

Watford Winter Shelter Handbook 2024/25

1. General

- 1.1. Watford Winter Shelter is a humanitarian response to provide shelter during the winter months for people who are rough sleeping in Watford. It is managed by New Hope on behalf of Watford Borough Council.
- 1.2. It will operate every night from the 14th November to 13th March at the Haven, 4 Whippendell Road.
- 1.3. There are 15 beds available through Watford Winter Shelter. When the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is activated, then an additional six beds will be made available in the communal area at the Sanctuary.
- 1.4. New Hope will keep records of service users accessing the scheme – name, date, reason for rough sleeping. This information will be shared with Watford Borough Council.

2. Staffing

- 2.1. The shelter will be staffed by a Watford Winter Shelter Sleep In Support Worker (working from 6pm to 8am but able to sleep between 11pm and 6am) and a Watford Winter Shelter Support Worker (working from 6pm to 10pm). These two support workers will be helped by security personnel, who will be awake all night, and three volunteers who will assist from 6pm to 11pm.
- 2.2. All staff and volunteers involved with Watford Winter Shelter will have an up-to-date DBS and references.
- 2.3. All staff and volunteers will have attended the Watford Winter Shelter induction and training.
- 2.4. The staff will be managed by the Haven manager and the volunteers co-ordinated by the HR and Volunteer Administrator.

3. Referrals, eligibility, and risk

- 3.1. **The** cut off for referrals to the Watford Winter Shelter is 8pm every night.
- 3.2. Referrals are either via Watford Borough Council or the Haven (during opening hours).
- 3.3. Watford Borough Council staff will first need to complete a homelessness assessment, and then, if necessary, complete a referral for the Watford Winter Shelter at www.newhope.org.uk/wws-referral and a phone call is made to the Watford Winter Shelter on call number (01923 521112). A member of New Hope's Haven team will then make contact with the individual directly. (Please note a member of the Haven will be on call when the Haven is closed.)
- 3.4. If someone contacts New Hope when the Haven is closed (i.e. via the 0300 number), the individual must contact Watford Borough Council on 01923 226 400 and council staff will first need to complete a homelessness assessment, and then, if necessary, do the referral and a phone call is made to the Watford Winter Shelter on call number (01923 521112).
- 3.5. In circumstances when a customer attends at Watford Borough council without a phone, council staff will first need to complete a homelessness assessment, and then, if necessary, complete a referral for the Watford Winter Shelter at www.newhope.org.uk/wws-referral. Then, council staff will call the Haven on-call staff on 01923 521 112 to confirm an available bedspace and make the individual aware of when and where to attend to access the shelter.
- 3.6. Beds will be allocated on a first come basis and please note that non-attendance will mean that a bed is lost immediately and it will be reallocated.
- 3.7. Referrals must have a) local connection to Watford (five of the last six years – unless they have an active homelessness application with WBC) **OR** b) restricted eligibility (NRPF).

- 3.8. All referrals must be single adults and no animals are allowed.
- 3.9. New Hope will hold a risk assessment specific to the emergency provision and have the discretion to refuse referral.

4. On-call procedure

- 4.1. On-call for the Winter Shelter will be shared by the Haven staff team rather than New Hope's Exceptional Circumstances rota.
- 4.2. Calls to the Watford Winter Shelter on-call number 01923 521 112 are forwarded to a dedicated on-call mobile. This phone is on a PAYG Giff-Gaff (O2) account with unlimited calls and texts but NO DATA. Its mobile data features are turned off. DO NOT turn them on and only use the browser and other data functions when securely connected to a Wi-Fi network.
- 4.3. Should sickness or other adversity prevent you obtaining the dedicated on-call mobile, a temporary substitute can be used by contacting Anthony (aprior@newhope.org.uk) with the alternative mobile number.
- 4.4. Note: outgoing calls will appear as from the on-call mobile not 01923 521 12.

5. House rules

- 5.1. Service users must sign the house rules document when they first enter. All service users must adhere to the rules of the service and contribute to keeping the space safe for service users, staff, and volunteers.

6. SWEP

- 6.1. In the event, that SWEP is activated in Watford, then provision will be utilising voids in the WWS, the Sanctuary and an additional six camp beds at the Sanctuary.
- 6.2. Beds will be allocated on a nightly basis.
- 6.3. Please note that though SWEP is a humanitarian response, individual with local connection to another authority will be assisted with reconnection back to their local connection within 24 hours. When making referrals please contact relevant local authority before completing referral form.
 - 6.3.1. Dacorum Council out of hours - 0800 018 6050
 - 6.3.2. St Albans Council out of hours - 01727 811155
 - 6.3.3. Three Rivers Council out of hours - 01923 776611
 - 6.3.4. Hertsmere Council out of hours - 0845 300 0021.
- 6.4. Referrals must be single adults and no animals are allowed.
- 6.5. Please note that, the cut off for referrals to the SWEP is 8pm every night.
- 6.6. An online referral form is always to be completed: www.newhope.org.uk/wws-referral. The member of New Hope staff on call will then make contact with the individual directly.

Times and Duties

Time	Details
6pm – 7pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and volunteers arrive at the Haven. • One volunteer will be based in the kitchen (meal preparation), one at reception (sign in sheets, house rules agreement), and one will help set up the rooms. • Staff check the SUD and the referral folders.
7pm – 9pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service users allowed into the Haven, sign-in, sign the house rules agreement (if first time) • Staff to talk to service users to ascertain accommodation status and possible options, updating the SUD as appropriate • Food available up until 9pm
9.00pm – 10.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen closes at 9pm and volunteers clear up • Security arrive at 9pm • Service users can go upstairs but a member of staff must be present. Service users may be searched and breathalysed before going upstairs. The upper breathalyser limit for entry into the building is 70. • Contacts recorded on the SUD • At 10pm the support worker leaves
10.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All service users upstairs • Volunteers tidy up downstairs
11pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers leave • Lights out upstairs and the service users bed down for the night • Sleep in worker beds down
6.00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep in worker wakes up
6.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service users woken up to prepare to leave for the morning.
6.30 – 7.00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tea and coffee to be served.
7.00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service users leave site, and are encouraged to come back at 8.30am for a hot breakfast and further support on accommodation issues.
7.00 – 8.00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air the upstairs rooms • Pack bedding away • Ensure SUD is up-to-date • Sleep in worker leaves at 8am • Security leave at 8am

House Rules

Behaviour

The following behaviour will not be tolerated from service users at the Watford Winter Shelter, both inside or in the vicinity of the project:

- Violent, aggressive, intimidating or inappropriate behaviour, including verbal abuse or threats
- Refusing to leave the building when asked by a member of staff
- Unacceptable noise levels
- Non-compliance with behavioural contracts
- Entering prohibited areas

Any instances of the above will result in being asked to leave immediately and the possibility of an exclusion.

Possessions

Service users may bring a maximum of two bags on site. New Hope does not offer storage facilities for service users staying in the Watford Winter Shelter. All belongings must be taken off site when leaving in the morning.

The following must not be brought into the building under any circumstances:

- Illegal drugs or solvents
- Any item which could be deemed an offensive weapon (knives, tools, guns etc.)
- Food/drink (a bottle of water is permitted)

Any instances of the above will result in being asked to leave immediately and the possibility of an exclusion.

The following must be handed in to staff immediately upon arrival:

- Any drug paraphernalia
- Any alcohol

Staff reserve the right to search belongings and person if any of the above are expected. Failure to abide by the above will result in being asked to leave immediately.

Access and Support

Entry/Exit times

- Do not approach the Haven before 7pm
- Last access for all referrals is 10:00pm; entry will not be permitted after this time.
- Visitors are not permitted inside the building
- Service users must leave by 7am every morning, with all belongings and leave the building.
- Service users are encouraged to return to the Haven at 8.30 for drop in to access showers and food.

Any instances of the above will result in being asked to leave immediately and the possibility of an exclusion.

Inside the Haven during Watford Winter Shelter hours

- Service users may not use the showers or laundry facilities. These are available during 8.30am to 10.30am.
- Lights will be turned out between 11pm and 6.30am the next day.
- Service users found in prohibited areas of the building will be asked to leave immediately.
- Smoking – All areas inside are non-smoking (this includes vapes). **Service users will not be able to smoke outside between the hours of 10.25pm and 6.30am the next day.**

Any instances of the above will result in being asked to leave immediately and the possibility of an exclusion.

I confirm that I understand and agree to abide by the above Watford Winter Shelter House Rules:

Print name:

Signature:

Date: