

The nine sessions will cover the following topics, not necessarily in this order or combination:

motivation for scheme, confidentiality, professional boundaries
problems and attitudes of young people; leaving care; isolation, loneliness

unfair discrimination, equal opportunities

sexual health, HIV, STD

drug abuse, legal aspects

child protection (since some tenants may be under 18); health & safety; care & control

evaluation by volunteers; questions; discussion; complaints

individual approval meeting - an interview following specific questions related to the training.

agreement

Volunteers who have passed through training and approval will be asked to sign an agreement, in which it is made clear what Nightstop (Starters) may expect of the volunteer, and what the volunteer may expect from Nightstop (Starters).

matching

During training the procedure for matching a volunteer with a client will be explained. In summary, clients' profiles will be compared with those of volunteers, and when a good match seems to have been made, a preliminary meeting on neutral ground will be held. This process may be repeated if necessary.

miscellaneous

Volunteers will be issued with identity cards, for which a standard passport-style photograph will be required.

As the Scheme continues, it may well be found desirable to arrange more training sessions.

Nightstop's official complaints procedure may be used if necessary by volunteers, clients and managers.

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nightstop
Stockport & Trafford

starters

Young Tenant Support Scheme

an introduction for
prospective volunteers

introduction

Starters, a young tenant support scheme managed by Nightstop Stockport and Trafford and partly supported by a grant from Stockport Social Services, is intended to help young inexperienced tenants through the first months of their tenancy. The tenants will be under 25, mostly single, mostly first-time tenants, and often previously homeless.

Volunteers will be expected to attend nine training sessions, each of about two hours. After the volunteer has been accepted and assigned to a client, there will be meetings to attend with the client and social worker to plan the level of support needed. Thereafter the volunteer agrees to commit on average perhaps 3 hours a week (varying according to needs of client) for the duration of the plan, expected to be six months in most cases.

job description

Each client will require different kinds and levels of support, and the length and content of the programme for the volunteer supporter will be worked out by the social worker and client with him/her. However, in general we should expect that a volunteer would offer support to the client in some or all of these aspects or his/her life:

- money management (bills, benefits)
- form filling
- getting advice from official bodies
- self-care (simple cooking, diet, shopping)
- simple practical work such as decorating
- morale
- occasional socialising

Training will, of course, equip the volunteer with some skills required, such as an appreciation of the problems encountered by young people leaving care, some background knowledge of benefit entitlements and where to go for advice on such matters. However, we should expect a volunteer to have the following qualities and skills (at least in embryo):

desirable:

- ♦ previous experience of working with young people
- ♦ previous experience of unsupervised working one-to-one.

essential

- ♦ be open to training and new ideas
- ♦ to be able to negotiate on behalf of young people with professionals and agencies in a personable and assertive way
- ♦ to be able to liaise and work with the lead service involved with the young person
- ♦ be able to build relationships
- ♦ be able to communicate and to listen and maintain confidentiality
- ♦ have some idea of problems facing young people in general
- ♦ have an appreciation of unfair discrimination, practised both against young people and by them
- ♦ have patience and objectivity
- ♦ have time (during the day or evening) and commitment for befriending and continued training.

These requirements imply a minimum level of maturity not likely to be found in someone under 25.

vetting

Volunteers will be vetted by application form, including three referees, one from an employer, two interviews (one before and one after training), observation during training and by checks with statutory bodies. At any time the organisers may decide that the volunteer is not suitable for the scheme; conversely, the volunteer may decide that s/he is not suitable or has taken on too much.

support and supervision

Regular supervision - frequency to be agreed with Nightstop (Starters) - and support meetings will be arranged. **Some of these meetings will necessarily take place during normal office hours.** Volunteers will be able to make contact with Nightstop (Starters) at other times, especially in emergencies.

training

The topics need varying amounts of time. The standard two-hour session may be extended by up to half-hour on occasion to reflect this. On other occasions the formal content may take less than the allotted time, and useful discussion may follow.