

Will Ipswich Winter Night Shelter open at all in 2023?

Not in its previous form. Instead, we are preparing to launch a new service in Spring 2023, subject to Change of Use Planning Consent being granted. We have applied for this. [This link takes you to our application](#). Since our shelter closed at the end of winter 2022, we have been working hard to adapt to local need and to develop new services that will help to address the root causes of rough sleeping in Ipswich.

So, is Ipswich Night Shelter closed for good?

Yes, but our building will still be in use for our new service, and we will still need volunteers. A crucial part of our service is that our volunteers provide genuine hospitality and compassionate company. This new service will also use volunteers to develop the life skills of our residents.

Why are you changing your provision?

The average number of guests using our winter shelter had declined steadily since 2016/17 and last winter, our average occupancy was just 2 or 3 people per night. Those people have been housed elsewhere. In previous years we had funding to employ seasonal staff to work with our guests during the day, to help them secure longer term accommodation and support. As a result, almost all the guests who worked with our staff have not needed to return to our shelter. This is a good news story!

What else has your charity done to adapt to local need?

The Government's guidelines for shelters, issued in March 2020 and August 2022, discouraged the use of communal sleeping areas such as camp beds in church halls. Instead, the priority shifted to offering single bedrooms, ideally with their own bathroom. This was to protect people from Covid infection and give them a place to comfortably rest, recover and isolate if they become ill. Thankfully, we had already decided to lease our own shelter building so we were able to refurbish this within these guidelines. We provided single bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms and ran our winter shelter during the pandemic. We are now updating our shelter premises again, in preparation for our new service – see below.

What is the new service and how many people will it help?

Our new service is called Selig Suffolk Springboard. It is designed to provide affordable, good quality, self-catering, supported accommodation for 7 adults. We expect our residents will be with us for 6-9 months.

Funding to begin this project has been generously granted by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Night Shelter Transformation Fund plus the Suffolk Giving Fund, Frank Jackson Foundation Fund, Denbury Charitable Fund, and the Suffolk Police & Crime Commissioner's Fund – all through Suffolk Community Foundation. This funding is a vital part of the transformation work but it has not driven the change. We believe that our transformed service is the best way we can continue to support local adults who have become homeless.

We will help residents to progress towards living independently in permanent, sustainable accommodation. As well as providing a supportive environment, we will focus on empowering our residents to secure employment. We believe that affordable accommodation and employment will change our residents' lives for good.

Employment support for Selig Suffolk Springboard will be provided in close partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions. They will empower our tenants to apply for and secure employment. Our own support staff will underpin this by helping to find permanent accommodation for our residents to move on to. They will provide at least six months of regular contact and general support after our residents have moved on. Our volunteers will provide activities and social events for former residents so that they have a support network.

Thanks to our volunteers and staff, we will help Selig Suffolk Springboard residents to regain hope and a life purpose, based around their goals, strengths, dreams and needs.

Why is Selig Suffolk Springboard a good thing for Ipswich?

Our new project will prevent rough sleeping because it tackles some root causes of homelessness. It helps to address the lack of affordable housing which prevents homeless people from getting back on their feet and back into work.

Selig Suffolk Springboard will be particularly helpful to young people under 25. They get a lower rate of welfare benefits which makes it difficult for them to live independently. We will also help some young people who are leaving care at 18 and who will benefit from our support. As well as supporting younger people who have become homeless and who are ready to work, we will also support adults who have become homeless and are seeking work.

Our new service will create sustainable change. It will empower people to live a full and independent life and to put down roots and become part of the community, instead of simply struggling from night-to-night. Selig Suffolk Springboard will reduce the risk of former residents slipping back in to homelessness because we will continue providing support and contact once they have moved on. An element of our funding is that we will organise social activities for ex-residents so that we see them, and they can easily tell us if they are struggling.

When will the transformed shelter service start?

We are working towards opening the new service in Spring 2023, after Planning Permission is granted for Change of Use. We will keep you updated via our [website](#), [Facebook Page](#) and mailing list (please email info@selig.org.uk if you would like to join our mailing list).

What about the people on the streets now? Who is helping them?

Organisations have been working together tirelessly to reduce the number of people who may have to sleep rough in Ipswich. [Click here to see more about these services](#). They include Outreach Workers who seek out anyone who is sleeping rough. The Outreach Workers check in with those who are sleeping rough and link them up with available help and emergency accommodation.

What should I do if I see someone who seems to be sleeping rough?

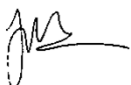
You can help by letting the Outreach Workers know about anyone who may be sleeping rough. Simply email RoughSleeping.Enquiries@ipswich.gov.uk. All you need to say is exactly where you saw them and when. You don't need to gather any personal information. You can also make sure that they know about the [Ipswich Soup Kitchen](#). If someone is injured or seriously unwell, please ask if they would like you to call 999.

What else is Selig doing for homeless people in Suffolk?

We have run [Suffolk Hope into Action](#) since 2017. This project enables local churches to work with us to provide a home to those in need. We have four homes open already, accommodating 11 tenants in total. We are opening our fifth home and are in discussion about opening more.

Thank you for your interest in our work. If you want to know more, you can visit our [website](#) and [social media](#). Professionals, funders, supporters and volunteers are very welcome to email me with any questions.

All kinds of people find that they have become homeless. Our transformed service will enable them to rebuild their lives. We are extremely excited about this.



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