

Harlow Christmas Haven Volunteers Handbook

(Updated: 2018)

Thank you very much for offering to volunteer for
The Harlow Christmas Haven
This Christmas ...

The Harlow Christmas Haven makes a real difference to both
Harlow's Street Homeless & Vulnerably Housed
throughout the 10 days of Christmas but ...
... without our volunteers that simply could not happen!

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A Unique & Very Special Volunteering Role ...

It is important to us as Trustees that both our overnight and day guests are secure in the knowledge that The Harlow Christmas Haven will provide them with a safe, clean, warm, non-judgemental, empathic and welcoming environment throughout their time with us at Christmas.

As Trustees, our number one priority must ALWAYS be to keep both our volunteers and guests safe. Therefore, we hope you will understand that all volunteers are required to be over 18 for safeguarding reasons.

The Trustees recognise and welcome the fact that collectively our volunteers bring a variety of both physical and soft skills to this unique and very special volunteering role.

We welcome all volunteers who enjoy cooking, cleaning, organising and listening.

Our Guests

The Harlow Christmas Haven must be a safe, clean, warm, non-judgemental, empathic and welcoming environment for all of our guests.

All of our overnight and day guests will have been referred to us by Street2Homes and registered as either Street Homeless (Sleeping under the stars) or Vulnerably Housed (in one room with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities).

Some, but certainly not all of our guests may have had or still have, issues associated with Drugs or Alcohol. For this reason, there is a Harlow Christmas Haven, non-negotiable ban of all Drugs and Alcohol on-site, at all times.

- If you at any time suspect a guest has either Drugs or Alcohol in their possession, please inform your Team Leader immediately who will either speak to the guest themselves or call a Trustee to speak to the guest.
- Any drugs or alcohol found on-site will be disposed of by one of the Trustees.
- Any guest found to be under the influence of either will need to be assessed by one of the Trustees before a decision is made regarding whether that guest can remain on-site at that time.

Aside from the above, our one other rule is for Trustees, Volunteers and Guests to show respect to each other at all times.

- In order to create a welcoming & friendly environment, we ask Volunteers to wear a name badge with only your first name on it so that our guests will feel at ease when conversing with you on shift. Please feel free to call our guests by their first names too.
- Do not tell a guest your surname or discuss with them any other personal or family details including your address or mobile phone number. Some of our guests will be estranged from their own families and may not be able to see their own children at this time.
- Taking a guest in your private car is discouraged. If deemed necessary, this should only be done when accompanied by another volunteer and all details of the journey should be initially discussed with either the Team Leader or Trustee on-site at that time before a final decision is made.
- If whilst chatting with a guest, you have concerns that they are at risk of abuse or exploitation please share these concerns with your Team leader or a Trustee.

Shift Procedures

We fully appreciate it is Christmas Party season but please remain mindful that the majority of our guests are extremely vulnerable and dressing appropriately for the role is essential – so no high heels, short skirts or low tops please.

Please arrive 15 minutes early for your shift to ensure an informed handover, from the previous team. All volunteers must sign in when their shift starts and sign out when their shift is finished. Remember to wear a name badge.

The Team's personal belongings (coats etc.) can be locked in the Office. Please ensure all guests are prompted to sign in and out of the building as necessary.

Each day consists of 5 shifts:

Breakfast: 8am – Noon

Lunch: Noon – 4pm

Dinner: 4pm – 8pm

Evening: 8pm - Midnight

Night: Midnight – 8am (the following day)

- We purposely have a maximum of 7 volunteers on each shift, to ensure all volunteers experience a purposeful shift and go home feeling they have given their time for the purpose in which it was donated – to support others.
- It is for this reason that we also prohibit volunteers from dropping in to help out when passing by the Christmas Haven – the shift belongs entirely to the volunteers who pre-booked the shift with Trustees.
- At least 2 of the volunteers on shift will be experienced Christmas Haven Volunteers and act as Team Leaders to advise, guide and support less experienced volunteers when needed.
- The Disabled toilet at the back of the building is for the use of Volunteers only.

Please Ensure:

- All medications are logged in and out of the Meds Log Book together with Guest signatures for verification. If in any doubt whatsoever, please speak to your Team Leader.
- All incidents must be logged in the INCIDENTS Book.
- All donations must be logged in the DONATIONS Book and placed in the red lockable cash box.
- The SHIFT HANDOVER Book is completed at the end of each shift, detailing any relevant information that the following shift should know.

Shift Duties

Trustees would like all guests to know they are staying in a safe, warm and CLEAN environment

Cleaning: Toilets, Shower, Kitchen and Dining Areas –

Preparation, Cooking & Serving of: Breakfast (9am)
Lunch (1pm)
Dinner (6pm)
+ ALL hot beverages.

Please Note: Volunteers are encouraged to sit down and eat with our guests at communal meal times.

Washing Up: Please do not leave washing up for the next shift.

Waste: Please use the Food Wastage and Re-Cycling bins appropriately – all other rubbish is to be black sacked and placed outside on left of front door until our bi-daily refuse collectors arrive.

Fire Escapes: Please ensure Fire Escapes are not blocked and the Fire Extinguishers are visible at all times.

Sleeping Hall: Without invading our guest's privacy, please regularly check the sleeping hall is organised and all guests are well and sleeping alone.

Showers: Please ensure wet towels are bagged and that there is a sufficient amount of dry towels available.

Clothing Area: Please continue to re-organise and categorise clothing for ease of guests looking.

The Volunteers Office

Must Always Be Locked!

The following items are located in the Office:

- First Aid Kit
- Emergency Procedures – Including: Emergency Procedures & Trustees Contact Numbers
- The Shift Handover Book
- The Incident Book
- The Donations Book
- A Sharps Box, Body Fluid Disposal Kit, Disposable Gloves & Aprons

In Cases of Emergency

Everyone must be asked to evacuate the building and stand in the GPCA Car Park.
Call 999 immediately, request the service you require and give the following address:

Great Parndon Community Association Play Barn
Abercrombie Way, Harlow, Essex
CM18 6YJ

Only after calling 999 – you must inform a Trustee immediately

First Aid

There is a small First Aid Kit in the kitchen and large First Aid Kit in the Office.

Any treatment however minor must be entered into the Shift Incident book in the office.

Any major Incidents should be reported to a Trustee as soon as possible.

When giving First Aid please use the disposable gloves and aprons provided to avoid cross infection.

Please use the bags provided to carefully dispose of all used items.

Health and Safety

- Health & Safety is the responsibility of ALL Trustees, Volunteers & Guests.
- Everyone is expected to behave in a way that does not endanger themselves or others
- If you have any concerns whatsoever, please report them to your Team Leader or a Trustee.
- If snow is expected, salt should be put on to the ramp and the three fire exits.
- After snow, the ramp and the 3 fire exits must be cleared. Please take care when doing this.
- Wet floors must not be walked on and yellow warning signs must be used
- The fuse box is situated behind the brown cupboard doors in the lounge.

- Candles are prohibited at ALL times.
- We recommend wearing disposable gloves when handling dirty clothes or bedding.

Cooking & Food Hygiene

Our kitchen has been inspected and graded 5/5 by a Harlow Council, Environmental Health Officer. This Officer is at liberty to arrive at any time during our 10 days of opening, to confirm volunteers are following the correct Food Hygiene Procedures in the preparation and serving of meals.

Please note: We CANNOT accept any donations of cooked food that has not been cooked in a professional kitchen. Always explain and apologise to any member of the public that turns up with a home-made offering.

Every shift has enough volunteers to prepare and serve the hot meals and hot drinks, therefore there is NO NEED for guests to enter the kitchen at any time.

Breakfast: A variety of hot and cold choices available

Cold Lunch: Soup and bread/butter or sandwiches

Dinner: All evening meals have been donated by a local Pub/Restaurant/Take-Away or Alternatively paid for by a Company in the local area

Please Ensure:

- All volunteers must **wash and sanitise** their hands **before** starting to prepare or serve any meals in the kitchen. Hands can be washed in the kitchen sink providing the washing up bowl has been removed from the sink first. Volunteers must repeat the above procedure if they have had to leave the kitchen for any reason.
- The kitchen knives stay in the kitchen at ALL times.
- The Food Hygiene Log Book is kept in the kitchen at ALL times.
- The temperature of cooked food is taken before being served and logged in the Food Hygiene Log Book at every meal time.
- Aprons are worn at all times.
- ALL chopping boards must be sanitised before use.

Dealing with Sharps and Body Fluids

This section advises volunteers how to protect themselves against the slight risk of infection from contact with body fluids.

A Sharp is anything which can puncture the skin and may be contaminated with blood or other body fluids. This includes glass ampoules as well as needles.

The following are stored in the locked office:

- A Sharps box, for the safe disposal of Sharps
- A Body Fluid Disposal Kit
- Disposable gloves and aprons that must be worn when handling Body Fluids or Sharps

Dealing with Sharps Injuries

Needle Sticks, Cuts, Bites or Scratches;

- Wash the exposed area thoroughly under running water
- Puncture wounds and cuts should be squeezed to encourage bleeding (not sucked)
- Cover the injured area with a waterproof dressing

Splashes to Mouth or Eyes;

Rinse thoroughly under running water or use the Eye Irrigation Set if available.

In the event of an injury by Sharps the person should attend the nearest Accident and Emergency Unit which provides 'post exposure prophylaxis' treatment. To be most effective, this treatment should start within 2 hours of exposure.

Disposal of Sharps

If a needle is discovered with the sheath separate, no attempt should be made to re-sheath the needle. The sharp should be picked up with the thumb and forefinger holding the side of the needle, not the ends and placed in the Sharps Disposal Box.

Do not place fingers inside the Sharp Disposal Box opening. If a Sharp gets jammed in the entrance to the box, the box should not be used again. Inform your Team Leader who will arrange for a new Sharp box to be obtained.

Disposal of Body Fluids

If Body Fluids are present, the area should be cleared immediately and the Team Leader informed. Protective gloves and an apron must always be put on before cleaning the area.

A Body Fluid Disposal Kit should be used and used according to the Manufacturer's Instructions.

Reporting Procedure

Any discovery of Sharps or injury resulting from contact with Sharps should be reported to the Team Leader immediately and logged in the Incident Book.

Advice, Information & Guidance ... What Happens Next?

The Trustees and Volunteers of The Chocolate Run Charity are not insured to give out advice, legal or otherwise to our guests.

Trustees and Volunteers can however, signpost guests on to the following agencies:

- **Streets 2 Homes Homeless Project:**

Harlow's Day Centre that supports the street homeless and vulnerably housed in Harlow, Essex.

- **Open Road Essex:**

Drug & Alcohol Addiction Support Service in Harlow, Essex.

Throughout the year, Streets2Homes provide the Street Homeless with a FREE hearty Breakfast, Monday-Friday and a hot meal at lunchtimes for all Service Users at an extremely affordable cost.

Also throughout the year the following Hot Meal Drop-ins are available to the Street Homeless and Vulnerably Housed at the stated venues/times:

- **Thursday night:** Helping Hands at St. Paul's Church in Harlow Town Centre, CM20 1LP – 6pm-8pm

- **Sunday night:** The Chocolate Run at The Playbarn, GPCA, Abercrombie Way, Harlow, Essex, CM18 6YJ – 6pm-8pm

The Harlow Christmas Haven always opens at Noon on the 23rd December and shuts at Noon on the 1st January.

After this date, the Street Homeless can refer themselves via Streets2Homes to Hope4Harlow, a daily, overnight cold weather provision, provided by a collection of local Churches during the Winter months of January and February.

