



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**DATE: 21 October 2009**

### **Porchlight accept Scrine contracts**

Kent homeless charity, Porchlight, has accepted the assignment of The Scrine Foundation's Kent County Council Supporting People contracts. The contracts include supported accommodation projects, Guildford Lodge and Wife of Bath Hill, both based in Canterbury.

Under a separate agreement with Canterbury City Council, Porchlight have also taken over the management of 20 shared houses, currently home to 109 people, in the city. In addition 14 members of staff will be coming over to the charity. The transfer of services is expected to take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

Mike Barrett, Chief Executive said, "We will work together with Kent Supporting People in order to raise standards of service delivery at the accommodation bringing it up to the level of our existing projects across the county. We will also be liaising with the owners and residents of Guildford Lodge in order that refurbishment work is completed as quickly as possible and disruption to residents is kept to a minimum."

The Kent County Council Supporting People programme is a major funder of this contract. Through this contract, the county council will meet its own responsibility to deliver better quality services.

Canterbury City Council's Head of Safety and Wellbeing, Steve Osborne, said: "This has been a good example of councils, the voluntary sector and private owners working together in collaboration to make sure that the impact on vulnerable tenants is kept to a minimum. I am confident that the new services run by Porchlight will be to a high standard and will make a positive impact on tackling homelessness issues within the Canterbury district."

With regard to the closure of the night shelter the Porchlight Kent Outreach team continues to work closely with rough sleepers in the city to find them suitable longer term accommodation. To date the team has successfully resettled 9 people who previously relied on the night shelter. The service operates a 24 hour free phone number, 0800 567 7699, providing help and advice for rough sleepers, those in unsuitable temporary accommodation and can also be used by the public to inform the team about a rough sleeper. There is also a drop-in session every Monday 10am – 12 noon at St. Peter's Church, St. Peters Lane, Canterbury.

For more information about Porchlight visit [www.porchlight.org.uk](http://www.porchlight.org.uk)

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## Notes to the Editor:

### About Porchlight

1. Porchlight is a Kent wide independent local charity that works to support single, vulnerable homeless people or those at risk of homelessness. It was established in 1974 as Canterbury Cyrenians and works throughout Kent.

2. Porchlight has accommodation based projects in Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and Ramsgate. The outreach team works with street homeless people as well as supporting former homeless people in their own homes, to prevent them returning to street life. Other services support people in their own homes who are at risk of becoming homeless.

3. In 2008-9 Porchlight helped over 1,600 vulnerable people. Porchlight projects include:

Kent Outreach: Our street outreach team work across Kent including working within prisons to help offenders who will be released from prison homeless. They operate a 24 hour free phone helpline for help and advice with housing emergencies - 0800 567 7699

Young Persons Services: This includes a direct access hostel, longer stay hostel and shared house, providing support for a number years, until each individual is ready to live independently.

Mental Health: We run a housing project in Dover specifically for people with enduring mental ill-health. We also provide support to 7 clients in another purpose built accommodation project in Margate. In addition we also have a young persons' mental health service that enables young homeless people with mental health problems to better access the health services they need.

General Accommodation: We have hostels in Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and Ramsgate. They range in the levels of support provided from high support needs with staff available 24hrs a day, to medium support with staff available on a 9-5pm basis.

Floating Support: This is a preventative service that provides support to vulnerable people in their own home who are at risk of becoming homeless. Many of these clients have been through the hostel system and are almost ready to live independently but just need a little support every now and again.

Training and Service User Involvement: We have a team that works with people accessing any of our services and helps them develop their skills and education. We provide tailored training and encourage people to get involved in the running and improvement of their project, or volunteer on a more formal level in the organisation. Porchlight is committed to involving our service users throughout all the activities of the charity. They are actively encouraged to become involved in education, employment, volunteering and service user involvement opportunities.

For more information about Porchlight visit [www.porchlight.org.uk](http://www.porchlight.org.uk) or contact Mark Parry on 01227 813196 / 07734 595308 or email [markparry@porchlight.org.uk](mailto:markparry@porchlight.org.uk)