Winter Night Shelter Impact Report 2025/26

By Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness

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Foreword

As Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness (KCAH) continues its mission of over three decades to support single individuals facing homelessness in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, the 2025/26 Winter Night Shelter Impact Report presents a compassionate and dignified account of our work.

The 2025/26 Winter Night Shelter Impact Report reflects our strong commitment to support our community members in need. During this season, we assisted 129 guests facing homelessness. We were able to provide 30 bed spaces in the shelter, which was financed and supported by the Royal Borough of Kingston.

The guests we served faced significant and often overlapping challenges, with most experiencing mental health issues, substance use, or physical health concerns. Despite the complexity of these cases, the shelter proved its value: we offered a shelter for 129 guests, and 40 of those (31%) were successfully moved into stable accommodation.

This outcome, particularly the 75% success rate achieved among those who engaged with casework beyond the initial crisis period, strongly underscores the life-changing power of sustained engagement and the shelter's vital role in reducing rough sleeping.

Summary

This year's Winter Night Shelter provided emergency accommodation and support to 129 guests. Three quarters came from within the Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK), referred to by KCAH, Spear, Street Pastors, and RBK council. The remaining quarter came from Merton, Sutton and Croydon through referring partners including Thames Reach, Faith in Action, St Mungo's, Spear and the local council services.

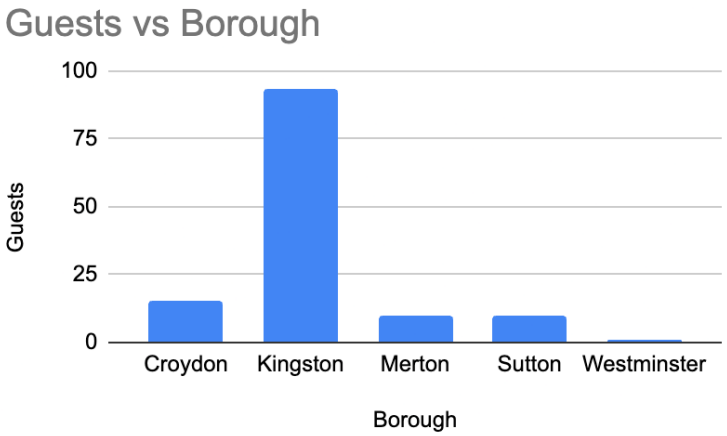
The shelter achieved meaningful outcomes: 40 guests (31%) moved to more stable accommodation. Success rates were significantly higher among those who stayed beyond the initial crisis period, underscoring the value of sustained engagement. A substantial number of guests, however, left without a measurable positive outcome.

This report demonstrates that the Winter Night Shelter played a vital role in reducing rough sleeping and supporting people who faced homelessness.

Referral Boroughs

Summary: Nearly three quarters of guests came from the RBK; and over one quarter came from the neighbouring boroughs.

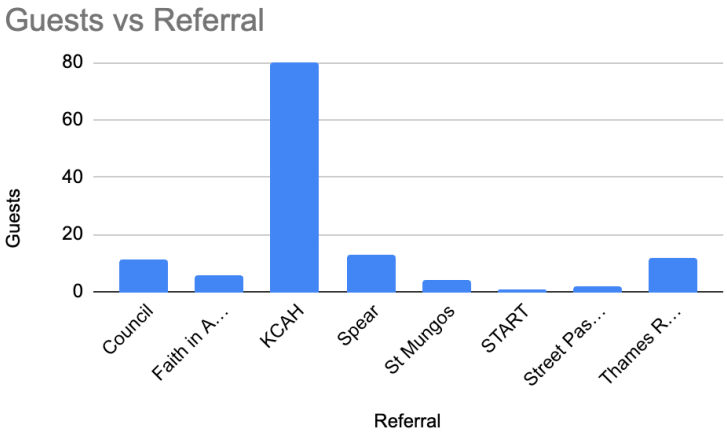
Borough	Guests
Croydon	15
Kingston	93
Merton	10
Sutton	10
Westminster	1



Referral Agencies

Summary: The shelter had 62 percent of the guests referred by us (KCAH) and 38 percent referred by partner organisations. Eleven of the guests came directly by council referrals, three from Merton, four by Sutton and three by RBK directly.

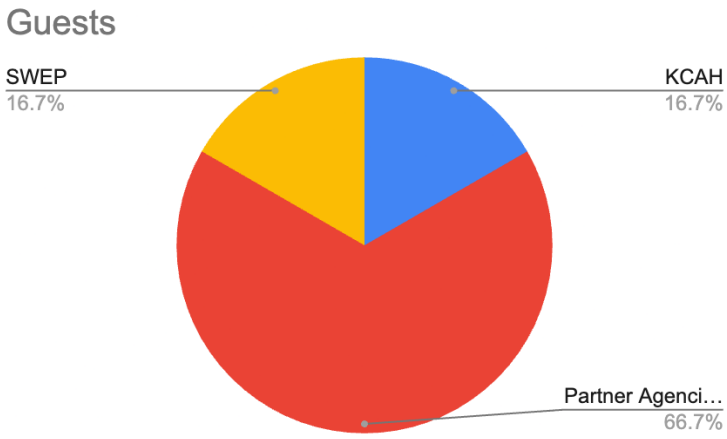
Referral	Guests
Council	11
Faith in Action	6
KCAH	80
Spear	13
St Mungos	4
START	1
Street Pastors	2
Thames Research	12



Referrals Declined

Summary: WNS declined thirty-six people who were referred, which means 27.9 percent of referrals. Most did, because they have failed to come to the shelter, or to the office. Also, we had others declined because they refused data sharing or were wanted by the police and also some because they declined to engage with services.

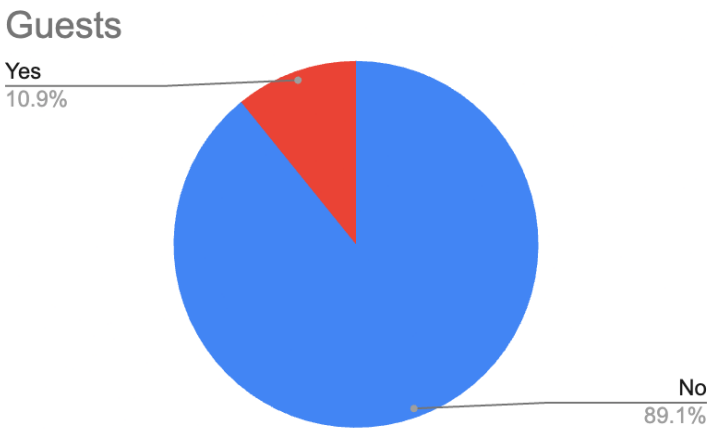
Declined	Guests
KCAH	6
Partner Agencies	24
SWEP	6



SWEP Referrals

Summary: SWEP was activated twice this winter: once for seven days, once for two days. Fourteen guests were referred under SWEP, five from Kingston, seven from other boroughs.

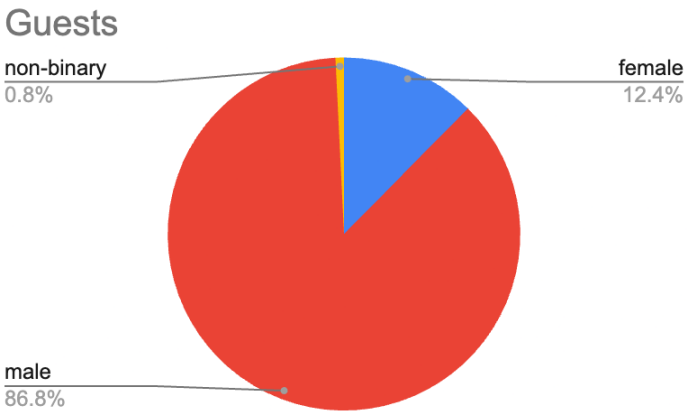
SWEP	Guests
No	115
Yes	14



Gender Distribution

Summary: The vast majority of guests were male (87%); 12% were female and one identified as non-binary. At no point did more than three female guests stay simultaneously.

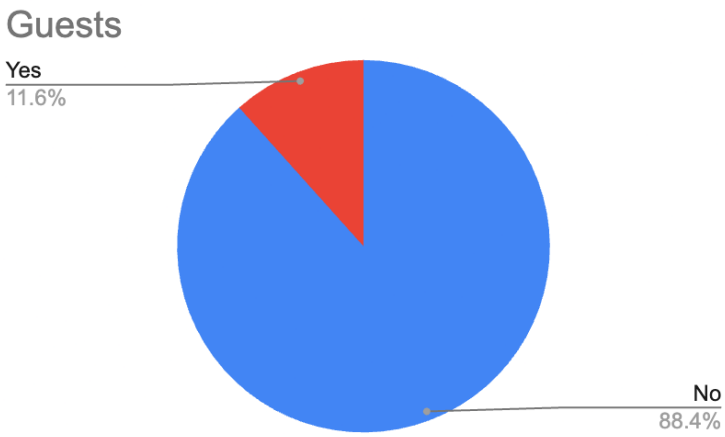
Gender	Guests
female	16
male	112
non-binary	1



Returning Guest Ratio

Summary: A small fraction (12%) of guests had stayed in a previous night shelter, and most returnees had attended more than one previous shelter.

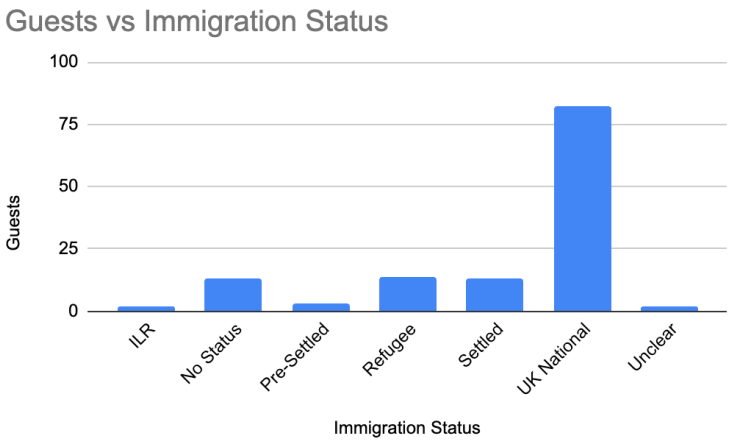
Returning	Guests
No	114
Yes	15



Immigration Status

Summary: Guests came from highly diverse backgrounds: 35% were non-British nationals, over 10% were refugees. Only two had unclear status.

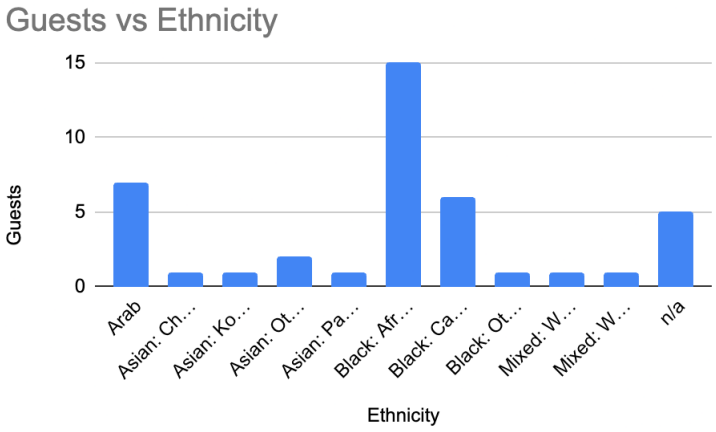
Immigration Status	Guests
ILR	2
No Status	13
Pre-Settled	3
Refugee	14
Settled	13
UK National	82
Unclear	2



Ethnicities

Summary: Guests were highly diverse: 52% identified as non-British. The largest minority groups were non-British Whites, Black Africans, and Arabs. Five guests chose not to declare their ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Guests
Arab	7
Asian: Chinese	1
Asian: Korean	1
Asian: Other	2
Asian: Pakistani	1
Black: African	15
Black: Caribbean	6
Black: Other	1
Mixed: White and Black African	1
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	1
n/a	5

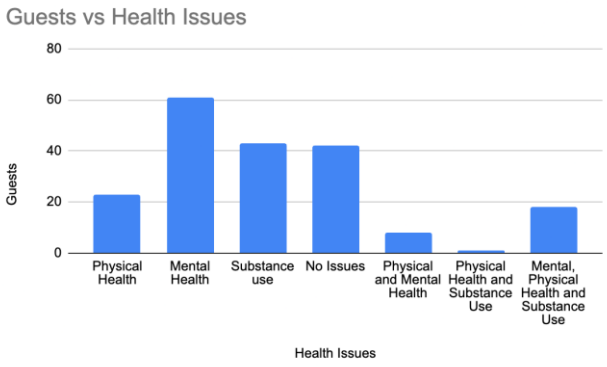


Health Data

Summary: 32.5% of guests had no health or substance use issues. Most had one or more concurrent health challenges, with mental health the most prevalent condition, followed by substance use.

Eighteen guests were particularly high-risk, presenting with all three: physical health, mental health, and substance use issues simultaneously.

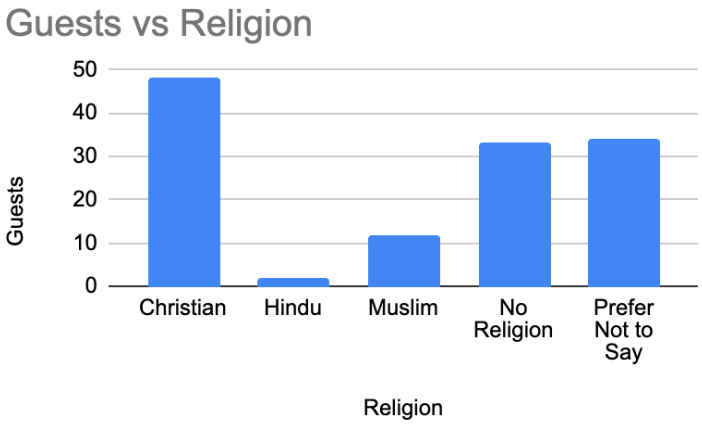
Health Issues	Guests
Physical Health	23
Mental Health	61
Substance use	43
No Issues	42
Physical and Mental Health	8
Physical Health and Substance Use	1
Mental, Physical Health and Substance Use	18



Religious Affiliations

Summary: Guests came from diverse religious backgrounds or no faith tradition. Throughout five months of operation, religious preferences; including dietary requirements, were consistently respected.

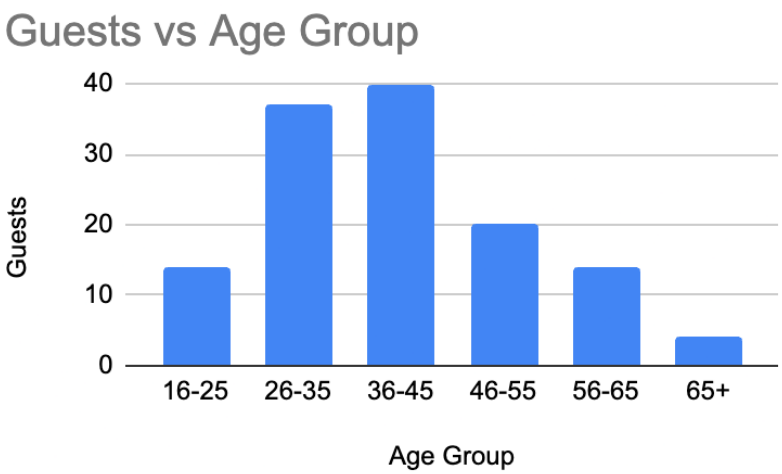
Religion	Guests
Christian	48
Hindu	2
Muslim	12
No Religion	33
Prefer Not to Say	34



Guests Age Groups

Summary: The majority of guests (59.7%) were aged 26–45. The smallest group was over 65s, with just four guests.

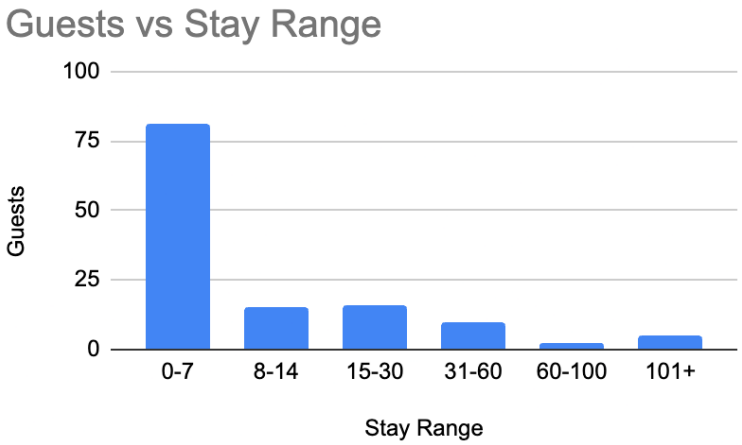
Age Group	Guests
16-25	14
26-35	37
36-45	40
46-55	20
56-65	14
65+	4



Length of Stay

Summary: Most guests stayed under seven days; 16 of these had successful outcomes. Five guests stayed over 100 days due to poor engagement or other complicating factors.

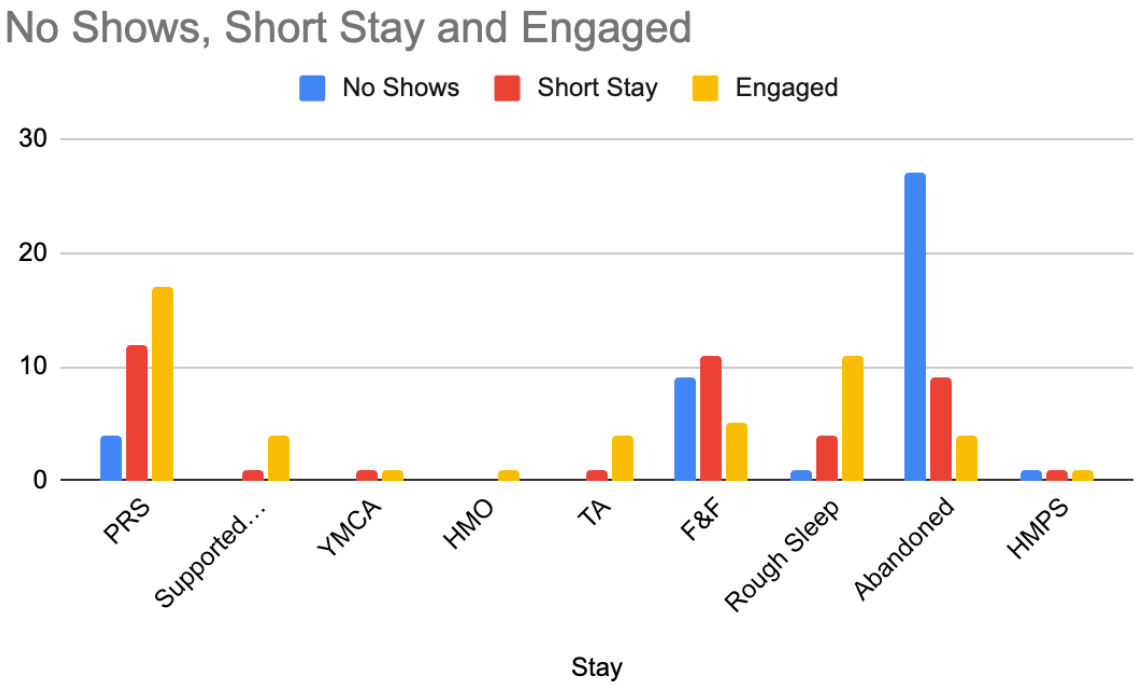
Stay Range	Guests
0-7	81
8-14	15
15-30	16
31-60	10
60-100	2
101+	5



Outcomes

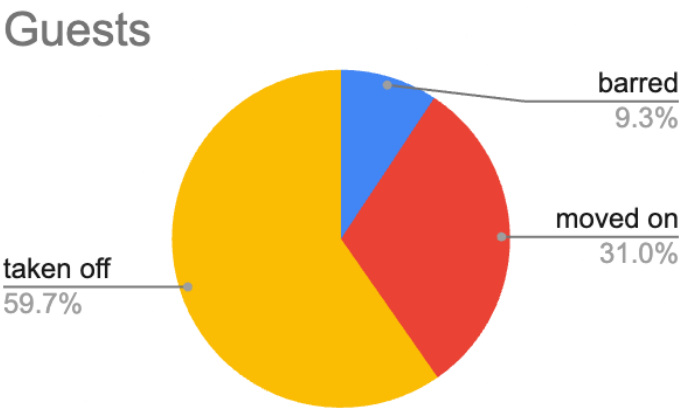
Summary: 31% of our guests accessed some form of accommodation after they left the shelter. When we exclude all who spent no longer than a week and left without a housing outcome, the success rate rises to 75%. Notably, four former guests secured stable accommodation after leaving, through their engagement with HCIS. The rest of those who left without a housing solution went on to live with family or friends, or to the street.

Stay	PRS	Supported Housing	YMCA	HMO	TA	F&F	Rough Sleep	Abandoned	HMPS
No Shows	4	0	0	0	0	9	1	27	1
Short Stay	12	1	1	0	1	11	4	9	1
Engaged	17	4	1	1	4	5	11	4	1



As of 14 May 2026, none of the 40 guests who secured stable accommodation have returned to the street.

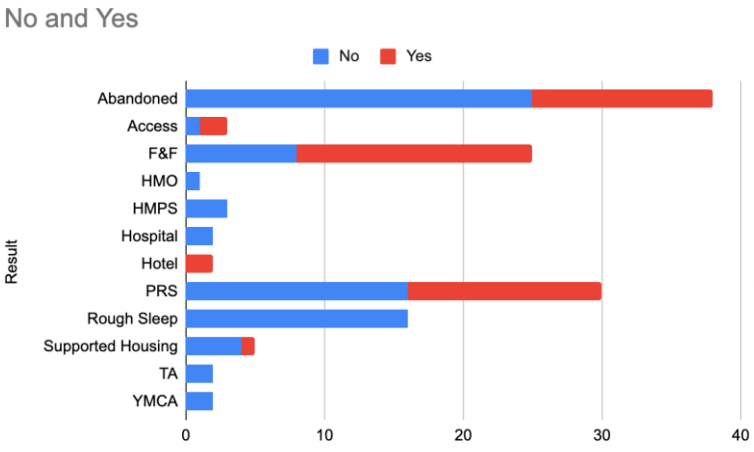
Outcome	Guests
barred	12
moved on	40
taken off	77



Prevention's Relation to Outcome

Summary: Over half of guests were prevention cases. None returned to rough sleeping after leaving the shelter, and they were twice as likely to return to friends or family.

Result	No	Yes
Abandoned	25	13
Access	1	2
F&F	8	17
HMO	1	
HMPS	3	
Hospital	2	
Hotel		2
PRS	16	14
Rough Sleep	16	
Supported Housing	4	1
TA	2	
YMCA	2	
Grand Total	80	49



In the tabe, 'Yes' means it is a prevention case, and 'No' means, not prevention.

RBK Ethnicity and Religious Data Correlation with the WNS Data

An analysis of 2021 Census data for the RBK against the 2025/26 WNS Impact Report highlights notable correlations and disparities across ethnicity and religious backgrounds among our guests.

Ethnicity

The comparison of ethnic data reveals significant differences between the borough's general population and the homeless individuals supported by the shelter, particularly concerning Asian and Black demographics:

- **Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African:** This group was significantly overrepresented in our service. They make up 2.8% of the RBK Census, but in the WNS they represented approximately 17% of all guests.
- **Asian, Asian British, or Asian Welsh:** This demographic was significantly underrepresented in the shelter. They account for 17.8% of the RBK population, but make up only 4% of all WNS guests.
- **White:** The representation here is almost perfectly identical to borough-wide data. According to the Census reports the White population is 68.3%, while the shelter supported 88 White guests, roughly 68%.
- **Other Ethnic Groups:** This group also demonstrates an almost identical representation, accounting for 5.7% of the borough Census and roughly 5.4% of the WNS population.
- **Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups:** This demographic is underrepresented, making up 5.4% in the Census but only contributing 2 guests, roughly 1.5% to the shelter.

Religion

The religious affiliations of shelter guests generally align with borough trends, with the not religious and the Christian were most frequent, however there were some noticeable difference in disclosure rates:

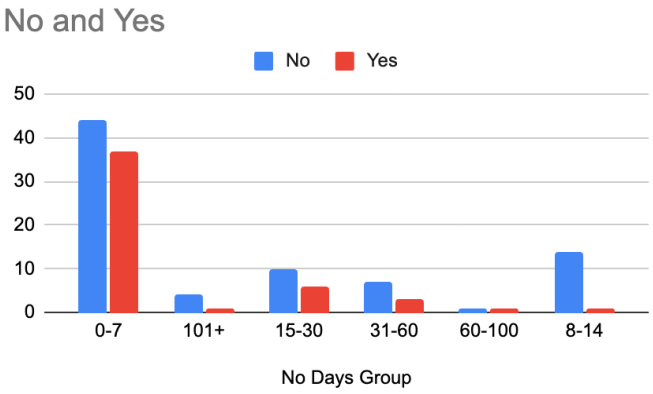
- **Undisclosed/Prefer Not to Say:** A major variance exists in the number of shelter guests who chose not to state their religion. Only 7.1% of Census respondents declined to answer, compared to 26.4% at the WNS.
- **Christian:** This was the most common affiliation in both data sets, though were slightly underrepresented at the shelter. Christians comprise 42.6% of the borough and approximately 37% of shelter guests.
- **No Religion:** This group represents 34.3% of RBK residents but only about 25.6% of the shelter population.

- **Muslim:** Muslims are slightly overrepresented in our service, accounting for 8.0% of the general population and 9.3% of shelter guests.
- **Hindu:** Hindus were underrepresented in the shelter, making up 5.0% of the borough population but contributing only 1.5% to the WNS.

The Length of Stay's Relation to Prevention

Summary: Across all categories, individuals referred to the shelter for prevention purposes typically had shorter durations of stay compared to those entering from rough sleeping.

No Days Group	No	Yes
0-7	44	37
101+	4	1
15-30	10	6
31-60	7	3
60-100	1	1
8-14	14	1
Grand Total	80	49



Staff and Volunteer Data

Volunteers provided essential help throughout the time the shelter was opened. Their help and contribution were pivotal for the running of the shelter. This year sixty-five people volunteered to help us run the shelter. Twenty-eight of them did volunteer on more than one occasion.

Partner Agencies

We have worked closely with many different partnering agencies who helped us to run the shelter. We had VIA who provided essential support for our guests with substance use issues. They visited the shelter once every week. Also, Change Glow Live (CGL) sent a nurse weekly to our shelter to take care of the medical needs of our guests.

Food Data

Food came from multiple sources: 16 volunteers brought donations, and Kingston Grammar School cooked a weekly dinner, with two additional volunteers helping to deliver it. On days without donations (the majority by spring) KCAH ordered the groceries from ASDA.

Venue

The shelter this year was located at 13 Geneva Road, in the venue of EnhanceAble. The venue had two kitchens, six toilets, one shower, one large dining area, and one large room, one small room and another small room available for sleeping. The large room was where all the gents were sleeping, the smallest room was available for special occasions like for guests who could not cooperate sleeping with others, and the other smaller room was available for the ladies. The venue also had parking at the front and a smoking area at the back.

Key venue challenges included: no reliable shower facility, no guest storage, and strict neighbourhood expectations, guests could not linger outside or arrive early.

Some of the beneficial features of the place were that it was warm, spacious and it also had internet access and a television too. So our guests were able to engage in activities passive or active they actually wanted to do.

Challenges the WNS Faced

The main challenge this year was the location. The shelter sits on a private road with family homes, and neighbours were repeatedly disturbed by some guests, requiring on-site security every Friday to Sunday for the final months.

When spring arrived, volunteer activity dropped significantly; affecting both support staff and those who supplied food.

A Success Story

One guest; an older gentleman illegally evicted from his room and sleeping on a bus came to our shelter in late December. He spent 145 nights with us, with no documentation to prove his local connection despite living in Kingston for years, no GP registration, and no access to his bank account.

HCIS and the shelter staff together worked with him extensively to secure him a GP, get his bank card back, and to be able to establish his local connection.

At the end he managed to get a GP, his bank card, and was placed on automated bidding for housing as priority due to his health condition. At the time of this report he was placed in temporary accommodation and was waiting to get his long-term home.

Feedbacks

From Guests

Guests praised the space, food, and staff, saying volunteers made them feel genuinely welcomed and that the varied, individualised food provision stood out. Two consistent negatives: no warm shower for extended periods, and no ability to store belongings at the venue.

> *"Staff have been warm and friendly and approachable. I needed help, and my stay was very pleasant and safe and including maintenance and cleanliness by the staff."*
>
> - Guest
>
> *"The communication with staff was excellent, lovely people."*
>
> - Guest

Guests suggested day access or extended weekend hours, noting few daytime options. A recurring concern was that some guests did not respect the rules, creating a chaotic atmosphere.

From Volunteers

Volunteers reported the shelter ran well, with a positive atmosphere and a sense of safety. More space improved guest dynamics, and the television helped guests feel at home and take their minds off their difficulties.

> "*Having a telly helped guests in the shelter to feel more at home there."*
>
> - Volunteer
>
> *"I think the shelter is running very well. It always feels calm and safe."*
>
> - Volunteer

They recommend having a greater variety of healthy food options such as salads and vegetables. Also, more jacket potatoes, which were always in high demand.

Housing Justice Quality Mark

KCAH has formally initiated the Housing Justice Quality Mark accreditation process. This evaluation included the submission of comprehensive applications and structured consultations. Furthermore, representatives conducted an onsite visit, engaging in direct interviews with our guests, personnel, and volunteers to assess our service standards.