SUMMER 2024

Newsletter

FCENS

Forest Churches Emergency Night Shelters



2023/2024 Season

This was our first season with a year-round drop-in, plus 15-bed winter shelter at YMCA Walthamstow. We are thankful for the work we have achieved. We met and supported 188 people at the drop-in, with 38 single adults in our shelter. 66 people were helped into stable move-on accommodation, half of these being through drop-in (non-residential) support.

Churches and Volunteers

After three years without communal meals, our churches and volunteers joined us this year to serve dinner. Evenings were a daily miracle, with delicious hot food for our guests. 105 volunteers served 7 days a week from 1st November to 30th April. Thank you, our community of volunteers from St Mary's & St John's in Walthamstow, Leytonstone United Free Church, Wesleyan Holiness, Wansted Parish, the Church of the Kingdom of God, South Chingford Congregational Church and Emmanuel Christian Centre. Thank you St John's Buckhurst Hill for bringing hand-made welcome packs for our guests.

Our Team

FCENS is blessed with a dedicated team to support those who need us, bound by compassion and togetherness to support people in community. Welcome Naheed, Aeça and Mellissa, who have joined Jean, David, Tunde and seasonal evening worker, Michal.







Guest Stories

Guests' achievements are testament to charity, hard work, grace and patience. We have witnessed people who have transformed lives, by building networks for themselves. With support from our team, guests have found new homes and accessed financial support including universal credit, pension payments, PIP disability benefits. We have helped people to access transport with a freedom pass. We have worked with NHS for wellbeing support. With thanks to the Waltham Forest Social Prescriber team, drop-in health services have given our guests access to essential care, one of them leaving us with a new set of teeth!

We always help where we can, whether that is for a few minutes or hours at the drop-in, for a while at the shelter, or for months or years, while we stay in contact with guests to make sure they are doing OK. Everyone's story is unique, support is focussed on every individual.

Peer Coaches

Peer Coaches Mellissa and Aeça have both experienced homelessness in Waltham Forest. They bring life experience to the team, working alongside our caseworkers to give peer support. They help guests with appointments, accessing bank accounts, helping into education and training. 'Hope Shaper Socials' are community events for guests to share stories about issues that affect them. Wellness and mindfulness sessions include meditation and yoga, with thanks to volunteer Laura.



SHELTER	38 (34 last year)		ALL GUESTS	188 (70)
Gender				
Male	22	58%	141	75%
Female	16	42%	47	25%
Age				
18-20	1	3%	9	5%
21-35	20	53%	87	46%
35-50	6	16%	47	25%
51-60	10	26%	30	16%
60+	1	3%	9	5%
Housing outcome				
Positive stable	33	87%	66	35%
Positive not stable	3	8%	14	7%
Not positive	1	3%	1	1%
Not homeless		0%	2	1%
Not known	1	3%	104	55%

Sponsored Walk

The Lived Experience Group held a sponsored walk in July in Walthamstow Wetlands to raise funding for Hope Shaper Socials events and raise awareness of homelessness in Waltham Forest. The group had a great time and raised £210. It's not too late to support them by donating at www.justgiving.com/campaign/hopeshapers

London to Brighton fundraiser

I'm riding London to Brighton to raise funds for FCENS this winter 2024-2025. Homelessness is on the rise in Waltham Forest. Rising costs make it harder each winter to fund the emergency beds we need, to provide much needed support for single adults in crisis due to homelessness.

It's a while since I've been on my bike! I will be working hard this summer to get back up to saddle fitness and I promise to be ready to crack London to Brighton in less than 5 hours. Your support will encourage me on those hard miles training rides!

The FCENS team, with support from our partner churches and the community, does miraculous work to help people into stable homes and to start rebuilding lives. Help us to help more people this winter. Thank you for your brilliant support.



Give Now

David is riding London to Brighton on 15th September. Help us to raise £2500 towards this year's winter shelter. www.justgiving.com/page/david-hoskins-london-2-brighton

Winter 2024/2025

This winter will look similar to last season, with 15 beds at YMCA, and evening meals served by our church network and volunteers at the drop-in centre. Contact the team to get involved. info@forestnightshelter.org.uk

New Home ?

The long-term goal is to find our own building to run the night shelter and day services. We are in conversations with a church in Waltham Forest where this could become a reality. Please join us in prayer for God to reveal His long-term plans for FCENS and to help us to make these a reality. Thank you for your support.