

Helping homeless callers



This poster aims to equip churches and other places of worship with the tools needed to assist homeless callers.

The number of people without homes is increasing; some will turn to a place of worship for help.

When a homeless person arrives, many struggle to think of how they can help or worry about getting it wrong. Here are a few pointers.

Plan ahead



Public places should have plans in place to safeguard staff and members of the public. Assess potential risks to yourself, vulnerable people, visitors, the property, and its contents.

Have a mobile phone and essential numbers to hand. Always put your safety needs above the needs of the caller.

Consider their safety



If you are worried about their safety, contact local homeless services or head to thestreetlink.org.uk

If the person is an immediate danger to themselves or others, call an ambulance or the police on 999.

Listen to their story



Homelessness is an alienating experience and the most important thing we can do is offer conversation and connection. Be friendly, respectful, and non-judgmental. Ask them what they would find most helpful.

Do not invite callers into your home or office. Instead, keep to public places.

Signpost local services



The most useful thing you can do is signpost. Local services are best placed to assist someone who is homeless. Keep their details to hand ready to give out.

Give what you can



In winter you may want to give out things like warm clothes, warm drinks, hand warmers etc. In summer, things like bottled water, suncream and hats are appreciated.

If you decide to give out cash, consider the short and long-term implications of doing so. The most effective way to help homeless people is to donate the cash you would give to a homeless charity or service instead.

Direct them to local drop-in services

Find local services by checking your council website and fill in the details below:

Drop-in day centre

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Tel

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Opening times

Emergency night shelter

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Tel

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Opening times

Encourage them to seek support

The best help you can give is to link them with homelessness services through the local council.

Many homeless callers will not want to engage with services, but if they do want help, you can call:

The Local Housing Advice team on

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The Shelter Helpline on
0808 800 4444