



## Chair's Report 2020-2021

### **A year of flexibility, resilience and dedication from volunteers**

2020-2021 has certainly been an interesting period in history to serve my inaugural year as Chair of Sussex Nightstop. The effects of the global pandemic, and its impact upon our ability to make Nightstop placements continued to be a key feature of the year requiring the flexibility, resilience and dedication of our volunteers, staff and trustees to see a way through. That we feel hopeful and optimistic about our year to come is testament to the unwavering commitment of the whole team across this time and our thanks and appreciation are deeply felt. Despite the inevitable challenges, I am pleased to be reporting achievements and progress across this period.

### **Heartfelt thanks to our volunteers – hosts and on-call**

It is at this point that I want to particularly highlight the support and commitment of our volunteers. As a host and long-time supporter of Nightstop I know first-hand that our strapline - 'A community response to homelessness' - is not a mere branding folly. Covid or not, we cannot provide a safe place to stay for those facing the appalling prospect of rough-sleeping without volunteer hosts who open their front door. In light of the prospect that we might emerge from this difficult time without such an offer, to have 20 host households work with us across the year, resulting in 10 making an active return (with more to come) shows the incredible tenacity and commitment of our volunteers. You have told us that you missed it and we're happy to have you back!



A key objective of next year is to further expand our network of hosts so that we can offer to help more young people. It has been so lovely to welcome young people at risk of homelessness back into our home and it has reminded us how rewarding this feels to us, as well as being a vital service for the young person we have hosted. It will be great to give more people the opportunity to experience this sense of purpose as well as keeping more people away from sleeping on our streets.



It is not only our volunteer hosts of course. We again, can't operate our service without our On-Call volunteers and I thank Anna, Lyn, Liz, Rosie, Jenny and Ceri who have with much flexibility and understanding continued to make themselves available across the year; waiting patiently and responding when they were needed. We will also be looking for more On-Call volunteers as well as hosts in the New Year.

## Sharing expertise



The organisation has also benefited from volunteer support in other ways. We were particularly pleased to launch our 'talking heads' video, facilitated by volunteer George, where the hosts could not articulate better the power and impact of Nightstop.

## New welcomes

Whilst welcoming four new Board members in this period, we also said goodbye to Trustee David, for whom we thank for his contribution to the organisation's governance. Meanwhile, I offer congratulations to both coordinator Sian and trustee Corinna in the wonderful new additions to their families. The Nightstop family is growing in all directions!

New board members:



Tim Williamson



Anne Hickey



Jenny Moore



Corinna Collins

Opportunity was taken this period to formulate a resource plan that matched the challenges of the external environment as well our objectives. Our De Paul UK grant-funded 'Telling Stories' project really helped us with this. This work generated:

- a new outcomes framework that provides clarity on the differences we want to make
- recommendations on how we might find out about those differences and what we might need to tell people about them.



Communication with and engagement of all our Nightstop stakeholders emerged as a key ingredient in this area and I very much welcome Liz to our team who takes on the role of Communication and Engagement Lead with Sussex Nightstop.

Understanding and demonstrating our achievements is ever more critical in an increasingly tough fundraising environment. I am pleased to report that we start our next financial year ready for that challenge.



## Embracing diversity and improving our approach



Whilst we had the difficult news in this period that our adult service funding was not to continue beyond March 2021 we were also pleased that our coordinator H remained a member of the team across this year and we are proud to have achieved The Allsorts Safer Space Award in this period, that acknowledges our work and ambition to be the best we can be in welcoming

and including people who identify as LGBTQ+. The work continues. We plan to repeat successful Trans Awareness training delivered by our wonderful partners Allsorts Youth Project and Sussex Nightstop will continue to adapt its practice. We commend H, our LGBTQ+ Champion, on this success.

## A firm financial footing

On happier funding news, a successful fundraising campaign run in this year ensured that the Charity moved into the 2021-2022 finance period on a secure financial footing. We are grateful for the support of all our existing funders and those who we work with for the first time. We are pleased that our local housing partners continue to have confidence in us and have committed to support an ongoing Nightstop offer in the city over the next two years.

Remaining connected and moving forwards in an informed and strategic way have been vital across this year. Planning into the unknown has required the Board to review strategy more frequently and a refresh to Year 3 of our Strategic Plan has emerged. The Finance and Quality groups of trustees are working well and are primarily focused on the scrutiny on the use of our money and the management of the risks we face running Nightstop. The mitigations we put in place help us all sleep better at night.

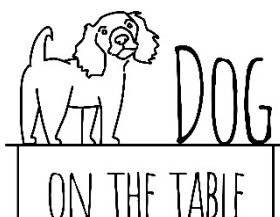
## Business support



We have received considerable support across this year from our individual, community and business donors, thanks to the efforts of trustees on our newly formed business engagement group and our Business Ambassador, Richard Zinzan, director of archangels architects.



We have enjoyed and greatly benefited from the first year of our corporate charity partnership with Mortgage Medics and I thank all of the staff there for supporting what we do with such commitment and enthusiasm.



Other business support included development of our website SEO (search-engine-optimisation) kindly supported by Kristian of organic marketing specialists, Dog on the Table. He continues to support us with our website planning.



A community response to youth homelessness



## Skilling up for the future

Nightstop staff members have participated in the local Youth Homelessness Network Group and Homelessness Providers Forum, and a range of De Paul Nightstop network events.



Like most organisations we know we must do more around improving equality and it is now a standing item on all Board agendas. Our next aim is a training programme for staff, trustees and hosts and one of our strategic aims is to increase diversity as we increase the size of our host network. Launched in this period, our Executive Director, Alison, is a member of the De Paul Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Steering group.

I'd like to finish with a few thank yous:



First, to our referral partners, most notably YMCA DLG and Brighton & Hove City Council Children's Services for trusting us to look after the young people referred to us and for taking the time to understand the unique service we offer via our network of volunteer hosts, who open up their homes to offer a safe and non-judgemental space for young people to be.

Also to our partners with whom close working remains so important to us. And of course to the Young People Centre for welcoming us and our young people into their space so warmly when Covid restrictions made the use of our usual spaces tricky.



And the very last thank you has to go to Alison, our Executive Director without whom nothing actually happens and certainly we would not have got through the last unique and very difficult year. Alison's positive spirit and work ethic have got Sussex Nightstop to what I believe is a good place as we hopefully look forward and see the end of this pandemic. I and the rest of the Board feel very lucky and grateful to have Alison running the operation and to work alongside her.

I want to close by reminding us all why we are here – it is to help young people like this guest by connecting them with hosts who have hearts the size of an ocean.

*"I've come such a long way since finding Nightstop. We have been on such an amazing journey together and I've had such a positive experience. Please thank the hosts for me, I really enjoyed making them some nice food, they are all so amazing, they have hearts the size of the ocean!"*

Tim Williamson, Chair of Sussex Nightstop  
November 2021



A community response to youth homelessness



## Our thanks go to our Funders and Supporters:

Albert Hunt Trust  
ArchAngels Architects  
Awards for All  
Brighton & Hove City Council  
De Paul UK  
Garfield Weston  
Henry Smith  
Mortgage Medics  
Sussex Community Foundation  
The 29th May Charitable Trust  
The Magic Little Grant

Accredited by De Paul UK



A service for everyone



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A community response to youth homelessness

