



## Questions and Answers for Volunteers

### What kind of people volunteer as hosts?

Nightstop hosts are ordinary people who want to reduce the problems associated with homelessness amongst young people and who have a room which can be used to keep a young person off the street for a night. Any household grouping can apply to be hosts, and would be assessed through an acceptance and vetting procedure. A good host is someone who is tolerant but willing to set boundaries on behaviour, is accepting and able to listen to young people without telling them what to do, and who is warm and welcoming, making people feel at ease without becoming so close that the young person becomes dependent.

### What are hosts expected to offer?

The minimum that Nightstop offers to a young person is a room for their exclusive use for the night, access to a bathroom, an evening meal and breakfast, the opportunity to wash their clothes and a warm welcome. Accommodation is offered from the evening through to the next morning. Hosts are expected not to leave the young person alone in their house and are given the choice of when they wish to make accommodation available. The host will be prepared to listen to the young person and will offer immediate support and encouragement, but will not be expected to provide counselling or professional help.

### How often will you want me to put someone up?

The hosts may offer as many or as few nights as they wish. Each month they will be contacted to specify their availability for the month, although this can be changed if necessary. Some may have a room which is only available at term time, while a son or daughter is away at university, others may have regular commitments which mean they are only available on certain evenings. The aim of Nightstop is to provide a service which enables volunteers to support and help young people.

### What training will I get?

All Nightstop volunteers will be offered training on a variety of topics. A day's training on Nightstop, and sessions on Child Protection and Working with Young People will be considered essential elements to becoming a volunteer, however there will also be optional training sessions made available to YMCA volunteers such as First Aid, and Negotiation Skills. All training will be free of charge to our volunteers. Nightstop training will include a chance to speak with volunteer hosts from another Nightstop.

### What support will I get?

Support will be available both through YMCA staff and through networking with other volunteers. Whenever a host is accommodating a young person, they will have access to 24 hour telephone support from the YMCA residential team. There will be regular opportunities for volunteers to come together in order to exchange ideas and experiences.

How will volunteers be checked?

All volunteers will be asked to complete an application form including details of two referees, and to agree to a check being carried out through the Criminal Records Bureau. The project co-ordinator will visit volunteers at home to discuss the requirements of the project, and view the accommodation on offer. Acceptance and appointment of volunteers will be subject to approval through the Nightstop management committee.

How will the young person be checked?

Referrals of young people will be made by various housing and youth agencies in the area, with the aim of obtaining information from those who know the young person the best. A referral form will be completed to assess the young person, and the referral agency will be asked to confirm they consider the young person suitable for placing in a volunteer's home. Nightstop will not accept a referral of a young person who is, or is suspected to be, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or who has a history of violence.

What sort of young people will you refer to me?

In the experience of Nightstops across the UK, many of the young people referred maybe scared or upset, and uncertain of going into a home where they don't know the people. Some may have left home after an argument and need support in going back home; others may need referral to hostel accommodation. Most are simply in need of a bed for the night and to know that there are people wanting to help them. In the history of Nightstop, there have been no major incidents involving a young person.

What information will you give to me about the young person?

When a host is contacted to arrange accommodation for a young person, basic information will be given such as age, name and sex. If it is felt necessary to give further background information, this will be agreed in advance with the young person. The young person may wish to discuss their circumstances with the host, however it is important that the young person is in control of how much or how little they wish to discuss.

What information will you give the young person about me?

The young person will be told your name, address and given directions to your house. They will be given a brief description of the type of household they are coming to e.g. family with two children.

Can I refuse a young person?

Preferably, if you are unable to accommodate a young person you will say before arrangements are made. However, if at any time you are concerned about the young person who has come to your house, you will be able to contact Nightstop to discuss your concerns and, if necessary, make alternative arrangements.

What happens to the young person after they leave my house?

Arrangements will have been made to support the young person in the future steps they will be making. There may be times when the young person may return for another night, either to you or another host, or they may return home or be housed elsewhere. Advice and support will be available to the young person in whatever area they need, through the involvement of Connexions personal advisors.

If you have any further questions, please contact:

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