

What is Nightstop UK?

Nightstop UK is an advisory and support service derived from the original national support service run by Barnardos from their CANA project in Leeds and the Nightstop National Network, a separate organisation of the 38 or so Nightstops around the country. The Network arranged quarterly meetings and training sessions for Nightstop workers and volunteers, and established national criteria for Nightstops to follow.

Nightstop UK will continue and extend the support services formerly offered by National Nightstop and the Network to the growing number of Nightstops around the country. It will also take on a campaigning role more actively than has previously been possible

The name *Nightstop* is now a registered trademark.

Nightstop in Stockport

registered charity no. 1057654

If you have any further questions or queries please contact

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nightstop
Stockport & Trafford

about Nightstop

Opening the door to
homeless
young people

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What is a Nightstop?

There are about 46 Nightstops around the country, mostly charities, which arrange **emergency** accommodation in the homes of approved volunteers for single homeless people aged 16 - 25. They work mostly with local social services and housing departments to help keep young people off the street while a more satisfactory solution is being found.

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Was born after two local women from the same church saw a television programme, "Everyman", in 1993, which showed how a group of people in Leeds had tried to tackle the youth homelessness problem there. Leeds Nightstop, formed as a result of the Faith in the City project, was the first, and had been running for about five or six years at the time of the programme.

Evelyn Johnson and Sarah Parker did their homework in Stockport, and in the autumn of 1993 a self-conscious group of volunteers, of different faiths and of none, met at Evelyn's house to set things up. We relied heavily on the experience of Leeds Nightstop and on advice from Nightstop UK, and in May 1994 we had seen through the official launch and taken our first nightstoppers.

By autumn of 1994 we had attracted cash support from the Department of the Environment and the Church Urban Fund, and the first coordinator was appointed in October. Later we were able to take on a part-time project worker.

In autumn 1997 we felt confident enough to offer our services to another local authority, and approached Trafford MBC. We have been active in Trafford since 1 August 1998.

In 2000, we set up the Starters scheme aimed to help young tenants manage their affairs in their first homes, and so avoid homelessness. The volunteers support the young people a couple of hours a week with life skills, cooking, decorating, shopping, bills and budgeting, form filling or maybe just some company for a couple of hours and have a chat and a coffee.

What kind of people are we looking for as a volunteer

Ordinary people who are over 18, from all sorts of backgrounds who are patient, tolerant and who don't judge people too easily. Volunteers need to be understanding of people's background and have the ability to listen to young people and be discreet about the work they do with them. We need people who are reliable that can attend and fulfil the commitments they have made. We don't expect experts in anything just people who can be realistic about the amount of time they can give, who can expect in return, training and full support from the Nightstop staff.

Any out of pocket expenses are reimbursed. All volunteers are checked by the Criminal Records Bureau.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How does Nightstop work?

A worker in an agency such as housing rings Nightstop and either hears a telephone message giving a volunteer's number or reaches a member of staff. The Nightstop worker asks a number of routine questions and then rings around the volunteer hosts. Sometimes no host is available. Travel arrangements are then agreed.

2. What is expected of the host?

The host provides a private bedroom, evening meal, breakfast, bath/shower, and if necessary, toiletries supplied by Nightstop. The host will also listen, if the nightstopper is talkative. If not, silence is respected.

3. What happens to the young person the next day?

The host advises him/her to return to the agency that made the referral. If necessary the agency will ask Nightstop to help again. The young person may spend several nights on the scheme, usually with a different host each night.

4. Do the volunteers get expenses?

We offer out of pocket expenses.

5. How often does a host take somebody in?

The host decides, and can always say no, even on a night previously agreed. There is no predictable pattern. A host may see four or five young people in a month, then none for a couple of weeks.

6. Isn't it dangerous, taking strangers in?

Or, isn't it dangerous for a young person going to a stranger's house? Nightstop vets volunteers thoroughly using approved checking processes. On the other hand, there are some young people we do not accept - those who are under the influence of something or other, those with a history of violence, and those with uncontrolled medical conditions.

7. What happens to nightstoppers when they leave the scheme?

By the nature of things we usually don't know, but we have reports of people moving into hostels, or their own flats. Occasionally, we see a young person on the scheme again a year or so later. We have now started a scheme called Starters to support young people in their first tenancy to prevent young people returning to Nightstop.