

A support volunteer's story

I became a volunteer with Nightstop after moving to the New Forest from London where I had grown up as a child and worked all my life in the City of London. As a youngster I was always a member of a youth club and then in my early twenties became a Youth Club Leader, which I carried on doing for many years.

Therefore on moving to the New Forest and hearing about Nightstop and their work amongst young people, it was a natural decision to join Nightstop.

Young people who need the help of Nightstop are no different to any other young person in this world today - it is just that they have hit a problem in their life and need guidance to get their life back on track.

Although we are told that the official agencies, whether local or central government, have put everything in place to help people in need - in practice it can be very daunting especially for a young person in this situation for the first time to find their way through a minefield of bureaucracy and red tape, with countless forms of never ending questions to answer and attending numerous interviews with housing officers and job centres.

This is where the role of Support Volunteer comes in and I have found with the young people I have helped, their needs vary from helping them to complete forms, accompanying them to interviews and to give them ideas of where to go next in search of lodgings or a job or just being there for someone to rely upon.

Some young people require the whole spectrum of help whereas others only require a friendly person to give advice or perhaps show some interest and believe in them.

Any person thinking of becoming a Support Volunteer, I am afraid there is no exact format you can follow - like us every young person is different and likewise their need. But provided you are a good listener, you know what is on offer for young people and you have a genuine desire to help a young person who is in a difficult position then great satisfaction can be achieved from this important role.

David