



Offering support,
befriending & advocacy
to anyone who has been
exploited in the sex industry

Information Pack 2011 - 2012

The Rahab Project, Alana House, 2 Southern Ct, South St, Reading, RG1 4QS

:: The Rahab Project ::

:: ORIGINS ::

Rahab began when 3 individuals independently contacted the National Christian Alliance on Prostitution (NCAP) after a local paper published photos of 7 women who'd received ASBOs because of their street working.. Local police asked MTF's CEO if support could be offered to break the cycle of re-offending , which also highlighted a need. Five people from local churches and Christian social action organisations formed the Steering Group. Night Outreach began in November 2005 and we have grown from there.

We are still a voluntary organisation, and now offer day time support, befriending and advocacy as well as continuing to run Night Outreach Teams weekly.

Our project operates under the umbrella of The Mustard Tree Foundation, a registered charity focused on people, seeking to be a voice for those who have no voice and enabling the community to speak for itself.

:: ACTIVITIES ::

At least once a week, Rahab volunteers go out to do street-based Night in Reading. We give out contraception, food and drink and offer support - simply by starting up ordinary conversations. Through the contacts made during Outreach, and from Referrals from our partner agencies, Rahab also offers day time support. One-to-one keywork sessions, support at appointments (i.e. court, statutory services), prison visits, general signposting, working in partnership with other local agencies: these are all things The Rahab Project does.

:: VOLUNTEERS ::

It's no exaggeration to say that without the hard work of volunteers, The Rahab Project couldn't exist! The commitment and passion of those who started Rahab in 2005 - Anita Hawthorne (Rahab's first project manager), Tim Clewer (MTF's director), Tonia Elliott (part of the founding group), Chris Milton and Malc Peirce (previous and present FCG directors), Sylvia Eedle (prayer support) and Lorraine Joslin (current project manager) - has been the catalyst for our work, and continues to facilitate its development. Our current volunteers enable Night Outreach Teams to continue, as well as supporting our day time work.

:: ETHOS & PRACTICE ::

Our ethos is integral to how we work. Compassion motivates us, and we seek to serve to the best of our ability, recognising the inherent value of each individual we encounter. The project does not exist to 'fix' people, but is there to serve and support. A listening ear, open heart and well-placed question are often more productive than coming with 'all the answers'. By offering befriending and support we seek to show options, and increase an individual's capability to make more positive decisions for themselves.

Rahab's roots came from different people from different churches with different expertise and experience, but all of us came with the same heart: we hope to show compassion and understanding to a group marginalised and misunderstood by society. Jesus showed this humility and conviction throughout His life, and we continue to be inspired and invigorated by His example and His message.

: : The Rahab Project : :

Our Ethos

Our values are **central** in defining who we are and the work that we do, ensuring we remain **focused**.

All volunteers and workers are expected to uphold the values & teachings of Jesus, and act in a manner that doesn't bring the project into disrepute.

Jesus' life demonstrated how to live life to the full. We seek to live like Him - empowered by the same Spirit and learning from His teachings and His life on earth.

Jesus was a **revolutionary**, loving the **marginalised** and **misunderstood**. He spent time with people who society despised and excluded. And He opened up **opportunities** to **change**. We seek to reflect this **inclusivity** and **compassion**.

For those who call themselves Christians, we each have a different shaped faith; God meets with us as individuals. But we are to share that faith in community. Wrestling through beliefs, doubts (as John the Baptist did), thoughts and actions is part of living life as a Christian. We don't have to agree on every doctrinal detail, but we believe this context is part of the beauty of being in community with people daily seeking to become more like Christ.

:: TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS & STAFF ::

We host a Morning Training Session bi-annually for volunteers who are involved in Outreach and Support. These are **essential** in building up basic **awareness** and **knowledge** in the area we work, as well as building a strong sense of **team** amongst our volunteers. Every quarter we invite people from partner agencies to share their experiences and talk about their service provision, which is an opportunity to broaden knowledge and ask questions.

We ask that volunteers involved in Night Outreach do one Morning Training session (or individually go through Night Outreach Training with the Project Manager if they are unable to attend the morning session) and meet the Project Manager for an informal interview prior to going out on the streets. To be involved in Day Time Support, a similar procedure is followed and regular Supervision sessions are arranged with the Project Manager.

:: SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERS & STAFF ::

The work that we do at Rahab can be quite demanding - whether it's the late nights doing Outreach or the stories we hear doing Support. Sometimes it can feel overwhelming, which is why we need to make sure our volunteers are OK as well as our clients! Sylvia Eedle has been very involved in supporting Rahab since we began. The Project Manager is responsible for work-related support and supervision. Regular group support for volunteers is hosted by Sylvia.

:: AFFILIATES ::

The Rahab Project is affiliated with *Beyond the Streets* (part of the National Christian Alliance on Prostitution) and we agree wholeheartedly with their aims and objectives. We've received support and advice from them in making policies and writing operational procedures. *Beyond the Streets* is a UK charity working to end sexual exploitation. They work to help people who're exploited by prostitution and sex trafficking to have access to genuine and attainable alternatives. They also believe that it is vital to look beyond the label "prostitute" and "sex worker", and to treat with respect and dignity the person behind that label.

:: RAHAB AND VOLUNTEERS ::

How to apply to become a Volunteer with The Rahab Project:

- Fill in the Volunteer Application Form
- Fill in a CRB check with the Mustard Tree Foundation *
- Read through the Equal Opportunities Policy
- Read through our Confidentiality Policy
- Read through our Universal Safeguarding Children Policy
- Attend a Morning Training Session
- Sign the statement on the next page
- For Night Outreach Team Members (with a car): provide the car registration, make & model to the Project Manager for safety **

* Until requirements change, volunteers are required to have an up-to-date CRB check, through MTF

** TVP's CCTV Team monitor the safety of volunteers whilst we are on Night Outreach.

Night Outreach Teams

We recommended reading “*Working the Streets*” by R. Robb & M. Carson (2002) New Wine Press, ISBN 1-903725-19-4 (The Project Manager has 2 copies of this publication) for a broad and helpful background to Night Outreach.

The Golden Rule

At the outset, it's always worth saying that the Golden Rule is to be **pleasant, respectful and to avoid confrontation**. If there is any doubt about safety, make a polite excuse and move on.

Prayer

Prior to every Night Outreach, the Team prays together. Taking a few moments to be still is especially helpful - not all prayer is talking! It is an opportunity to still ourselves - volunteers don't have to vocally join in; it is about taking time to realise that it is not about our own strength and solutions.

Dangers

The dangers of this work are real. For instance, some street sex workers are known to carry a 'blade' for their protection. They are making their living from their activities and often if they are being 'pimped' then this person will not be too far away. Any interference in their work may not be viewed favourably. Since Rahab began, we have **never** had a **volunteer threatened whilst on Outreach**, but we **never cease to be alert and cautious**.

Teams

Rahab Street Outreach Teams should be **at least two people, preferably three**. The appointed Team Leader for the evening has the discretion to decide if it is unsafe to go out. It can feel intrusive or intimidating for someone if large groups stop to talk to them. The Team operates by having 2 people make contact, whilst the 3rd person (if there is one) hangs back to alert of surroundings. They may then be able to call for help if trouble arises. It's usually best to **let 1 person (female) make the actual initial contact** and do the talking whilst the 2nd person prepares drinks. It's **NEVER** appropriate for initial contact to be made by a male. Team ratios will also be 2:1 female:male and team Leaders are always female.

Links

Rahab has links with the local Thames Valley Police (TVP) team, who are based in the Oxford Road Community Office. Night Outreach Team members are required to give their licence plate details to the Project Manager in order for the TVP CCTV team to keep a record of. This prevents car owners receiving a reprimanding letter about kerb crawling! We also have links with their NSOs (Neighbourhood Specialist Officers) and receive updates about what support we can offer women who may have recently been arrested or taken into custody. One of the most recent endeavours is launching the Ugly Mug scheme in partnership with Alana House, which catalogues information about dodgy punters and pimps who pose a threat to the women that we work with.

Day Time Support, Befriending & Advocacy

A Listening Ear

When we offer support at Rahab, we are offering a listening ear and non-judgmental support (see Equal Opportunities Policy). At the start of offering support, it is established that the information received will be treated confidentially, unless it poses a threat to themselves or a child (see Child Protection Policy and Confidentiality Policy). We aim to ask open-ended questions to allow a free response, and when giving advice we consider whether it has actually been asked for it. During Morning Training Sessions we briefly address 'Motivational Interviewing' as a technique.

Befriending

Offering friendship seems basic, but much of our support was established through friendship and openness. We must always remember to maintain appropriate boundaries. We would also like to highlight the importance of creating as even a befriending 'relationship' as possible—i.e. relating to someone as an adult, not slipping into the (sometimes instinctive) role of parent-to-child.

Advocacy

When acting as an advocate, it is important to take time to listen to the full story. Also, as we work in partnership with numerous statutory agencies across Reading, we must listen to them too. Sometimes this will be difficult, as the person we advocate for may have had negative experiences. In all things, we must seek to be gracious, but be clear we are there to seek out their best interests. Sometimes our advocacy takes us to support people when they are in court, and we will always endeavour to speak the truth and offer opportunities for those we know to start afresh and benefit from the support that is available (both from Rahab and from partner agencies).

Other Agencies

Rahab has worked with many local agencies - both statutory and voluntary - and we will continue to do so. Our Service Directory has contact numbers and services information.

Agencies that Rahab works with:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| - Baker Street Clinic | - Reading Probation Service | - HMP Bronzefield |
| - St Mungo's Street Services | - Reading Borough Council Housing | - TVP (Police_ |
| - DAAT (Drug & Alcohol Team) | - Criminal Justice Intervention Team | - Crossing Bridges |
| - BWA (Berkshire Women's Aid) | - ReadingCDA Cranstoun | - Social Services |
| - Elizabeth Fry Hostel | - Salvation Army | - Alana House |
| - Stonham Housing (Garner House) | - Riverside ECHA (Hamble Court) | - BCHA (Waylen Street) |
| - FCG (Faith Christian Group) | - CCA (Christian Community Action) | - KCA Prescribing |
| - Launchpad Reading | - NHS Broad St Clinic | - TVPS (for HIV & AIDS) |
| - RVA (Reading Voluntary Action) | - Turning Point | - DAIS Reading CRI |
| - RBH Florey Unit for sexual health | - Reading Social Services (PSM Team) | - HMPs (women's) |

Confidentiality Policy

Purpose

To provide uniformity in practice for volunteers in terms of handling client data and project information securely and identifying in what instance confidential information may be disclosed.

1. Persons who are sex working

1.1 Sharing information

1.1.1 Any information passed to any volunteer may be shared with other volunteers on a 'need to know' basis.

1.1.2 Discussion about any a person with other volunteers should be purposeful and not trivialising.

1.1.3 Discussion about a person with people outside of Rahab should be purposeful and not identify any individual.

1.1.4 Information given to any volunteer about a person who is sexworking may be given to the person's family or friends, or to any other agency **but only with the their informed consent**, unless exceptional circumstances prevail (see 1.4 below). This includes any information about whether or not someone uses the service that Rahab provides.

1.1.5 Reasonable care should be taken to ensure that discussions, conversations and telephone calls relating to confidential matters cannot be overheard.

1.1.6 Reasonable care should be taken when meeting a person we are supporting outside the hours of a normal Outreach session that confidentiality is maintained.

1.2 Recording in general

1.2.1 Any records which are kept relating to and identifying the person we support must be stored securely, to prevent intentional or accidental viewing. Written records should be kept in a lockable cabinet. Computer records should only be accessible with a password.

1.2.2 Where a person is receiving casework services s/he will be asked to complete a 'Consent to Store and Release Information' form.

1.2.3 Access to records is to be limited to the Steering Group only, unless a Team Leader is running an Outreach session and is using the folders to share information with other volunteers. Volunteers not on the Steering Group cannot access information in the folders at any other time unless a member of the Steering Group gives permission.

1.3 Recording in particular

1.3.1 Casework notes and documents will only be kept for two years after the last casework related contact. After this a note of the person's name and last known contact details will be kept in case of a future positive need for contacting them.

1.3.2 Any information that has been written with regards to anything to do with Child Protection or anything to do with any criminal incidents against a person or a volunteer will be kept in locked storage indefinitely in case of criminal proceedings that are not time barred.

1.3.3 Any 'ugly mugs' information is to be kept indefinitely because of their potential use in criminal proceedings and will be stored as above.

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