

Hope UK

Hope UK is a Christian charity that works nationally to provide drug education and prevention activities for children, young people and adults from all walks of life.

Hope UK's project with the Rushden Night Shelter and Northamptonshire Street Pastors, provided training to their volunteers to equip them with the skills necessary to identify potential drug use and how they could support someone with a drug dependency.



Cold Turkey

The Full Gospel Church in Rushden, Northampton is one of a number of churches that has undergone training with Hope UK to deliver a drug Awareness programme to Night Shelter and Street Pastor volunteers.

Thirty year-old James Hester, an ex-heroin addict from Rushden, had been living on the streets for several months before deciding to take drastic measures and clean up his life. James joined the Night Shelter project at the Full Gospel Church and after five months of going 'cold turkey' he had broken free from his drug habit.

James said: “The project has helped me to become a productive member of society. My life was a train wreck before I got help from the Night Shelter and now my life has transformed. I’ve got a steady girlfriend, I’ve got an IT qualification and I’m clean of drugs.”

James is currently living at the Full Gospel night shelter and works with the church as a day volunteer helping with gardening, bricklaying and general handyman tasks. He volunteers with two local charities and wants to train as a volunteer in the Night Shelter Project to support people in the same way he was supported.

He continues: “All I need to do now is sort out a flat and get a job. I’ve got a lot of respect for the Night Shelter project, so much so that I want to get involved. I’m a good example of how successful it can be and I want show drug addicts that there are people out there who can help change your life, if you’re willing to accept their support.”

East Northants Faith Group's Development Worker Mark Lees, said: “Working in partnership with Hope UK has trained us to recognise, help and support drug users in the area. Hope UK has given us the opportunity to reach out to those marginalized from mainstream society and help them to make significant and long lasting changes to their lives.

“James has changed in a radical way since we first met him five months ago. Initially he had no motivation and could see no way out, but with support and guidance from the team James’ attitude has been transformed. I am sure he will achieve everything he sets out to do.”

Rushden Night Shelter was established in 2008 by the East Northants Faith Group alongside another community project called Street Pastors. The Night Shelter project now cover the whole of Northamptonshire and Street Pastors has expanded to other areas of the county as a community safety initiative with the local council and police force. Street Pastors are now active in Northampton town centre and the scheme will be expanded to cover Daventry in 2009/10.

Camille Cummings, Drug Educator for Hope UK comments: “Not only does the drug awareness programme and the Night Shelter project help individuals like James, data reports shows Street Pastors is helping to reduce crime rates in this local area, as well as making a real difference on the streets during the night time economy.”

Results

By the end of the Hope UK training programme Street Pastors will:-

- Know the four categories of drugs and their main characteristics
- Be able to recognise signs and symptoms of possible drug use
- Be equipped with what to do in an emergency and where to go for help of further information
- Be better equipped to support shelter users and people in the town centres in the night time economy.



Hope UK
25(f) Copperfield Street,
London,
SE1 0EN
T: 020 7928 0848
W: www.hopeuk.org