



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHURCHES WINTER SHELTER CELEBRATES QUALITY MARK ACCREDITATION**

**Housing Justice is pleased to announce that Tunbridge Wells Churches Winter Shelter (TWCWS) has today, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015, achieved the Housing Justice Quality Mark for Church and Community Night Shelters at EXCELLENT PRACTICE.**

The Housing Justice Quality Mark (HJQM) is a set of quality standards designed to support and recognise Church and Community Night Shelters which achieve safe and effective practice.

The HJQM accreditation is offered at either "Safe Practice" or "Excellent Practice". The detailed standards include volunteers training, guest and volunteers' health and safety, referrals and links with other homelessness agencies, and data collection and sharing.

HJQM accreditation provides benefits to homeless shelter guests, staff and volunteers. It also enables the local community, local authorities, funders and insurers to be confident that the shelter operates to a good standard in all that it does.

Project Manager Peter Dunning said: "The Tunbridge Wells Churches Winter Shelter is geared towards offering Christian hospitality to homeless people including those who have been living on the streets. This hospitality is more than just tea and sympathy, more than a bed and safe shelter for the night. It seeks to also include a supporting and caring arm to help people to rebuild their lives: so making a real difference to people, offering through personal transformation the opportunity for them to 'move on'.

A HUGE "WELL DONE & THANK YOU" to all who have assisted and enabled this recognition of the great work being done in our community.

The Shelter is now closed, but will be needed again next winter we are certain. Volunteering information will be available on the website from mid-September. Financial donations are always welcome - details on the HOW page of the website. [www.tunbridgewellswintershelter.co.uk](http://www.tunbridgewellswintershelter.co.uk)

The HJQM was first piloted in winter 2013-2014 and is now offered to shelters in all parts of the country.

Housing Justice Chief Executive, Alison Gelder said: "We are delighted to welcome TWCWS to the network of Housing Justice Quality Mark accredited Night Shelters.

"Church and Community Night Shelters are proving an effective response to homelessness in many parts of the country, providing shelter to people who might otherwise be forced to sleep on the street or sofa surf with friends or family.

"Many shelters are seeing the value of signing up to HJQM accreditation. By the end of this winter Housing Justice will have carried out accreditation with more than 20 Church and Community Night Shelters across the country"

ENDS

### **Media Contacts**

**Alison Gelder** Housing Justice Chief Executive

**078 3241 6508 / 020 3544 8094**

[a.gelder@housingjustice.org.uk](mailto:a.gelder@housingjustice.org.uk)

### **Tunbridge Wells Churches Winter Shelter Project Manager**

Peter Dunning

Office.twcws@gmail.com

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **FOR EDITORS**

#### **About Housing Justice**

Housing Justice is the national voice of Christian action to prevent homelessness and bad housing.

Housing Justice works to enable the provision of better services by churches for people who are homeless or in housing need, and to raise awareness about housing and homelessness issues, voicing the concerns of churches, and of homeless and badly housed people, both amongst churches, the public and in local and national government.

Our Church and Community Night Shelters (CCNS) project aims to resource, improve and link up the growing network of CCNS across England and Wales, encouraging and equipping them to offer hospitality with excellent standards to homeless guests, thereby supporting the guests in their journey from street to home.

We do this by supporting the setting up of new CCNS, training shelter coordinators and volunteers, rolling out the Housing Justice Night Shelters Quality Mark, and facilitating forums where CCNS coordinators and volunteers can share good practice and find peer support.

[www.housingjustice.org.uk/shelters](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/shelters)

Our Faith in Affordable Housing project encourages and enables churches to use land and unused buildings for new affordable housing projects.

Our Mentoring & Befriending project provides moral and practical support to newly housed homeless people, to ensure they do keep their new home.

Housing Justice works with, and for, homeless and badly housed people of all faiths, as well as those who have no religious beliefs. All our services are offered to the whole community and, wherever possible, we work in partnership with others who share our values, regardless of religious beliefs.

[www.housingjustice.org.uk](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk)