

Durham Winter Night Shelter

2018-2019 Winter Trial Report

Statement from the Leadership Team

We are happy to say that trial to test the Shelter process, has been a success. Over the five weeks we hosted 33 individual guests. We opened 23 times, opening when overnight temperatures dropped to below one degree Celsius.

We have had fantastic local support. Within our 75+ active volunteers we had fourteen churches represented. We had 36 students volunteering from us, most of these were provided by Just Love Durham. Durham City Council have been a great financial and professional support for us. A number of our guests found permanent accommodation through the partnership we built up with council housing services and local housing charities. Local businesses such as Nandos and the Gilesgate Old Laundrette offered their services to us for free. Most importantly, St Nics Church, Elvet Methodist Church, North Road Methodist Church and the Salvation Army at Sanctuary 21 have opened their doors to our guests this Winter. We could not have opened without this outstanding local support.

We received great coverage in the local media featuring on BBC Look North, BBC Radio Newcastle and in the Northern Echo and Durham Palatinate.

There have been learning opportunities. Part of this trial was to test whether our policies and procedures produced a safe and welcoming environment for our guests. Whilst this was the case, we will learn from this trial and create an upgraded model for next year. Our thoughts have already turned to the next few years and potential areas of growth.

As a team we thank God for what has happened this year and we wait with expectation to see what is coming next. We pray that we can continue to bless rough sleepers in Durham and hope that this is the start of a very exciting story.

Durham Winter Night Shelter Pilot Shelter Vision

Vision:

To see God end the cycle of homelessness and addiction in Durham City by providing the most vulnerable people with a safe bed and access to vital services.

Values:

- To treat every guest as a precious child of God
- To provide a service that is safe and effective for Durham's most vulnerable people
- To show God's grace in our service for our guests and through the relationships within the team.

What is the Durham Winter Night Shelter?

The Durham Winter Night Shelter is a Christian initiative that seeks to answer the Christian call to social justice and care for the vulnerable in society. It is a project that aims to provide emergency winter accommodation for the homeless population of Durham City. It will have capacity to provide emergency

overnight shelter for 15 guests in a 6-week trial period in the worst winter months. Each guest will be accepted regardless of individual life choices, sexuality, gender or religious affiliation. The Shelter will be a safe space in which each guest can get a good night's sleep, food and access to vital services that will help them start on the road towards permanent housing. We will also aim to provide guests with the ability to tackle the causes of destitution. This will be done in partnership with the Salvation Army and the engagement of outside drug and alcohol services.

Our aim for 2018/19 is that this pilot allows us to gain a vital insight into the homeless problem in Durham. We will gain an intimate knowledge of the scale and needs of the homeless population. This will enable us to set a longer 3/5-year plan with a better grasp of what needs to be done to end homelessness in Durham. It will also provide concrete data from which to pass on to local authorities and associated charities.

Durham Winter Night Shelter Leadership Team

Alastair Taylor – Just Love Durham
Darryn Hook – Sanctuary 21 (Salvation Army)
Ruth Lackenby – Durham and Deerness Valley Circuit
John Oliver – Emmanuel Church, Durham
Joseph Cottrell – St Nics, Durham

Dec 2018 – Feb 2019 Winter Trial

Durham Winter Night Shelter (DWNS) was proposed by a collaboration of an ecumenical group of churches, Just Love Durham and local Durham residents, students and services. The leadership team formed in September – October 2018 and set up a trial to see the need for a cold weather shelter for the rough sleepers of Durham. This trial was set up with help from the Glasgow City Mission. After forming the plan policies and procedures (available on request) we approached a number of churches to be potential venues. Four churches offered space:

- Sanctuary 21 (Salvation Army)
- North Road Methodist Church
- Elvet Methodist Church
- St Nics Durham (CofE)

The Churches provided space and took ownership of the project while in their space. North Road Methodist church was used as a gathering point for the duration of the trial. During the October to November DWNS held three training sessions. (With an extra added in January). We provided training for the night shifts, safeguarding, first aid, conflict management and information on existing services. This was done in partnership with other organisations. We acquired over 75 volunteers. They were a mix of students and local residents. We had a good balance of age and gender and a good range of experience. They came primarily from Just Love and the local churches, but we attracted a number through social media.

Durham Winter Night Shelter was open for a total of 5 weeks over the winter period of 2018-2019. Opening on the 3rd of December to the 16th then breaking over the Christmas period and opening for another 3 weeks from 15th January to the 3rd of February. We needed to break over Christmas as we didn't have enough volunteers for this period. However, the North Rd meeting was used by the council to help provided support during this time. We also had to cut down from 6 weeks to 5 as one of our venues fell through due to insurance issues. During this time, we opened 23 times when the weather fell below 1 Degree Celsius.

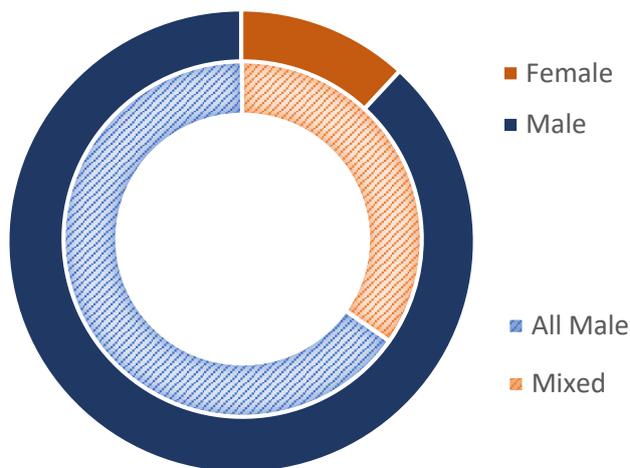
DWNS Guest Numbers and Demographics

Over the 5 weeks had 33 individual guests stay at the DWNS.

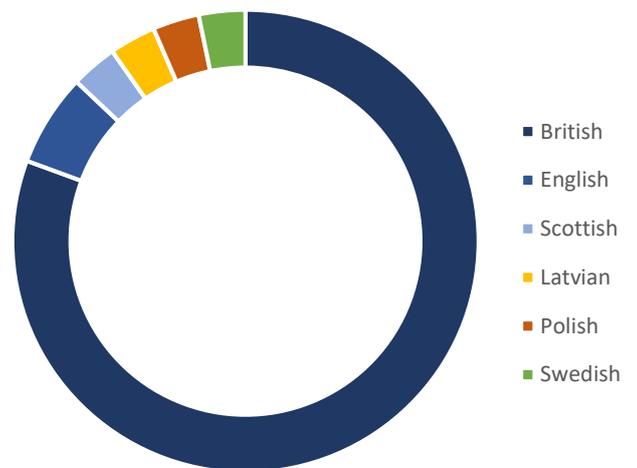
The guests were mostly British men. We only had a few women but there was at least one woman present on over a 3rd of the nights. This shows a need to maintain mixed facilities. We had a few Europeans. (A number of our guests preferred to be identified as English or Scottish which has been represented)

Age ranged from the youngest being 18 to the oldest being 59. Most being in their 30's and 40's.

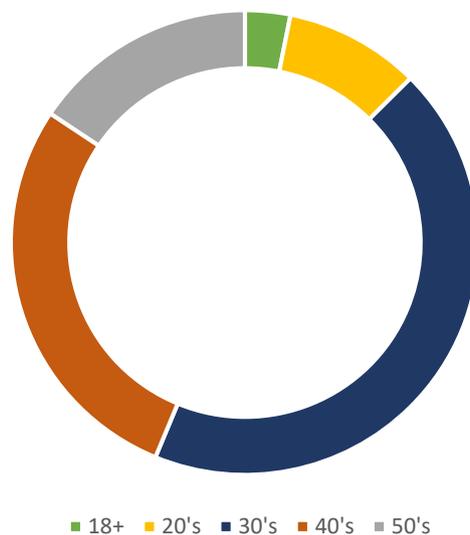
Gender Split of Guests and Nights



Nationality



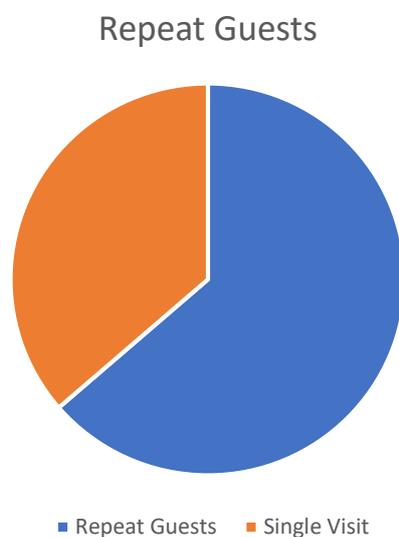
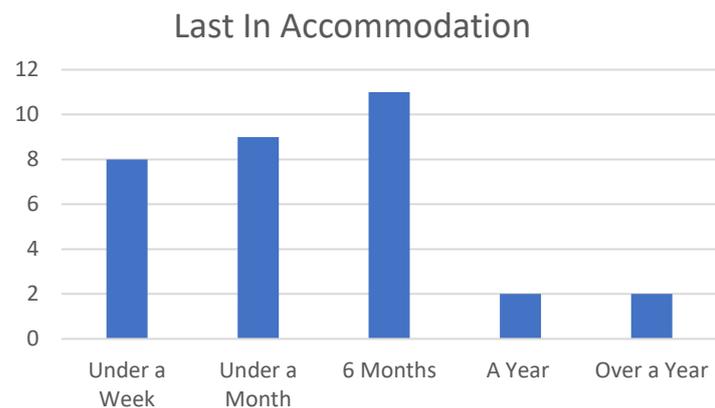
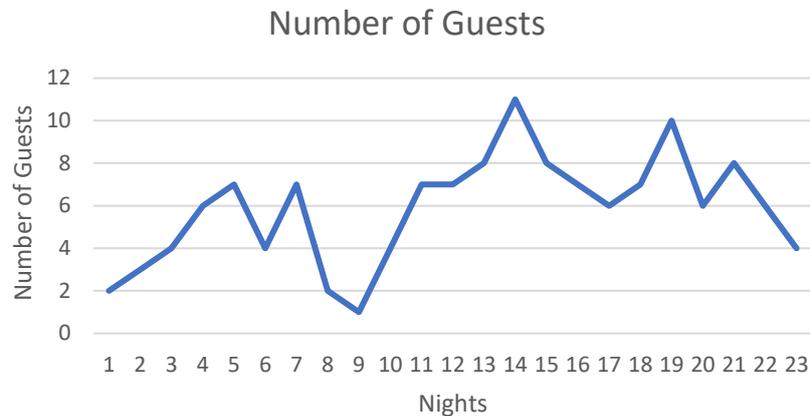
Age



Number of guests per night varied with our lowest being just 1 (due to a miscommunication) and the highest being 11. We attempted to maintain a strict policy of only offering shelter to those with no availability of accommodation and turned away a number of people who didn't make that criteria. When possible, we offered to help them access their accommodation if in difficulty.

About 2/3rds of our guests were repeat guests over the duration of the trial. With a third being single visits. Single visits tended to be those who managed to get emergency accommodation soon after being made homeless and those who were passing through Durham (while being known to be homeless).

The majority of the guest had been in accommodation in the last 6 months. We provided emergency shelter to a number of people who had been made homeless that week. During our trial we managed to work with local agencies to get a at least 12 of our guests into permanent accommodation.



DWNS Trial Conclusions

Durham Winter Night Shelter set up this trial. To do three things

- To prove there was a need for winter accommodation for rough sleepers in Durham
- To prove that DWNS could meet that need
- To gain information and experience needed to run a full winter shelter program.

The DWNS leadership team believe that this data supports these three aims. With evidence of over 30 rough sleepers being in Durham over the winter period, with a large number of these being here for the majority of the winter, there is a need for a winter weather shelter.

DWNS went some way to meet that need with 23 successful nights open. DWNS was well supported by Churches and volunteers as well as local agencies and institutions.

With what we have learned it is the DWNS team's belief with a full program DWNS could work with Churches, partners and other agencies to meet that need.

DWNS believes that we now have enough information and experience to move forward to plan a full program for Winter 2019-2020. We are now looking at taking the steps forward to plan this growth.

Part of this growth will be to increase the time we can be open for and possibly increase the amount of people we can welcome. Most importantly, we will be registering as a charity and looking to employ a staff worker to increase our leadership capacity.