

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

WYRE FOREST NIGHTSTOP &
MEDIATION SERVICE



NIGHTSTOP

Our core purpose

Preventing homelessness by empowering young people to achieve their full potential

Our work

- We provide homeless young people aged 16-25 with emergency accommodation in the homes of trained and approved volunteer hosts.
- We support young people aged 11-25, and their families, by offering Time2Talk mediation to resolve conflict and prevent family breakdown.
- We provide counselling services to support the mental wellbeing of young people at risk of homelessness.
- We offer an education programme to secondary schools and colleges to raise awareness of youth homelessness.
- We give young people the opportunity to gain accredited life skills to help them live independently.

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

**FOREWORD BY JUDITH FORD, CEO, AND
DENISE CARSON, CHAIR OF TRUSTEES**



Judith - Our 2020 Annual Report gives us the opportunity to reflect on an extraordinary year. I am hugely proud of the way that our organisation has responded to working in such a changed world. As a team, we have quickly adapted to new ways of working, moving many of our services onto digital platforms whilst continuing to work safely face to face when required. No mean feat, and huge thanks go to staff, volunteers and hosts for making this transformation possible, supported by the robust stewardship provided by our trustees.

Our young volunteers have been amazing, helping within the community and coproducing new services with us. An example of this is our newly developed Health and Wellbeing Award, an Open College Network accredited course that we will be delivering in 2021 to support young people to develop their mental health and resilience.

We welcomed our first ever Nightstopper, Carrie, to our virtual Staff/Trustee Away Day to speak about her journey that has taken her from homeless 16 year old, to young volunteer, Nightstop Host and a career as a Children's Oncology nurse. We also welcomed Mandy as a new volunteer, a local photographer who spent a day with the team photographing some of our work. Mandy has experienced homelessness in her youth and both Carrie and Mandy are inspirational role models showing that being homeless as a young person is no barrier to building a successful career and giving back to your community.

We have made so many new friends in our local community. After the pandemic struck, we've had numerous generous donations of money, food and clothing from individuals and community groups. To those who have donated, we thank you all. We've received amazing support from businesses who have given their time, expertise and donations. The list of supporters is endless but demonstrates that our young people are very much at the heart of our community and we endeavour to maintain these strong relationships so that we can continue to meet the needs of our young people and the community within which they live.

We move into 2021 with new premises, many new ideas and a pledge that we will continue to work tirelessly to reduce youth homelessness and empower our young people to live independently. Thank you to everyone who has been part of our year in 2020.

Denise - Who could have envisaged this time last year the challenges we would encounter in the coming 12 months?! Did we rise to those challenges?...Did we ever! In its usual indomitable style, Nightstop adapted where necessary and got on with the job. It's the dedication of the amazing staff, hosts and volunteers that enabled Nightstop to support the young people of Wyre Forest and South Worcestershire through these strange and troubling times. You are stars one and all and on behalf of the trustees, I thank you.

OUR BIG MOMENTS OF 2020



The moment Pearce got a place!



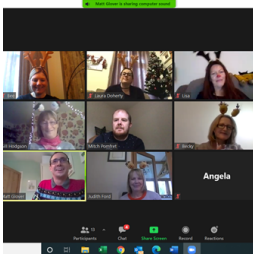
The moment we went back to school



The moment we took time for tea



The moment young people gave back



The moment we embraced the "new normal"...



...as a bigger team!



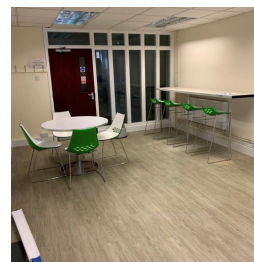
The moment big ideas were born



The moment our community stepped up



The moment Nightstop went national



...and the moment we began a new era



THE MOMENT PEARCE GOT A PLACE!

Pearce found himself homeless after leaving the care system aged 18. He felt adrift and angry and was keen to find a job and his own home.

Pearce came to Nightstop and stayed in emergency accommodation and then supported lodgings with volunteer hosts. Our hosts and staff team gave Pearce emotional and practical support, creating trusting relationships with him, helping him to deal with his anger and supporting him to navigate the local authority property bidding system and to find employment.

After 191 days living in supported lodgings, Pearce secured his own place! The Nightstop team continued to support him and increase the likelihood of him sustaining his own tenancy by providing cooking utensils and helping him to set up utilities.

Pearce is now happily settled in his own home and hopes to start his own business.

“
I don't think I would've done as well as I have done without Nightstop
”
Pearce

NIGHTSTOP

During 2020, we have delivered more nights of emergency accommodation than in any year in our history. We have supported **53** young people with crisis support with our volunteer hosts providing **542** nights of accommodation.

THE MOMENT WE WENT BACK TO SCHOOL



Mediation and counselling form two crucial pillars in our homeless prevention strategy. They address the two key drivers of youth homelessness: relationship breakdown and mental ill health. Young people are supported to build positive relationships, develop their communication skills and enhance mental wellbeing.

When the first national lockdown started on 23rd March, we sadly had to suspend our very successful schools' mediation service as we all started working from home.

Our mediation team jumped into action, putting measures in place to deliver our family mediation sessions and counselling online. Throughout the year, we continued to deliver our services, helping young people to remain at home, improving communication within families and supporting the mental wellbeing of young people during a very difficult time.

Finally, in September, we were able to go back to Baxter College and resume the delivery of face-to-face services with the appropriate safety measures in place. A big moment for our team and the many pupils who benefit from this amazing service which we plan to expand in 2021.

“

I really enjoy these sessions. I always feel very relaxed and calm afterwards”

14 year old mediation user, Baxter College

MEDIATION AND COUNSELLING

During 2020, we have provided **211 mediation sessions** reaching **133 young people**. We have provided **238 counselling sessions**, supporting **36 young people**.

THE MOMENT WE TOOK TIME FOR TEA

2020 has been a tough year for homelessness services with the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. Due to robust safety adaptations, and the commitment and flexibility of our amazing volunteer hosts, they have continued to accommodate young people throughout the year.

Our hosts have embraced online training via Zoom and have taken part in a wide-ranging evaluation of our services to help us improve services and plan for the future. They have even taken part in a national campaign aimed at recruiting more volunteer hosts and increasing the diversity of the hosting community, enabling the network to support more young people.



“

It's enjoyable, satisfying and rewarding to help a young person in need

Nightstop Volunteer Host

”



Our volunteer hosts are at the heart of our organisation. Without them, we couldn't deliver our life-changing services for young people. During the pandemic, our hosts have been heroes, opening their homes to provide COVID-secure emergency accommodation for young people and providing more bed nights than in other year in our history.

Our hosts don't just provide a bed and a safe place for a young person to stay. They provide so much more; help with developing life skills, a listening ear, warmth and trust. As lockdown restrictions meant that we have been unable to host our famous tea parties, we made doorstep deliveries of a cream tea to our volunteers in April to say "thank you" for their amazing work. Their commitment in this unprecedented year has been overwhelming.

VOLUNTEERING

During 2020, our team of amazing volunteer hosts provided **2,168 of volunteering hours**, providing a room and a warm welcome for young people who are experiencing homelessness.



THE MOMENT YOUNG PEOPLE GAVE BACK

One of the most satisfying aspects of our Nightstop work is seeing young people growing through volunteering, developing key life skills and confidence as they give back to their peers and to their community.

Throughout 2020, in the most challenging of circumstances, the young people who have been supported by Nightstop have continued to be inspirational role models.



Charlotte (pictured left) is one of these young people. Charlotte has trained as a peer mediator with Nightstop and has done amazing work as an ambassador, starring in a film developed by Sport Relief in which she told her story and how she had been supported by our Nightstop and mediation services. In March, Charlotte co-facilitated national coproduction workshops in partnership with Revolving Doors, giving insights to charities across the country into how they can engage with young people using their services. Charlotte works as a carer and has also been giving back to her community, organising collections of essential toiletries for use by older people in care homes.

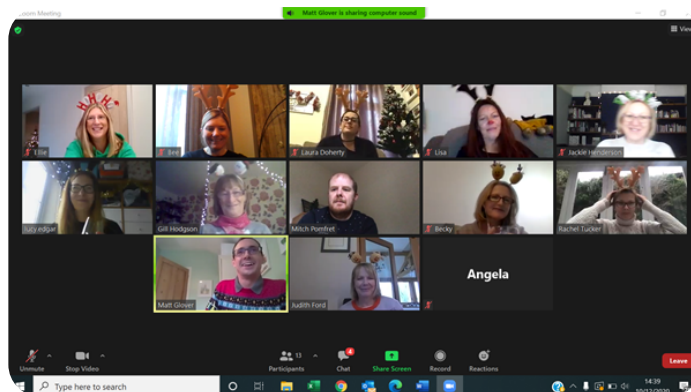
We have had to reinvent our schools education work due to the pandemic and find new ways of reaching young people at risk of homelessness. Our young beneficiaries volunteered to develop a new video about our services for use in local schools. This will ensure that young people are educated about the realities of homelessness and its causes as well as knowing where to go to for support if they are in crisis.

“

**[Volunteering] brings me joy. It gives me
a sense of pride** ”

Courtney, Nightstop young ambassador and peer mentor

THE MOMENT WE EMBRACED THE "NEW NORMAL"...



As an organisation, we have had to make huge changes in 2020 in response to the huge challenges posed by delivering frontline crisis services during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been agile and innovative, anticipating the first national lockdown and adopting online services early for the delivery of our mediation and counselling services. We have developed robust risk assessments for our emergency accommodation services to keep them safe for young people and volunteer hosts. Our staff team and trustees have embraced new technology and ensured that all of our services have continued. There has even been some time for laughs as a pet or home-schooled child has invaded our video calls!



...AS A BIGGER TEAM!

Throughout 2020, we haven't just consolidated - we've grown. We have recruited and grown our staff team to provide additional operational and administrative support as our services have expanded rapidly to meet growing demand. We have also grown our Board of Trustees with two new members with expertise in human resources and charity governance.



As well as continuing to provide high quality service delivery, we have been developing as a charity, refreshing our organisational values, securing new funding and developing new services including Open College Network qualifications for young people at risk of homelessness. Together, we are well prepared to meet the challenges of 2021 and beyond.

THE MOMENT BIG IDEAS WERE BORN



Young people drive what we do. Their lived experience, passion and commitment creates the big ideas that takes Nightstop in new directions.

Nightstop is committed to the coproduction of services with young people and 2020 has called for new ways of doing things. Young people have embraced digital solutions and socially distanced workshops to work with us, creating and delivering services. With young people, we have co-designed and piloted new life skills courses, created our new young person's centre and undertaken a major evaluation of our Nightstop services. This work will enable us to more effectively tailor our services, respond to emerging needs and support even more young people at risk of homelessness. 2021 is going to be a big year as we put our big ideas into action.



Thank you!

THE MOMENT OUR COMMUNITY STEPPED UP

...Or to be more accurate, the "moments" our community stepped up! 2020 really has brought out the best in our community across Worcestershire and we have been overwhelmed by their support.

Life has been really challenging for us all but our Nightstop supporters have stepped up time and again, raising funds, raising awareness of our work on social media and supplying essential items for young people in need.

We've seen spontaneous donations of food, clothing and toiletries, a socially distanced VE Day street party, fundraising from doorstep photography sessions and online classical concerts and generous corporate support from businesses both local and across Europe. The support of our community has been humbling and inspiring and is changing lives for young people in need.

“

If it wasn't for you guys and the hosts I doubt me and my mum would have mended our bond as quickly as we did. Thank you for everything you've done and the opportunities you have given me

”

Nightstop Service User



THE MOMENT NIGHTSTOP WENT NATIONAL



We have been able to tell the Nightstop story to the nation in 2020 thanks to the BBC during this year's Sport Relief fundraiser.

We were visited by Fara Williams, England's most capped female footballer, who created a film with young beneficiaries, Charlotte and Crystal, and our team. Fara spent 6 years during her England career as one of the many "hidden homeless" currently living in the UK. She shared her experiences of homelessness with Charlotte and Crystal, who have benefitted from our Nightstop and mediation services. They told Fara of the huge difference this support has made to their lives.

The film was followed up with a piece on BBC Radio Five Live, taking Nightstop on to the national stage and showcasing the life-changing work we do with young people, helping them to create a brighter future.



“

So many young people in the UK are at risk of homelessness, but together, we can make a difference

England footballer, Fara Williams, MBE

”

...AND THE MOMENT WE BEGAN A NEW ERA

2020 was the year that we moved to our new premises on Worcester Street in Kidderminster. We're so excited about having a new home!

With more room for our growing team and a brand new young peoples' centre being coproduced by our team, our beneficiaries and generous supporters from InTouch Global Foundation, we can look forward to exciting times in 2021 as we grow and develop our services further.

We all know that 2021 will be hugely challenging. COVID-19 related restrictions look to remain in place for some time to come and the pandemic will disproportionately affect young people, impacting on their mental health, relationships and employability. Sadly, we expect to see more young people than ever before accessing our services as they face relationship breakdown, poverty and ultimately, homelessness. We stand ready to support them with a bigger team, dedicated space for young people and new services aimed at fulfilling our purpose: **preventing homelessness by empowering young people to achieve their full potential.**



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www.wyreforestnightstop.org.uk

NIGHTSTOP NEEDS YOU!

Nightstop cannot deliver its life-changing services for young people without the generous support of our community. You can support our work in a number of ways.

DONATE

You can make a donation via our website. Go to **www.wyreforestnightstop.org.uk/make-a-donation**

HOST

You can volunteer to host a young person. Call us on **01562 743111** to find out more

FUNDRAISE

You can hold your own event to raise money for Nightstop. Email us - **info@wfnightstop.org** - for a fundraising pack

PARTNER

If you're a local business wanting to support Nightstop, email Bee - **bjohnson@wfnightstop.org** - to discuss becoming a partner.