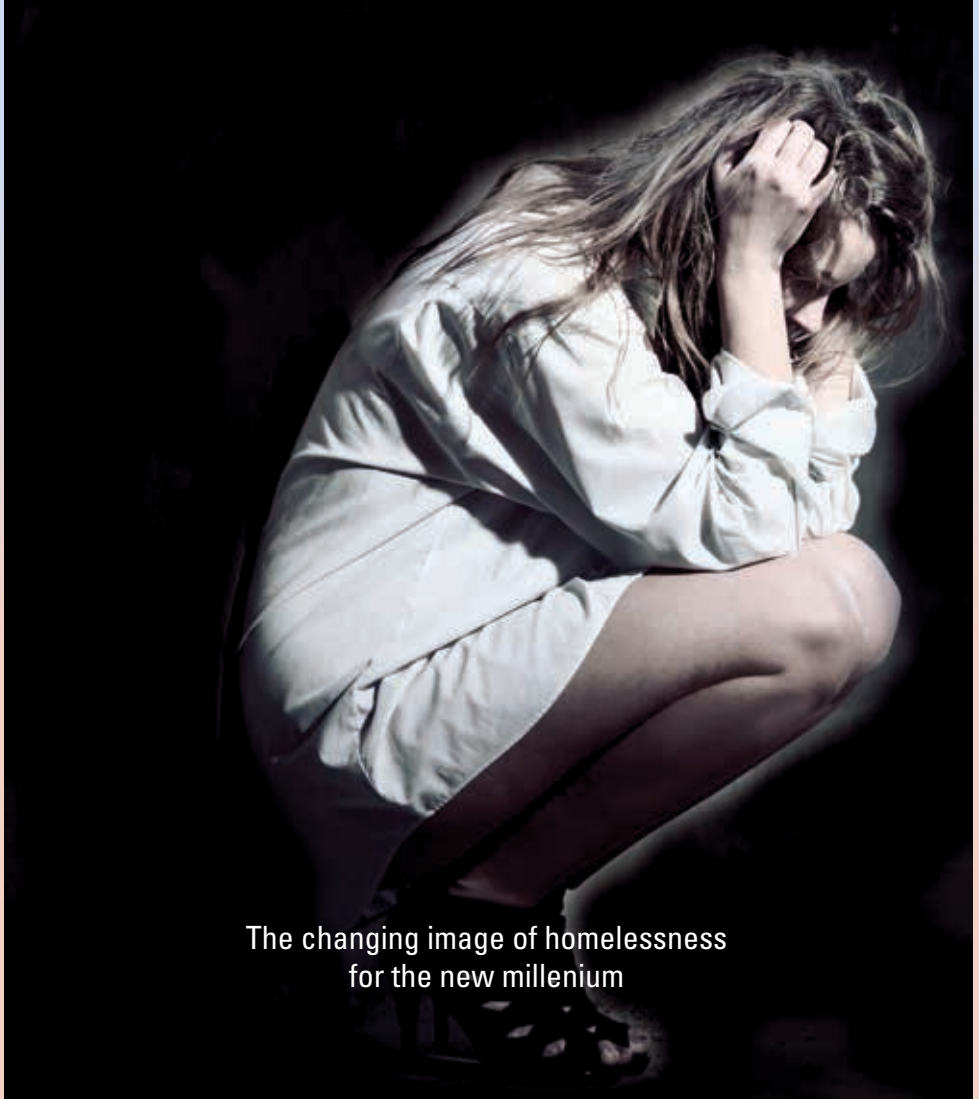


Homeless Care newsletter 24

Threshold

World Homeless Day Conference Edition



The changing image of homelessness
for the new millenium

Find out more about **Homeless Care** on
<http://www.homelesscare.org.uk/> and <http://www.maidstonedaycentre.org.uk/>

On 10th October 2017 people around the world will mark World Homeless Day in many varied ways and change the lives of homeless people in their local community.

Presented by

HOMELESS CARE

PROGRAMME

- 09.00 Registration and coffee
- 09.30 Welcome to the Conference
Peter Cox, Homeless Care Chairman
Speaker **Rick Henderson**, CEO Homeless Link
Our thanks to Homeless Link for homeless statistics
Speaker **Matthew Scott**,
Kent Police & Crime Commissioner
- 10.40 – 11.00 Coffee break
Speaker **Mossie Lyons**, Director Kairos
Community Trust Southwark
Speaker **John Littlemore**, Head of Housing
Maidstone Borough Council
- 12.15 Panel discussion: Speakers, clients & Day Centre Manager
...many thanks to all our speakers!
A networking lunch will be served following the discussion

**Our thanks to National Lottery and to the
Tudor Park Marriott Hotel for supporting this event.**



Peter Cox: Chairman Homeless Care



After a commercial career within the communications industry working for British, French and American companies Peter made the switch to the voluntary sector having previously

volunteered for a variety of organisations.

His main engagement over some 25 years was with charities concerned with people disadvantaged within the employment market including those affected by homelessness.

Peter retired from full time employment last year after 10 years of heading a London based charity concerned with training and employment support for those leaving prison.

One of the original founding trustees of Homeless Care (previously Maidstone Christian Care) he now acts as the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Rick Henderson: CEO Homeless Link



Rick Henderson has been the CEO of Homeless Link, the membership body for homelessness agencies in England, since July 2012. Previous to this he was the CEO of Action for

Advocacy and has over 25 years' experience in community development leadership. He is the author of 'A Right Result? Advocacy, Justice and Empowerment' and 'Prisoners, Patients or People?' Rick is also a member of the

Mayor of London's Rough Sleeping Task Force and the Housing First Europe Hub. www.homeless.org.uk

Matthew Scott: Kent Police and Crime Commissioner



Matthew Scott was elected Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in May 2016.

His role is to set policing priorities for the county, by consulting with the public and putting

together a Police and Crime Plan. He then holds the Chief Constable of Kent Police to account for the delivery of that plan. The PCC also sets the council tax precept for policing, is responsible for the overall policing budget, and commissions services for victims of crime and funds community safety projects.

Following a thorough consultation exercise, Mr Scott published Safer in Kent: The Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan earlier this year which sets out the force's priorities for the next four years. The plan is kept under constant review and Mr Scott is currently asking people to tell him what matters to them by completing his Annual Policing Survey.

You can read the plan, complete the Annual Policing Survey and learn more about Mr Scott and the work of his office at www.kent-pcc.gov.uk

Mossie Lyons: Kairos Community Trust Southwark

Mossie Lyons has worked with Kairos Community Trust for 20 years. Kairos is a charity based in south London that works with homeless people with addiction-related problems. He set up the Kairos residential



rehab in 1997 and was manager there until 2005. Since June of that year he has been the director of the charity.

Kairos means the opportune time, and at Kairos they offer all who come to their

services the opportunity and time to embrace life. www.kairoscommunity.org.uk

John Littlemore: Head of Housing Maidstone Borough Council



John’s career in housing stretches to more than 30 years. He has enjoyed various roles in the field of housing with the first half of his career working in London before moving to Kent.

John’s portfolio of responsibility now includes a range of regulatory functions including Licensing, Environmental Health Community Protection and Health & Wellbeing in Maidstone, which all have a natural synergy with housing. He is the Chair of the Kent Joint Policy & Planning Board for Housing as well as being a member of the Kent Housing Group’s Executive Board. John is a Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives, a Magistrate on the North Kent Bench and he takes a keen interest in housing law. www.maidstone.gov.uk

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On the 10th of October 2017 people around the world will mark World Homeless Day in many varied ways and change the lives of homeless people in their local community.

History

The concept of ‘World Homeless Day’ emerged from online discussions between people working to respond to homelessness from various parts of the world.

The Inaugural World Homeless Day was marked on the 10th of October 2010. Since its founding, World Homeless Day has been observed on every continent except Antarctica, in several dozen countries.

Use of the idea of ‘World Homeless Day’ is open for all to use... anywhere in the world.

Purpose

The purpose of World Homeless Day is to draw attention to homeless people’s needs locally and provide opportunities for the community to get involved in responding to homelessness, while taking advantage of the stage an ‘international day’ provides.

IN THE UK

How many people sleep rough each night?

According to the latest figures, collected in the autumn of 2016 and published in January 2017, 4,134 people are estimated to be sleeping rough on any one night.

Is rough sleeping on the rise?

There was an increase of 16% from 2015 to 2016, while since 2010 rough sleeping estimates show an increase of 134%.

Which areas saw the biggest increases?

The East of England has seen the biggest percentage increase in rough sleeping since last year (44%). This is followed by the North West (42%), the East Midlands (23%) and the North East (18%), all of which have seen increases in rough sleeping above the national average.

Turn to page 10 for news of some of the world's cities that have the highest homeless populations.

Homeless Care runs Maidstone Day Centre

Maidstone Day Centres is pleased to offer a welcoming environment to homeless and vulnerable men and women in Maidstone. Our service is aimed at all who find themselves homeless and we pride ourselves on the fact that we have no waiting lists and can offer help immediately we are approached.

The number of homeless people continues to increase and the Day centre is currently supporting 35 to 40 individuals a day. All able to use the Day Centre as their contact address.

Membership Scheme

Maidstone Day Centre is open six days a week and operates a membership scheme for clients wishing to access the facilities we offer. The scheme is designed to reduce the number of clients who do not have a real need for the services and would simply use the Centre as a convenient meeting place. The membership system is also intended to assist clients in budgeting their benefit payments and it generates a modest additional income. Regular Day Centre users often pay 2 weeks in advance, when they receive their benefit payments.

This helps to reduce the risk involved in carrying around a sizeable amount of money. Those who are newly homeless and/or not in receipt of benefits, are not asked to contribute.

For a daily payment of £2 clients receive a substantial breakfast, a non stop supply of hot and cold drinks and a freshly homecooked lunch with a pudding. They also have access to hot showers, a laundry service, good quality re-cycled clothing and when available, sleeping bags and tents are supplied to those living on the streets. At the end of each session, clients are given a pack up of sandwiches, fruit, cakes and a drink to last until the next day or Sunday and Bank holidays when the Centre may be closed.

The comfortable lounge is where people can read, watch television, listen to the radio, play board games or pool and relax. It is noticeable that homeless people often curl up in a chair and try to make up for the sleep they lost because of having had to remain vigilant to attack; passers by are sometimes extremely hostile towards rough sleepers. Several of our clients have over the past year, had their tents burned down and other property damaged or stolen.

The practical provision of basic needs such as food and showers is only sticking plaster. In order to help people turn their lives around, Day Centre staff continue to give clients one to one support to clients according to individual need. This may help with benefit entitlements, employment applications, training opportunities, establishing identity, Court appearances, registering with a doctor, problems around drug/alcohol misuse and most importantly applying for accommodation. Virtually all applications for benefits and

accommodation must now be made online and so the Centre has set up a small computer suite and beginner level training is available to clients. Our staff are skilled in dealing with the many problems that homeless people encounter. Helping to raise damaged self esteem is an important part of our work if individuals are to feel motivated and encouraged to keep on seeking accommodation and work.

Once accommodation has been secured for a client, we are able to help him or her to make the correct claims for Housing Benefit, to arrange for a gas and electricity supply then furniture and bedding. When the client moves into a new property we will provide a hamper of food and basic household items. We are very aware that our support is crucial at this time of change if the tenancy is to be sustained. The responsibility of running a home, maybe for the first time, can be daunting. There are likely to be daily challenges such as making sure the rent is paid on time, budgeting for food, cooking and cleaning and then looking for work. A number of newly housed clients continue to attend the Day Centre so that they can receive the daily contact, practical support and encouragement essential to sustain their tenancies. Sometimes people find the isolation of independent living very stressful after the camaraderie of life on the streets and staff may advise voluntary work until paid work is secured. Staff frequently offer telephone guidance to callers who are newly homeless or are in danger of becoming so.

We have been concerned at yet another rise in the number of young people we work with who are no longer able to stay in their family homes, because of relationship disputes, often with a parent's new partner. These young men and women usually join the hidden homeless, the

400,000 plus people in the UK who have nowhere to live but sleep on the floor of family or friend's homes until the welcome wears out and they move back onto the streets again, rendering them particularly vulnerable.

At present the majority of our clients are men with just 23% women. Whilst a proportion have no history of drug or alcohol abuse, the number who do, diagnosed or undiagnosed, we estimate at around 70% and probably more than 80% who suffer from mental health problems. At our last estimate, 75% of our clients had spent some time in prison and some of these are caught in the revolving door lifestyle of persistent offending. We continue to support these clients each time they are back in the community. Our policy is to keep on keeping on and it is encouraging when a man or woman makes the leap to a fresh start.

As well as the Day Centre we also provide support via our community food share scheme, Food for Thought, which continues to deliver food each weekday to people who would otherwise go hungry. Distribution points include school breakfast clubs, local hostels, day centres for elderly or disabled people, as well as supplying emergency food parcels to people going through a crisis in their lives. The food share scheme also provides food for our own kitchen at Maidstone Day Centre. The fresh fruit, vegetable and meat donated are particularly welcome in providing a balanced diet for clients.

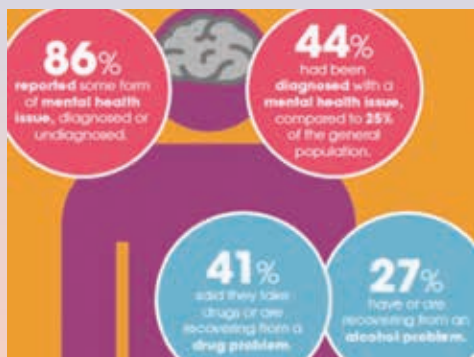
The scheme is carefully regulated by Homeless Care so that it is not abused. Annual food drives by the Kent Messenger, Harvest Festivals and Christmas collections by churches and schools ensure that food stock levels are regularly replaced and maintained.

Homeless Care also manages Goodsell House, a halfway house with ten bed spaces that is an HMO (House of Multiple Occupation) licensed by Maidstone Borough Council.

At present we receive some funding from KCC but the majority comes from grant making trusts and donations from the public.

We have been established over thirty years and during this time have seen many changes. Today we face the continuing challenge of an increase in homelessness that is sadly reflected across the whole of the UK and the rest of the world.

Homelessness, Health and the role of a Day Centre



Dr John Green
Poor health can contribute to being homeless, and being homeless can lead to poor health. Limited access to health care can make it worse
(<https://medlineplus.gov/homelesshealthconcerns.html>).



It's not surprising that a number of studies have shown greater rates of several mental and physical health problems in people who are homeless or insecurely housed. After

all the major contributions to improved health and longevity of populations in the Twentieth Century, it wasn't better medicines, antibiotics or immunisations, but improved housing, sanitation and food that made a difference. So as an occasional GP presence in Maidstone Day Centre, not prescribing but available for clients to talk to if they wish, I often feel like an added extra after the latter two of these important basics have been provided (and the first is being addressed).

Many studies have reported greater rates of chest infections in people who are homeless. It may be due to the good care that is provided in Maidstone Day Centre, in terms of food and warmth, but I have not found this to be the case (though any researcher would point out that the sample size of clients or patients I come across in my sessions every couple of weeks or so at the centre is too small to be significant).

Skin and blood infections (from sharing tent or needles in the past), bruises (homeless people are more likely to have been assaulted), foot problems (obvious reasons) and sexual health problems are all thought to be more common in those who are homeless.

I would say that is indeed the case. These are problems that benefit from timely access to health care. So it is tragic if this does not happen. Registering with a GP, or seeing a sexual health outreach service, is often the first stage. Being new to an area, not knowing where GPs are, problems encountered in the past attempting to see doctors or nurses, unwelcoming complicated registration arrangements, and distrust and anxiety on both sides can make this difficult; so trying to break down these barriers is important.

The same may be true of muscle, joint and soft tissue pains being more common, and potentially benefitting from treatment.

I'm not sure how many people who are homeless get to have physiotherapy or rest aching joints however.

On other hand mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, personality disorders, and substance misuse problems, while commoner in people who are homeless, are also very common in day to day general practice; perhaps because these are problems that don't often just come and then go away; they persist. And there often isn't a good effective treatment. Alcohol or drugs may seem a great but problematic way of coping. What can really help here is a sense of community and consistent stable long term relationships whether with friends, peers, staff, volunteers, agencies, health workers... These relationships have to start somewhere.

THE PEOPLE WHO MATTER MOST



Lorna

"It all happened so quickly. I had been teaching English in London for 23 years without a break and for the last 14 in private schools, when a whole string of things came up at

once. A couple of suicides that I didn't see coming; my brother in law and one of the students. Depression kicked in big time and I was signed off work."

Lorna applied for sickness benefit which would at least safeguard the rent; or so she thought. Unfortunately her landlord had other ideas and even though she had been a responsible tenant and had explained her

illness to him, he wouldn't listen. When she was out he put all her belongings in the garden and changed the locks. With her family in the Midlands and no local connection the Council couldn't help and she had nowhere to go. In desperation, Lorna took an overdose and ended up in the mental health unit of a hospital in Orpington. "To be in such a dark place is terrible," she recalled. "It made me think about my brother in law and my pupil and I understood how they must have felt.

People say that suicide is a cry for help but it wasn't, I meant it. I was p*****d off when I came round because I didn't expect to. I just wanted it all to stop. When you can't see a way out it is hideous."

But there was a way out, although it would be a slow journey. With the proper care she began to recover and faced with leaving hospital searched online for a place to go. She found a commune that promised to help rebuild lives for people with depression. "It was a beautiful place, idyllic," Lorna remembered "but it turned out to be kind of cultish and when I started to question things, I was asked to leave. It was almost as if they didn't want you to have any contact with the outside world."

With nowhere to go Lorna started sleeping rough, in parks and churchyards. "I woke up one morning and it was drizzling," she said. "Someone had put one of those big foil covers over me, the sort that the emergency services use. I have been overwhelmed by the kindness of strangers. One night, about 10 o'clock, I was in McDonalds, a bit teary, when a young couple they must have been 18 or 19, asked if I was OK. I told them briefly about my situation and went to the toilet to have a cry. When I came back they

had booked me into a Travel Lodge for the night. They walked with me to the hotel and helped carry my stuff. They had even paid for my breakfast the next day.”

Lorna has been coming to Maidstone Day Centre for a few months now. “It has given me routine, something to get up for”, she told us. “Some of the friends I have made here are the best I have ever had. I thought I had good friends in Dulwich but they disappeared completely. Here people look after their own. It is a lifeline.”

There is a happy ending. Laura is now living in a shared house which suits her well as she loves having people around her. She is now waiting for replies to her ads for private tuition and will start looking for supply teaching, to get her back into the swing of things.



Andy

“When I look at the soup runs and the awful places I used to go, I realise I was on my backside. I was a proper mess.” It was after leaving the army, a

relationship breakdown and his problems with alcohol that everything started to go wrong for Andy. He found himself on the streets and totally alone, not knowing where to turn for help. It wasn't until he came across Maidstone Day Centre that life started to change for the better. “The progress I have made now is fantastic,” he said. “Friends and colleagues I knew before say I am looking well. I put it down to the Day Centre and the kindness of people.”

“I was in the army for quite a few years

and I was lucky enough to travel,” he told Threshold. “Germany, Canada, Cyprus and a French Commando course that was worse than basic training! I went to Bosnia, into a proper war zone. You drive through villages and you see burnt out houses and chimney stacks. It's a strange place but a beautiful country. There is this dark humour that helps you to cope and then you end up in the bar. When I came back to England it was a completely different army. By Friday afternoon the camp was deserted, everyone had gone home to their mum, wife or girlfriend so there wasn't the same companionship and it was lonely. Then the army became just a job rather than a lifestyle.”

Being back in civvy street was proving tough. The turning point was when he Googled “homeless in Kent and Maidstone Day Centre came up. “I got myself over here, and they really looked after me” he said. “I was able to have a shower, get clean clothes and you feel a whole lot better instead of being muddy and dirty. It gave me that little bit of pride in myself.” That pride prompted him to apply for rented accommodation and eventually he was moving into a room of his own. Andy now sees his future working in the homeless sector. He has joined the Homeless Care volunteer team and has enrolled on a mental health course to better his understanding of himself and others. But he has another, very special ambition. Andy has two children that he hasn't seen for a long time. “It was through the alcohol,” he told us, referring to the estrangement of his family. “If I can become the dad that they deserve then I want to rebuild my relationship with them. That's my main aim now”

Some startling statistics from around the world.

1. According to Homeless International, around 22.8 million reside in slums. And according to a Philippine government report, 1.2 million are children who live either by peddling or begging on the streets; 70,000 of which come from Metro Manila alone.
2. The city of Los Angeles has one of the largest concentrations of homeless people in the United States. Currently, it houses about 57,737 homeless people (second only to New York city).
3. There are about 5 million homeless people in Russia and of that number, 1 million are children. Studies show that Moscow has the largest share of homeless people in the country, accounting for 10,000 – 50,000 (depending on the source of information). Despite the ever growing number, there remains no social approach to the problem.
4. 40% of the total population of Mexico is living in poverty and according to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) the number of people on the streets of the Mexican capital stands to be between 15,000 and 30,000.
5. According to the 2000 census, around 28,364 people are homeless in Jakarta, Indonesia. However, due to recent natural calamities such as floods and storms the homeless population has grown significantly.
6. In 2003, there were about 23 million homeless people in India. Since then, the number has gone up despite the programs implemented by the government to reduce its homelessness rate. In Mumbai alone, there are about 25,000 people who have continued to grow since the economic crisis of 2009.
7. The Homeless are said to be the phantoms of Buenos Aires streets. As of today, there are about 15,000 homeless people residing in the filthy streets of the city and with the city's public refuges hosting 1,700 beds for the homeless, this is a scenario that is not going to change in the near future.
8. In Budapest alone, there are about 10,000 homeless people. Recently, the Hungarian government passed a law that criminalizes homelessness, forcing those who do not want to stay in government-provided shelters to have their own homes. As of today, around 6,000 of the homeless population live in Budapest shelters.
9. Based on a recent study, around 10,000 people are homeless in the centre of Sao Paulo Brazil. Most sleep in old abandoned buildings and hotels.
10. According to the 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, Seattle is home to a total homeless population of 9,106.
11. Around 7,000 to 10,000 people in San Francisco, U.S.A. are homeless, 3,000 to 5,000 of which refuse to live in temporary shelters provided by the government.
12. Homelessness statistics show that out of the 20,000 homeless people in Greece, 9,000 are from Athens. The number of homeless people in Athens Some startling statistics from around the world.
13. The second largest city in the State of California with a population of 1,345,895, San Diego is home to 8,879 homeless people.
14. Lack of affordable housing and homeless shelters has contributed to the alarming number of 7,419 homeless people who call the streets of Tampa, Florida their home each night.

15. Out of the 17,000 homeless people in Italy, 7,000 are from Rome.

16. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the number of homeless people living in Washington in 2013 was around 6,865. Last year, the city government began to provide shelter to its homeless population whenever temperature levels dropped below freezing point. Those who do not want to stay in temporary shelters are provided with a budget to stay in hotels.

17. As of July 2013, analysis by Chicago Coalition for the Homeless found that 116,042 Chicagoans were homeless in the course of the 2012-13 school year. This is a 10% increase from last year's homeless population.

18. A 2013 study shows an estimated homeless population of 5,000 living in Tokyo. This number was a significant increase from the 3,800 homeless individuals recorded in 2008.

19. According to a 2011 study, there are about 4,088 homeless individuals in Baltimore, Maryland, many of which are families with children. Today, the city government is making strides towards putting an end to this social problem by creating projects aimed at providing affordable housing and health care.

20. Rio De Janeiro is known for having a

high homelessness rate with over 2,500 homeless people as of last year.

21. In a recent study shows that about seven people per day become homeless in Dublin. In 2013, there were about 2,366 people that were reported to be sleeping on the streets of Dublin every night. The government's failure to increase the stock of social housing is said to be the root cause of this social problem.

22. There are as many as 2,200 homeless people every night in the city of Indianapolis, which is equivalent to around 15,000 over the course of a year. Though this city is known for its faith-based shelters, there's just not enough shelters to provide a place for the entire homeless population.

23. According to the 2012 Point in Time report from Metro Denver Homeless Initiative, Denver saw an increase in its homeless population from 411 to 964 between the years of 2011 and 2012.

24. Most of the homeless people in Portugal are concentrated in the cities of Lisbon and Porto. Reports say that around 300 homeless people sleep on the streets of Lisbon every night. Today, members of the Comunidade Vida e Paz are persuading the homeless population of Lisbon to take part in rehabilitation programs in order to improve the quality of their lives.

Thanks for this information to Juan Castillo & List 25



Volunteering at Maidstone Day Centre

Maidstone Homeless Care would not be able to help as many individuals as we do without the support of our wonderful volunteers. We are extremely proud of our volunteer heritage, as the organisation was started by volunteers from Maidstone Girls Grammar School Maidstone in 1986, providing sandwiches and hot tea for the homeless community in the town.

Today our volunteer team looks a little bit different but is just as important. Whether they are cooking meals for our clients in the day centre, providing administrative support to our team in Maidstone, providing one-to-one befriending support within the shelter or picking up food collections from local shops and churches, they are an undeniable asset to the services that we run.

Could you be part of our dedicated and passionate volunteer team? Our volunteers range from young to old, have varying abilities, and can spare varying amounts of time, but one thing they all have in common is their passion to support the homeless community in Maidstone. Volunteering with us is a fantastic way to learn new skills, socialise with like-minded individuals, and give something back to your community. So whether you can give a day a week, an hour or month or want to be on our list of ad-hoc volunteers; whether you want to test your cooking skills, offer professional services or help us sort through our collections, then we have a role for you. In the words of Helen Keller "alone we can do so little, together we can do so much" and with your help we can do even more to help the homeless community in Maidstone. To find out more or for an informal chat call or email our Day Centre Manager, Zofia on 01622 674064 or manager@maidstonedaycentre.org.uk

Remember we need volunteers

please call 01622 674064 for further information!



@MaidstoneDayCtr



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HOMELESS CARE



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Homeless Care Limited Registered Company Number 08414392
Registered office: as above Registered Charity Number 1151412

Homeless Care received an unannounced visit from Environmental Health and we have again been awarded 5 stars for another 2 years.



Our standards are higher than some of our local restaurants!

MAIDSTONE
DAY CENTRE

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT
Community Food Share Scheme

GOODSELL
HOUSE

MAIDSTONE
CHRISTIAN CARE

