guidelines** (rules!) which should **make us all safe** under any circumstances, irrespective of specific individuals.

You are reminded to take extreme care around '**one to one**' contact, creating opportunities for allegations to be made. Avoid ever being out of sight or 'earshot' of other volunteers.

Do not arrange to **meet guests** outside of the venue without talking this through with the venue co-ordinator and/or your pastor. Always ensure that you meet only in a **public place**. Do not offer to look after personal possessions. Do not offer **transport**, unless here again you have carefully discussed with your co-ordinator/pastor; you take another volunteer with you; someone else knows exactly where you are going, for how long and when you will be back. Protect your own safety at all times. If in doubt – don't!



Never give out your **phone number** unless you get a separate specific SIM for the purpose which can be discarded should you subsequently need to break off communication.

Volunteers can assist with B4N in a number of different ways

- Setting up the shelter late afternoon early evening (Probably from 6.00 pm) - Setting up tables, chairs, beds and bedding, prepping table games and other activities. Health and Safety checks of premises.
- Preparing / (Probably from 6.00 / 6.30 pm)
- Registering guests as they arrive 7.30 – 8.00 plus
- Serving food & drink 7.30 till 9.30
- Offering hospitality to guests (7.00 pm till 10.00 pm)
- Overnight (9.30 / 10.00 pm till 7.00 a.m. Making sure everyone is comfortable and settled in for the night; lights out at agreed time. At least one volunteer to remain awake overnight.
- Waking up guests;
- Cooking and serving breakfast;
- Clearing beds and bedding away; washing and tidying up; cleaning and tidying church.
- Securing the building, locking main doors;

What is required of Volunteers?

- Readiness to read and abide by the **B4N policies and guidelines**, especially regarding **Health & Safety procedures**.
- All Venue Co-ordinators / Church Leads need to familiarise themselves with the full Policies and Procedures documents.
- Ability to respond calmly but quickly in an emergency.
- Ability to take responsibility for the period of their shift.
- Judgement of when to call for help.
- Basic knowledge of the building, especially the location of fire exits.
- Willingness to follow instructions from team leader, and work as part of a team.
- Knowledge of basic first aid would be useful.
- A heart for the vulnerable, poor and needy and a willingness to be challenged and changed.



B4N 2019 Overview

B4N 2019 was the fifth year of running 'A Bed for The Night' (B4N), Reading Churches Winter Night Shelter.

The B4N night shelter opened for 12 weeks in 2019.

The night shelter opened on Friday 4 January and the last night was Thursday 28 March 2019. This is the longest continuous time that the shelter has been open since it began. Last year B4N ran for 2 months (plus a week's extension into March due to extreme weather). This year, FAITH received funding from the government to run B4N for a third month until the end of March. The funding also covered payment for overnight supervisors.

In total 11 churches hosted B4N 2019.

There were 3 new churches hosting B4N for the first time - **Abbey Baptist Church, Wycliffe Baptist Church and Argyle Community Church**. The Salvation Army continued to be solely responsible for providing emergency beds under the Severe Weather Emergency Programme (SWEP). Salvation Army is also now the location of 10 'sit up' beds used to provide shelter to rough sleepers in Reading (set up during 2018 as part of changes to the structure of the Housing Pathway). Providence Chapel provided food to B4N guests on Monday evenings.

Venues and Nights	January	February	March
Monday	Abbey Baptist Church		
Tuesday	CiRDIC		
Wednesday	LifeSpring Church		
Thursday	St Laurence Church	Carey Baptist Church	Argyle Community Church
Friday	Greyfriars Church	New Hope Church	
Saturday	All Nations Church		Wesley Methodist Church
Sunday	Wycliffe Baptist Church		

As in previous years, the main referrer of rough sleepers to B4N was **St Mungos** Rough Sleeper Outreach Service. This year we **also took referrals from other services** including the **British Red Cross, New Leaf and Reading Borough Council (RBC)**, as well as rough sleepers who self-referred and were known to FAITH from our **ReadiStreet** soup run outreach mission. This year **referrals were not limited to those with local connection only**.

Of the 53 guests referred, **42 guests stayed at B4N in 2019**.

The number of guests staying at the shelter started off low, as in previous years, at 6 guests on the first night. Numbers grew quickly over the first few weeks and **averaged around 16 guests per night over the course of B4N 2019**. This compares to an average of 10 guests per night during B4N 2018. The maximum number of guests to stay on one night was 22. **We provided a total of 1,310 bed spaces to our guests this year**.

At the time of writing this report, **18 of the 42 guests who stayed at B4N 2019 have been housed**, 7 are in temporary accommodation, 9 are not in contact, and only 8 are known to have returned to rough sleeping.

The shelter ran smoothly on the whole, as per the previous four years, with a few incidents which we will touch on later in the report. However no serious incidents occurred.



B4N 2019 Review

Volunteers

Over 300 volunteers helped to run B4N 2019; we had over 100 new volunteers and around 200 volunteers who had taken part in a previous year. We are so grateful for the commitment and dedication of the amazing volunteers we have – without them B4N would not be possible.

New volunteers this year came mainly from the three churches joining B4N as hosts for the first time – **Abbey Baptist Church, Wycliffe Baptist Church and Argyle Community Church**. Many new volunteers also joined from the Catholic churches and from the wider church community.

Overnight supervisors were appointed for the first time this year to manage the team of overnight volunteers and ensure someone was awake at all times. This was a paid role for 10 hours from 10pm to 8am.

Volunteer Training

Four training sessions for new volunteers were held in November 2018, December 2018 and January 2019. Despite being attended by over 100 volunteers, there was still demand for more training sessions to be held as more individuals wanted to be involved but could not make the training dates or found out about them too late.

For B4N 2020 we plan to start publicising much earlier in the year and to the wider church community. We also plan to better publicise the optional drug awareness training (run by IRIS) so that more volunteers have the opportunity to attend. We also plan to run a shorter re-fresher training session for volunteers with 2+ years' experience.

Registers for evening and breakfast team volunteers

During B4N 2019, volunteer registers were completed at each venue with the venue Co-ordinator generally taking responsibility, sometimes prompted by the member of FAITH staff on duty. This was an improvement on last year when registers were completed more sporadically. Future improvement could still be made as breakfast volunteers were generally less good at signing the volunteer registers.

Keeping the volunteer attendance enables FAITH to keep an up-to-date record of volunteers and current emails and contact details. It also enables FAITH to ensure venues are sufficiently manned.

Transportation of Beds and Bedding

Very special thanks needs to go to **George Joyce** who helped transport the beds and bedding every Saturday and Sunday mornings and to **Trevor Mayall** who helped with transportation on Thursday mornings. We are very grateful to both of you – Thank you.

Thanks also for transporting beds and bedding goes to Amanda and Mary from FAITH who covered Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Although the bedding bags were only supposed to have guest bedding in them, over the weeks guests took to leaving more of their clothes and some possessions in their bedding bags. This definitely needs monitoring as we cannot be held liable for anything that goes missing during transportation or storage at the venues.

Bed linen

This year we changed the approach to washing bed linen and this was done once a week instead of each night. Guests therefore had the same bed linen for a week which was transported from venue to venue in their own labelled bedding bag. This saved unnecessary laundry costs and time for B4N volunteers.

Very special thanks to the **laundry teams at Greyfriars Church and New Hope Church** who washed the linen each week and to those volunteers who helped with changing the linen on Fridays. Also thanks to the **ladies from the Catholic churches** who helped with bed linen that needed washing outside the weekly cycles. Thank you all.



Reading Street Pastors

As in previous years, most nights we had at least one Street Pastor on the door at each venue. B4N are extremely grateful for this relationship and the support that they provide on a daily basis at B4N. Feedback from some Street Pastors in previous years has been that more information is required about who can attend for dinner only. This year information on 'dinner only' guests was added to guest lists by the member of FAITH staff on duty. This could be done more consistently by all FAITH staff next year.

St Mungo's

As in previous years B4N ran with St Mungo's as our main referrer. As the rough sleeper outreach service commissioned by RBC, they are well placed to know who is in genuine need of a roof and a bed, and of any other health or wellbeing needs. They are also able to determine whether an individual has a local connection and therefore, whether they will be able to be found long term accommodation in Reading. We have developed an excellent working relationship with St Mungo's over the past four years.

St Mungo's attended morning sessions at B4N on average once per week to meet with guests they had referred into the night shelter.

Referrals from other services

This year we also took referrals from other services including the British Red Cross, New Leaf and Reading Borough Council (RBC), as well as rough sleepers who self-referred and were known to FAITH from our ReadStreet outreach mission. For those B4N guests who had not been verified as rough sleepers by St Mungo's, we worked with them to identify their support needs and signpost them to the relevant services.

Local Connection referral criteria removed

Prior to B4N opening its doors this year, it was agreed that St Mungo's would also refer those without local connection to B4N. This was a change to previous years. Although it would be very unlikely for someone without local connection to be housed in Reading during or after B4N, we made the decision to provide temporary relief and shelter over the winter months to prevent rough sleeping, particularly if bed spaces were available.

The government funding received by B4N this year was also aimed at preventing homelessness and getting people off the streets irrespective of where they come from. At the B4N 2019 planning meeting on 25 October 2018, Matt Farrow (Rough Sleeping Interventions Co-ordinator at Reading Borough Council) clarified that those with no local connection would still not be able to be put on the Housing Pathway. However they could be helped to reconnect with the place they came from, including any homeless European rough sleepers.

Reading Borough Council (RBC)

This year B4N worked closely with RBC throughout the night shelter and received some referrals directly from the council themselves. FAITH staff were given the opportunity to attend some Access Panel meetings (held weekly at the council by the Homelessness Partnerships team and attended by other homeless / housing support services). These meetings were extremely helpful for us to understand the processes involved for individuals to be housed in Reading under the Homelessness Pathway. We also attended numerous meeting with RBC to discuss the housing options for B4N guests specifically.

Matt Farrow from RBC attended several evening sessions at B4N to talk with our guests and offer them advice on the next steps they could take towards housing. This included making appointments for some of our guests with the Housing Advice team at the council and advising guests on how to go about setting up claims for housing benefit. Matt's presence at B4N was hugely appreciated and made a real difference to the outcomes for some of our guests, helping them to be housed sooner. Thank you Matt!



B4N 2019 Referrals and Outcomes

The success of B4N again speaks for itself with the number of our guests being housed and engaging with services. These are the figures for B4N 2019 with figures from previous years reports included for comparison.

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Number of nights B4N open	84	64	58	56	31
Referrals from St Mungo's	34	28	52	38	26
Other Referrals (incl Red Cross, Council, Rahab in 2017)	6	0	1	0	0
Church Referrals	0	2			
Self-referral (of individual known to FAITH)	13	10			
Total number of guests referred to B4N	53	40	53	38	26
Number using B4N	42	34	33	38	22
Number housed (including Launchpad, SArmy, Private, Hope Into Action)	18	11	17	22	7
Long term Hospital	1	0	1	0	0
Prison	1	1	1	1	1
Family / Friends	5	0	4	0	2
Waiting List / Homelessness pathway	0	5	5	4	0
Left area	0	0	2	0	0
Waiting for Rehab	0	0	1	0	0
Used sporadically / Not engaging	0	6	4	0	4
Waiting List / Ongoing no recourse	8	3	3	0	0
Lost Contact	9	4	0	0	0

Of the 53 guests referred in 2019, **42 guests stayed at B4N this year**. This compares to 34 guests who stayed at B4N last year (albeit the night shelter was open 20 nights fewer in 2018 compared to 2019).

At the time of writing this report, **18 of the 42 guests who stayed at B4N 2019 have been housed**, 7 are in temporary accommodation (including hospital, prison and sofa surfing with either family or friends), 9 we are no longer in contact with; only 8 are known to have returned to rough sleeping (the majority of these either have no local connection or no recourse to public funds).

Comments from guests:

I used to think that food and clothes handouts couldn't really help people that much and didn't understand why they were necessary. Only when I became homeless did I realise. I thought I wouldn't survive, that I was going to starve or freeze out in the cold. I am so grateful to Bed for the Night, to St Mungos, to the food and clothes handouts, they really have saved my life.

I can't thank you enough...I'm grateful for everyone's help getting me here; Thank you for everything

I wanted to thank you again for listening.... my appointment went well and I think having spoken about it already helped me today; Thanks for your understanding

You give me life advice that is very valuable; Thank you so much

Everything went well with the council and I've got the keys 😊😊....Thank you 😊

I'm doing much better now, can't really tell you why... actually maybe I can...I've started going to church on Sundays - that might have something to do with it

I'm trying to find a church to go to and I thought I would try all the churches that we stayed at during B4N

I'd like to volunteer so I can give something back for everything you've done for me



The Guest List (including 'Reserves')

We operated a 'guest list' system as we've done for the previous four years with St Mungo's sending a list out each afternoon with guest names (and guest assessments for any new referrals) to Mary, B4N Co-ordinator. This then went in the file that travelled with a member of FAITH staff to each venue.

Like the previous year FAITH only sent round one file, which held the guest list and the guests' signed agreements. The file containing guests' assessments was kept at the office with any relevant information passed on to the venue Co-ordinators. This was to protect guest confidentiality. Only information pertinent to guests' welfare, dietary needs or volunteer safety was given to the venue Co-ordinators.

This year the number of guests on the guest list each night often exceeded the maximum capacity of bed spaces (15 males and 3 females). The increase in names on the list compared to previous years resulted primarily from the fact that guests could be referred from other services, not only from St Mungos.

If the list was full, any additional referrals were added to the list as reserves on the basis that they could have a bed for the night if there was a spare bed space at 10pm. This was clearly explained to guests on their first night at the shelter if they were being admitted as a reserve. It was ensured that guests fully understood that a bed could not be guaranteed each night until a space on the main list became available.

As not everyone on the guest list showed each night, the reserve system worked well and there was no occasion that a guest on the reserve list needed to be turned away. Having guests on a reserve list meant that many more bed spaces could be filled and the B4N occupancy rate increased significantly from last year as shown in the table below.

Percentage Use of B4N	2019	2018
Total Number of nights guests attended	1,310	517
Maximum nights available (Nights x Bed Spaces)	84 x 18 = 1,512	64 x 18 = 1,152
Total usage / occupancy rate	87%	45%

Guests who turned up who were not on the list were assessed by the Co-ordinator/FAITH staff and then either allowed to stay on the proviso that they presented at the council / engaged with St Mungo's in the morning or they were offered sleeping bag, duvets and pillows if they could not be allowed in. Where this happened during the SWEP period, they were referred to Salvation Army at Willow House where emergency beds are provided during Severe Weather. If SWEP was not running, the individual was asked to provide a sleep site so that the Co-ordinator/FAITH staff could notify St Mungos via StreetLink.

StreetLink is a national organisation the public can use to report the location of someone who is rough sleeping. StreetLink will contact the local outreach service to pass on the information and the local outreach team will search for the rough sleeper at the reported location, usually within a couple of days but potentially the very next morning!

The number of guests staying at the shelter **averaged around 16 guests per night over the course of B4N 2019.** This compares to an average of 10 guests per night during B4N 2018.

The maximum number of guests to stay on one night was 22. This was at one of the larger venues with more capacity.



Guest behaviour

In general, guests were well behaved and courteous and would happily undertake set up/clear-up duties if asked. Many willingly volunteered to help pack up and load the van in the mornings. Several guests enjoyed coming back for a meal even when housed.

Many of our B4N volunteers commented on the camaraderie between our guests which was so evident this year. Our guests looked out for each other both during the evenings/mornings and during the day when not at B4N. We saw strong friendships grow. In particular our guests loved music, whether listening to records over some speakers or playing instruments themselves. There were pianos at quite a few of our venues and when guitars and even a drum kit were provided, the singing, dancing and laughter that followed were a joy to behold.

Several guests requested Wi-Fi, not all venues had this but where possible a code was given to the guests.

We had two guests with cars at B4N this year. One was able to park their car securely during their stay at B4N. For the other, parking proved a problem at one of the venues on the first night they stayed as they received a parking ticket. However they managed to get this overturned due to their circumstances. On future nights they parked their car in a near-by car park to the venue also used by B4N volunteers.

Some of our guests began to feel frustrated particularly towards the end of the night shelter as they waited for news on their housing. Our volunteers did a great job lifting their spirits and encouraging them to stay positive.

Several of our guests had significant mental health problems and complex needs this year. We had many guests suffering with addictions to drugs, alcohol or gambling.

Incidents

Three guests were banned for abusive language and aggressive behaviour towards volunteers and other guests whilst under the influence of alcohol. Incidents happened two nights in a row. Warnings were given to the three guests after the first night's behaviour. On the second night, similar behaviour arose and the guests were asked to leave by the venue Co-ordinator. FAITH staff took the decision that the guests' behaviour merited a permanent ban from all venues.

Drug, alcohol and smoking use on premises was evident at B4N but only on few occasions when beer cans or cigarette butts were found in bins or toilets. Drug paraphernalia including clean needles were found on two occasions in guests bedding bags when linen was changed. A clean needle/syringe was also found in one of the halls after a morning clean up. No guests were excluded solely for drug/alcohol use because unless caught in the act it becomes very difficult to exclude any particular individual for using on site.

On one occasion toilets were blocked with "non-toilet" waste material and were very expensive to unblock. This also occurred last year and prevented the use of the showers for guests at B4N this year apart from a couple of occasions. The venue was not comfortable with the risk of further blockages.

There were no thefts reported of guest or volunteer belongings. This was an improvement on last year when two guest mobile phones were stolen while at B4N. Guests and volunteers were often reminded to be vigilant.

As was the case last year, we had an intimate relationship develop between two guests and they wanted to spend time with each other alone, on one occasion in a toy cupboard! Volunteers and staff were vigilant and the relationship itself did not cause any major concerns. However both guests were excluded for abusive behaviour and the relationship dissolved after they were no longer guests at B4N.

Mental Health

Several of our guests this year had complex needs and suffered with both significant mental health problems and alcohol addictions. On multiple occasions, incidents occurred during the night because other guests were not able to sleep. They were disturbed by the behaviour of our guests with complex needs such as talking loudly, becoming abusive and aggressive, picking fights and drinking in the toilets. Other guests were not tolerant of these behaviours and this resulted in some heated arguments including one physical confrontation when two guests needed to be separated. These individuals required more intensive support than we could provide at B4N.



Despite this our volunteers and FAITH staff managed any incidents, keeping calm and diffusing the situation. The guests were moved out of the night shelter as soon as alternative and more appropriate accommodation became available.

Police Visits

The police were called to B4N on one occasion this year when a guest arrived on edge and extremely paranoid. Their behaviour escalated rapidly and became out of control with shouting, angry outbursts and hitting out at the walls in the building. This potentially serious incident was dealt with in less than 20 minutes from start to finish as volunteers remained calm and the police arrived within minutes to detain the guest, remove them from the premises and take them to Prospect Park hospital.

Medical Issues / Ambulances

An ambulance was called to B4N on one occasion. The partner of one of the guests had sustained injuries in a fight earlier on in the day when he arrived at B4N one evening. He had bruises and cuts to the face and was clearly in a lot of pain and discomfort, falling in and out of consciousness and having difficulty breathing. An ambulance was called and an assessment carried out by the paramedics. He was advised to go to hospital in the ambulance but refused to go.

On another occasion a taxi was called to take a guest to hospital after calling NHS 111 for a tooth abscess.

On another occasion a B4N guest was taken to hospital when he slipped and twisted his ankle after getting out of bed during the night.

Paracetamol and Ibuprofen were added to the first aid kit and it was noted on the daily venue report sheet if it was needed by a guest for routine ailments.

HOLT Nurses

The Health Outreach Liaison Team - HOLT nurses attended B4N in the morning sessions once a week on a pre-arranged day. This gave FAITH staff the opportunity to advise guests when the nurses would be at B4N the following morning. Guests felt relaxed and would approach the nurses if they needed medical assistance or advice. The nurses' attendance was extremely helpful and we are very grateful for the HOLT team's commitment to B4N.



Debrief and feedback from volunteers

After the end of the night shelter **volunteers** were invited to a **thank you session** and asked to provide feedback. Around 70 people were able to attend we were able to get some valuable feedback. There is a whole range of opinions and ideas around rules and timings. It also became evident that the layout of the different venues and the skills sets of the key team members affects the way in which each venue works.

The following quotes summarise the feedback we received from our volunteers.

The best bits about B4N

Serving – my worship to God; involvement with other churches in Reading

The sense of really making a difference; feeling fulfilled; the experience was humbling

Seeing guests start to hope; good open conversations with guests; I enjoyed banter with and listening to guests

Hearing about successful re-housing

I learned so much more about homeless provision in Reading

The amazing volunteer team, I loved seeing them every week

Being able to help gave me so much more than I gave

Wonderful guests, fantastic volunteers, great atmosphere, amazing Co-ordinator

Good sense of team work within the church and feeling part of the local community

My perception of addicts changed; my personal boundaries were stretched

The breakfasts! A note from a guest given with a sweet saying 'Compliments to the Chef'

Guests bringing sweets to say thank you, when they had nothing, and we have everything

The willingness of guests who have so little to share what they have

What worked well this year?

Friendly atmosphere and good relationships between guests and volunteers

Seeing the camaraderie between the guests

Smooth organization of the venues

Giving guests opportunity to play instruments – guitar, piano and singing for the entertainment of others

The welcome on the door from the Street Pastors was appreciated

Good the way bed linen was managed, sharing of the bedding and central washing made a big difference

What was difficult?

The difference between venues and how this means each venue has different rules. It can be hard to communicate this to guests. Confusion about food at Providence Chapel / Abbey.

The time before B4N started I wasn't sure what to expect, who would be there and what would happen. Then I got there and was OK 😊

Working and sorting family life, leaving children at home, to be free to volunteer, once at B4N – no problems!

Getting guests up in the morning! Lack of sleep, early morning switch over, snoring! 3 months was a long time!

Knowing how best to converse with guests; dealing with guests with complex needs; responding to incidents

Seeing people as God does, without judgement



Timing – ensuring it all runs smoothly and getting the church back to functioning

Not knowing outcomes of the guests or if they need more prayer

Ideas for improvements

More prayer, get more people praying for their church's B4N, pray with your shift (or previous shift); prayer at the end of shift with your team

More publicity to churches in a wider area for volunteers, more church members involved with volunteering

Start preparation of B4N earlier (ideally after the summer we could have the first contact with the Co-ordinators)

More training sessions for new volunteers (video session sent to venue Co-ordinators to give in house training)

Uniform night rules across every venue – time doors are locked and no cigarettes till morning!

Serve meal at same time each night (encourage discipline in chaotic lives)

Text guests reminders for dinner and breakfast times etc.

Consistency among churches applying the rules

Clearer boundaries about alcohol being brought in or secreted outside for further use

Having the guest list earlier, knowing expected numbers before shift, more communication on dinner only guests

Extra morning help would help B4N run more smoothly, let morning chef know how many guests for breakfast

Ladies appreciated a separate room

Some would like entertainment (TV, film, games). Others want to sleep. Could we cater for both? E.g. separate common room? More music, instruments and more games available for guests

Knowing how much of a guest's belongings should be locked away; managing expectations of what they can bring; who to refer to when odd things are brought and left, like a TV or personal ID

Shelter for welcoming volunteers if outside in cold conditions, make sure heating on for guests inside church

Better kitchen equipment, serving utensils, food warmer, a fool proof dishwasher!

More co-ordination on dinner menus, guests commented that they would prefer not to have the same food every week at a particular venue if possible, and not the same meal prepared for too many nights in a row

Guidance to guests on personal diet, provide fruit (we had a lot of cake!) give the guests recipe ideas

In the mornings, guests often wanted food to take away. Ensure breakfast bars available.

Churches to provide a budget for those buying food so not to overspend. Central fund to help with food costs?



Comments from St Mungo's, RBC and HOLT

Comments from St Mungos

St Mungo's team feedback for B4N 2019.

- The B4N staff and volunteers would refer people to and use the StreetLink telephone number to report if they were rough sleeping and unable to access B4N which enabled our service to target these vulnerable individuals on outreach and in some cases then refer into B4N or other services which was great.
- We valued it enabling St Mungo's to have more opportunities to engage with individuals away from the streets.
- We recognised that clients enjoyed using the service and felt supported when attending and liked having an alternative option away from the main Homeless Pathway in Reading.
- It was great to see people move from the street, into B4N and then into accommodation. Without B4N running, these individuals may have had to continue to rough sleep until moving into accommodation.
- Clients reported being listened to – having a TV to watch the football.
- The B4N allows St Mungo's and FAITH to work closely together and build on already existing relationships which we really value.
- That even when client's behaviour had been at times challenging, that conversations were able to be had about what that person would need to do to re-access if asked to leave with clear guidelines and processes.
- That it would be useful if B4N staff could email over the list each morning, rather than St Mungo's having to call staff and sometimes wait for responses as this slowed down St Mungo's processes of knowing if there were spaces to allocate etc.
- That St Mungo's saw this year a reduction in spaces that they had available to allocate clients to.
- Recognised that sometimes it was difficult having St Mungo's clients and non-St Mungo's clients on the list and working towards different rules – particularly around non-use of spaces vs. being removed from list.

Comments from Matt Farrow, RBC

Due to a successful bid for funding from central Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative, Reading Borough Council was able to provide financial assistance to FAITH Christian Group and their partners to contribute to the running costs of B4N this year. A total of £25,000 was made available to extend B4N until the end of March 2019 and to contribute to the cost of a Co-ordinator role throughout the winter period.

This is the 5th year that B4N has been in operation in Reading and it continues to go from strength to strength. The relationship between FAITH, their partners, St Mungo's and Reading Borough Council is integral to the success of the night shelter and we will continue to develop this moving into 2020.

Comment from Amanda, HOLT nurse (Health Outreach Liaison Team)

A Bed for the Night was an excellent provision to offer shelter for the homeless clients in Reading during the winter months. A number of these clients were suffering from physical and mental health problems. Mary communicated regularly with HOLT to allow the team to be updated. Mary also referred clients to HOLT directly if she had a particular concern and supported the client with an ongoing plan regarding appointments and housing options.



Special Thanks

Blake Morgan who not only volunteer for B4N but have nominated us for their Charity of the Year for the past three years.

Anne Bingham at “Forgotton Feet” who came to provide foot care to our B4N guests on two evenings during the night shelter.

Deb O’Riordan who brought her folk group to sing and entertain our B4N guests for an evening.

Charles Butler who bought us some replacement beds.

Peter Wells who bought us some replacement beds and a replacement 'B4N Rules' banner.

ISG PLC who donated a large hot food buffet to B4N on one evening.

All the volunteers and venues that donated bedding, bed linen, towels, clothes and food for our B4N guests.



Proposals / Changes for B4N 2020

Before the night shelter

- Arrange a praise and worship service for all volunteers before B4N starts (possibly at Greyfriars).
- Start B4N publicity and training earlier – we plan to give earlier notice of training dates and in the publicity, provide a list of ways that people can be involved in B4N.
- We will consider a member of FAITH staff coming to talk about B4N in churches that are not B4N venues in order to make more people aware of B4N and get more volunteers involved from the wider church community.
- We plan to offer 'refresher training' to our existing volunteers who received training more than 2 years ago. This will be a shorter session than the compulsory training session for new volunteers. The 'refresher training' will not be compulsory. However existing volunteers must sign and return a declaration form confirming that they have refreshed their training by at least reading the latest volunteer manual **BEFORE** they can volunteer.
- First Aid courses will be offered to Co-ordinators and overnight supervisors at each venue to ensure there is always a volunteer with an up to date first aid certificate on site.
- We will consider whether DBS checks need to be obtained for Co-ordinators and overnight volunteers based on the most up to date guidance.
- We plan to better publicise the optional drug awareness training (run by Iris) so that more volunteers have the opportunity to attend.
- Reading Borough Council Adult Safeguarding course dates will be made available to volunteers.

During the night shelter

- We plan to apply the B4N rules more consistently between venues, particularly around the times meals are served (between 8pm and 9pm), the time guests must arrive (last admittance 10pm) and the time guests must leave the venue in the morning (9am).
- We will recommend that Co-ordinators attend every evening session at their venue (if they need to miss a week they should appoint a deputy Co-ordinator to fulfil the Co-ordinator role in their absence). We need to ensure that FAITH staff are only present at venues in a **supporting/advisory role**. They should be **referred to** but not **deferred to** as church Co-ordinators are ultimately responsible for their venues.
- Where Co-ordinators do not stay through the night or return in the morning, there needs to be a separate morning Co-ordinator appointed and properly trained so as to engage with St Mungo's and the FAITH member of staff on duty.
- We will ask Co-ordinators to ensure that their venue has all the necessary kitchen appliances available and in good working order, e.g. fridges, toasters, dish washers, ovens, microwaves etc.



- We will recommend that volunteers come to volunteer every week at their chosen B4N venue (as far as possible) so as to build rapport and get to know our guests.
- We plan to involve guests more in tasks such as stripping their own beds (needle safety!) and making their own beds once a week when linen is changed.
- We intend to arrange for guests to be able to access showers at least once a week and have toiletries available.
- We intend to keep a stock of spare underwear in the Ops box.
- We plan to ask our venues to provide some breakfast options that guests could take away with them, such as breakfast bars or fruit, for those who do not want to eat a cooked breakfast first thing.
- We plan to encourage venues to provide a prayer team who will pray during the night shelter, ideally in a separate room on site. This would be for as long as possible but certainly for an hour during the evening.

After the night shelter

- We plan to give volunteers and churches more feedback and information on what to pray for after B4N finishes.



Declaration

I hereby declare that I have read through the 2020 manual for existing volunteers and promise to abide by the guidelines set out here and in the original training that I underwent.

In particular I undertake for my own safety to avoid any 'one to one' contact with guests, especially outside the venue. I will always endeavour to be within sight and 'earshot' of other volunteers.

Whilst I realise that FCG cannot legislate for the actions of Church staff and members on their own premises I respect their experience and advice. I will not arrange to meet guests at any time or place other than the B4N venue without first discussing any such plans with my co-ordinator or pastor and understand that they may wish to clear any such arrangement with FCG.

I will not take responsibility for any guest's personal belongings, bags, clothing etc.

I am responsible for notifying anything shared with me by a guest, even in so-called confidence, if it is illegal or endangers or potentially may endanger another person.

Signed:-..... Date.....

Full Name

Contact Number

Email