

**VOLUNTEER CHAPLAIN
CRAWLEY FOYER – ROLE DESCRIPTION/GUIDELINES**

Base/Location Crawley Foyer	Address and contact details Crawley Foyer, Horsham Road, Crawley RH11 7AQ 01293 514222
Name of Line Manager Samantha Burton (West Sussex Chaplain)	Date role description last reviewed July 2019

Purpose of Role

To provide spiritual and emotional support to residents (and sometimes staff) at Crawley Foyer which is a YMCA DownsLink Group supported housing project for 16-25 year olds.

YMCA DownsLink Group

YMCA DownsLink Group works across Sussex and Surrey to provide a variety of services and projects to the local communities.

Children, young people and families are at the heart of YMCA DownsLink Group with a particular focus on the needs of young people who find themselves on the fringes of society and need support, including young people who are homeless. We want all young people to belong, contribute and thrive.

Our work covers a wide range of areas including accommodation, general advice, counselling, mentoring, sexual exploitation, mental health, housing advice, young offenders, youth clubs, alternative education and apprenticeships.

We currently provide housing for about 700 young people across Sussex, and we make a difference to the lives of over 15,000 young people, children and their families.

Crawley Foyer

Crawley Foyer is a YMCA supported housing project, with 24/7 staff cover because of the high level of need of the residents. It has 45 residents at any one time, aged 16-25, most of whom stay around 2 years. These young people are usually homeless – i.e. they cannot live at home or do not have a home for a variety of reasons. Most residents have had trauma in their lives (e.g. bereavement or abuse) or they would not be living at Crawley Foyer.

The aim for young people living at the house is to help them feel safe, and to work with them both to provide support in dealing with their past, but also to help them think about the future – what their goals and aspirations are. Over the past couple of years staff have undergone significant training about the effects of trauma on young lives (and on all lives) and this has had a big impact on the work- better outcomes for residents, fewer non-positive move-ons etc. Most residents will move from the Crawley Foyer into more independent accommodation.

Vision for the Chaplaincy Service at Crawley Foyer

YMCA DownsLink Group is an inclusive Christian organisation. This is what we say about Chaplaincy:

"A chaplain is someone, usually from a church or faith group, who wants to support the community. There are often chaplains in hospitals, sometimes in schools and in all sorts of everyday settings.

Our YMCA volunteer chaplains are here to offer support to residents and staff. The daily pressures of life can get to us all. Our volunteer chaplains are here to listen and to chat, and if you have worries, large or small, you can share them if you want to. Everything is confidential unless they are worried for your safety or someone else's safety.

They are also here to explore spiritual issues with you if you choose, and if you would like them to pray with you or for you, just ask. They will not try to convert you to their faith; they will respect what you believe. They are here for everyone, no matter what your spiritual beliefs or background."

At Crawley Foyer there has been a chaplaincy service since January 2019. The volunteer chaplains currently come in each Tuesday evening and cook and eat a simple meal with the residents. This gives the opportunity to chat while cooking and eating together. Over time this allows relationships and trust with residents and staff to build up. The chaplaincy evening takes place every Tuesday from 6.30-8.30pm. Volunteer chaplains come in on a rota basis in pairs or threes. We require an initial minimum commitment of a year and each chaplain is expected to help every 2/3 weeks on average on a rota basis.

Main Tasks

- Proactively engage with residents and staff to build good relationships with them
- Be available on a rota basis to come in (in pairs or threes) every 2-3 weeks on a Tuesday evening to help prepare a simple meal and chat informally with residents and possibly staff
- Be able to listen carefully, recognising that from time-to-time listening at a deep level will be required
- Act in a non-judgemental and impartial way
- Maintain appropriate boundaries within relationships

- Offer appropriate support, based on their own personal skills and resources and in their faith/belief/tradition, recognising when it is appropriate to use faith-related language and when not
- Be insightful about their physical proximity to residents and be very mindful of the appropriateness of any physical contact
- Sensitively discern whether it might be appropriate to offer prayer and only pray with someone if that person consents
- Attend / complete YMCA training required for the role
- Respect other people's beliefs and let the Chaplain(West Sussex) or project staff know if a resident has requested support from someone of a different faith or tradition so we can meet that need
- Act confidentially unless concerned for someone's safety in which case the Volunteer Chaplain should let senior project staff know, and also the Chaplain(West Sussex).
- Be prepared to have a conversation with the Chaplain for West Sussex every 2-3 months (or more often if needed)
- Meet with all the other chaplains and the Chaplain for West Sussex every 6 months to review how things are going

Volunteers should not:

- Try and convert someone to their own faith or belief system
- Initiate inappropriate conversations about faith/belief
- Meet up with residents outside the project without first seeking permission of the Project Team leader.
- Give out phone their own address or other contact details
- Share anything on social media except very basic information- if in doubt check with the Chaplain (West Sussex)
- Take photos

Role Specification - Skills and qualities required for the role:

- Kindness
- Prayerfulness, or ability to keep the young people and staff in your thoughts from time to time
- Having a committed faith or philosophical belief as well as being inclusive and welcoming to people of all religious faiths or philosophical beliefs and none
- Sense of humour
- Reliable
- Non-judgemental
- Good listening skills
- Good verbal communication skills- comfortable with interacting with a diverse range of people, leaders, project staff, young people, in a positive and respectful way
- Able to work in a small team

Commitment and Expectations

- A minimum commitment of one evening every 2/3 weeks for one year
- To attend meetings and training from time-to-time. The Chaplain (West Sussex) will organise this around the availability of all volunteer chaplains where possible.