



# Ipswich Soup Kitchen Guidelines

[www.ipswichoutreach.co.uk](http://www.ipswichoutreach.co.uk)

**The following guidelines have been drawn up to help and support the important work carried out by the Soup Kitchen volunteers. They are based on over 20 years experience of providing a Soup Kitchen in Ipswich. Guidelines on hygiene from the Suffolk Council Environmental unit are also enclosed.**

**THE GUIDLINES ARE FOR THE SAFETY OF THE VOLUNTEERS, THE BENEFIT OF THE CLIENTS, AND THE MINIMISATION OF ISSUES THAT MAY AFFECT THE SMOOTH RUNNING OF THE SOUP KITCHEN.**

The Guidelines are split into a number of sections for clarity and ease of reading.

- The Soup Kitchen Evening
- Engagement with Soup Kitchen clients
- Dealing with difficult situations
- Health and safety issues
- Clean up after Soup Kitchen Evening

## The Soup Kitchen Evening

- Soup Kitchen runs from 7.30pm and is there to provide basic sustenance for the vulnerable and needy of Ipswich.
- Each group should aim to have at least 6 volunteers on each evening. If this is not possible the group leader needs to assess whether the number of available volunteers is sufficient to safely distribute the food and beverage to the clients on the night. If the group leader deems it unsafe because they don't have sufficient volunteers, and it is too late to ask for support from other teams, the group leader can cancel the Soup Kitchen for that night. If this is likely to be the case **please** let Ian Walters know, beforehand if possible.
- All Volunteers attending on the night **should, unless the group leader thinks its unnecessary**, wear a Soup Kitchen Florescent Vest, this is so they are clearly visible to clients, other volunteers and any other agencies in attendance (e.g. police).

- Wear warm clothes that you won't mind getting marked or damaged.
- Assemble all you will need before you set out, especially: black bin bags (to collect rubbish & discarded cups), disinfectant spray & kitchen roll, plastic/polystyrene cups, a number of foldaway tables to serve, and a large bottle of water and maybe a broom to wash down the pavement of any spills. Also you may want to think about; a basic first aid kit, wet wipes for volunteers' hands, a torch, and possibly blankets.
- Experience has shown that the following food or drink is suitable: tea/coffee/soup/sandwiches served in portions in individual sandwich bags/ fruit/pre-packaged biscuits/cakes/crisps etc. Hot food only if prepared in a health department approved kitchen, and having portable hand washing facilities on site.
- Ensure that all food is handled, stored and transported in a manner suitable for that food category (As per hygiene rules) – some people make the false assumption that homeless people have “cast iron stomachs” – the reverse is true.
- Food and drink should be served from tables on the pavement.
- Always hand out food, drinks, and clothing, rather than leaving people to rummage for themselves, it's more honouring, and it's less likely to lead to disputes and fights. Try to ensure that everyone gets something and no one person takes lots of one item.
- Ensure that all objects, which could cause injury or damage in the event of an accident, are securely clamped or strapped in place.
- Do not meet with our clients (homeless) outside of Soup Kitchen time, and don't give out your personal contact details.
- Personal Property, we ask that all volunteers leave valuables at home or locked in your car. Don't leave any personal items in view that shows or may provide personal information.
- Always ensure that at least one member of the team has a mobile phone which is switched on, and ready to contact the emergency services if necessary.
- Each night bin bags must be available, and clients must be instructed and encouraged to put their rubbish in these bags. Rubbish must then be taken away/disposed of in bins on site. Collect up any used and discarded cups and sandwich wrappers with gloved hands before you leave.
- Do not give money or medication to our clients (homeless).

- At the end of each evening, please can the leader for that night record the names of the volunteers that were present on the night and the number of clients served. Please keep a record of this information for your own records but email Ian Walters of the number of clients attending on your evening.
- Any incidents, however small, should be reported to Ian by phone or email ASAP, this includes any dialogue between clients/volunteers and non-soup kitchen personal such as members of the public not involved in Soup Kitchen.

### Engagement with Soup Kitchen Clients

*It can be difficult to relate to someone who is mentally ill, or drunk, or on drugs. The best advice we can give is: "Be yourself – but think before you speak". Many of the people we meet are desperately lonely – just listening to them may be the most useful thing you can do, particularly at a first meeting. Try to establish relationships with other agencies and venues which work with the homeless in the area(s) you visit as this will make you more effective in helping your clients in an emergency.*

*You may find the following points helpful:*

**Listen when someone is talking to you:** If you don't understand what they have said, tell them so politely rather than giving some glib or non-committal answer.

**Talk to people normally:** The homeless may have more problems than you or I, but they have similar interests and concerns.

**Practice being a listener rather than a talker:** You should aim to draw people out and understand them before you start making suggestions.

**Anticipate:** Be sensitive to a 'bad atmosphere' and/or an individual whose body language spells trouble, and either be particularly conciliatory or walk away.

**Get to know names:** You will have more respect from people and more support when someone else is causing trouble if your clients view you as a friend.

**Make yourself aware of the various agencies:** There are a number of agencies that can help the homeless in Ipswich. Carry this information down with you – agency information is supplied.

**Don't try to have a rational argument:** Someone who is clearly irrational, such as people who are drunk and/or on drugs can be unpredictable.

**Don't take abuse personally:** If someone takes out some of their anger and frustration on you, don't feel you must return it or defend your dignity.

**Don't say "I know how you feel" or "I understand":** You can't possibly, and the homeless person is likely to tell you so in no uncertain terms!

**Don't give out false information:** If you don't know the answer to a question or the solution to a problem, never try to bluff your way out, be honest enough to say, "I don't know the answer, but I'll find out and give you an answer next time".

**Don't make rash promises:** Never make promises unless you are able to fulfil them, people will never forgive you for a broken promise (and remember what seemed minor to you could have been terribly important to them).

**Don't give out personal details:** Even if you think you know them well **don't** give out personal details to clients, like your home telephone number or address. Nuisance calls or unexpected visits are rare but can be distressing when they happen.

**Female team members should not agree to meet male clients on their own:** Some men who appear perfectly normal can in reality be extremely dangerous individuals. In the same way male staff should not agree to meet female clients on their own, allegations can easily be made, and they are difficult to deal with.

### [Dealing with Difficult Situations](#)

**Critical Fall-Back Position:** *If the group leader becomes worried about the safety of the volunteers the group leader should shut down the Soup Kitchen, and make sure the volunteers leave safely in their cars. It is important to let Ian know as soon as possible by phone or email what has happened.*

*Notwithstanding the above **Critical Fall-Back Position**, it is worth taking note of the following:*

**Never intervene in an argument or a fight:** If you think there is a risk of serious injury, **CALL THE POLICE** quickly and unobtrusively.

**Never try to sort out aggressive individuals on your own, or with somebody else:** If someone physically threatens any team member, **IMMEDIATELY CALL THE POLICE** whilst quietly and calmly backing away from the individual. Do not get isolated in a difficult situation and keep the volunteers/team together.

**Don't try to be a doctor or a nurse:** Unless of course you are a doctor or a nurse! Don't apply a plaster to a cut, give it to the client to apply for

himself/herself – and **CALL AN AMBULANCE** if you think the condition may be serious.

**Don't offer to use your car to take someone to hospital:** You have neither the life-saving skills nor the life-saving equipment of an ambulance crew – if it's serious enough for someone to need a hospital, it's serious enough for you to **CALL AN AMBULANCE**.

*There are some other points to bear in mind when handling difficult situations:*

**Always remember that “a gentle answer turns away wrath”:** Apologising, even when you're not at fault, will often end a possible confrontation.

**Don't get into disputes:** Never ever try to restrain an angry person or push them away.

**If you need to call the Police:** If any group has a need to call the Police and need Police assistance, PC Bevan has informed us to call 101 and ask for a Local Officer to attend. If the matter is urgent then dial 999.

**Report any Incidents to Ian:** Any incidents, however small, should be reported to Ian by phone or email ASAP.

**At the end of the evening:** When the food is finished don't hang around, tidy up, and leave.

If a pattern is forming regarding any behaviour, we can warn other groups within the Soup Kitchen and take action if necessary.

**It is essential that if the Police have a need to speak to Ian about an incident that has happened or been raised regarding the Soup Kitchen that he has all the information to hand so he can comment on the situation.**

### Practicalities – Health & Safety

- Be aware of the risk of blood borne viruses, keep well away from blood and open wounds or sores, and put a plaster on any exposed cuts or sores which you may have.
- Body lice and head lice are typically more common on the streets, amongst the homeless, than the general population. It is advisable not to hug anybody, a handshake greeting and goodbyes are acceptable. If you are worried about a physical contact during the evening it may be sensible to have a bath/shower and wash or air your clothes when you get back home.

## End of Soup Kitchen – Clean up Requirements

- Sanitize folding table surfaces as necessary at the end of the Soup Kitchen.  
**Spray** surface with sanitiser / **Wipe** clean with disposable paper towel.
- Dispose of any unused food and drink at the end of the Soup Kitchen.
- Remove all rubbish from location.
- All serving utensils' and containers are properly cleaned and stored for next time.

## Thank you for Volunteering

## Ipswich Soup Kitchen - Hygiene Rules

### Clean the kitchen before you start

**Remove** pets, laundry and any other non-food items from the work area.

**Wash your hands**, rinse them under running water, dry them with a clean paper towel and then turn off the tap with the paper towel.

**Put on a clean apron.**

**Clean the kitchen worktops and cutting boards** using an approved sanitiser (label should say it meets BS 1276/13697) and clean disposable paper towel.

**Use the 2 stage cleaning method** as follows:

1. **Spray** surface with sanitiser.

**Wipe** clean with disposable paper towel.

2. **Spray** again with sanitiser.

**Leave** for a few minutes for the sanitiser to kill any remaining bacteria.

**Wipe** clean with a disposable paper towel.

## **Prevent Cross Contamination**

**Wash your hands again.**

**Change your apron if it's dirty.**

**Remember to practice good personal hygiene** - No jewellery, No smoking, No chewing gum, and long hair to be tied back or wear a hat.

**If making sandwiches** only use cheese/ham and avoid salad (which would have to be washed/prepared separately).

**If baking off sausage rolls**, wash hands after placing on baking tray.

**If making packet soup** sterilise the flask with boiling water before filling.

## **Cooking**

**Cook sausage rolls thoroughly** – so that the sausage meat is not pink in the middle. This may be achieved by following the manufacturers cooking instructions and double checking by splitting one sausage roll from each batch and checking the colour of the sausage meat.

**Do not use the same tongs/spatulas when handling raw and cooked sausage rolls.**

## **Chilled Storage**

**If storing sandwiches/sandwich fillings** - Check fridge thermometer and keep food at 8C or below (target temperature is 0-5C).

**Store sandwiches/ fillings separately from raw food** – with the sandwich fillings on a shelf above any raw meat or unwashed salad/vegetables. Ensure sandwich fillings are covered and within their use by date.

## **Transport and Packaging**

Clean food packaging/containers must be used.

Sandwiches and hot sausage rolls to be transported without delay and reach destination within 30 minutes of leaving kitchen.

## **Management**

**Training** - All food handlers must be trained on these Rules.

**Reporting** - Any serious problems reported immediately to your group organiser.

**Reviewing** - Organisers should review practices if issues are suspected, or at suitable intervals, and take appropriate action as needed.