

St
Martin
in
the
Fields

Could you provide a place of welcome,
hospitality and sanctuary for people
with no recourse to public funds?

*International Groups: a new ministry initiative for
churches, supported by St Martin-in-the-Fields*



What we do

The Sunday International Group at St Martin-in-the-Fields was set up in September 2013 aiming to provide a place of welcome, hospitality and sanctuary for foreign nationals who are destitute in London, focusing especially on those with no recourse to public funds. It provides a hot meal, access to showers and laundry and helps with essential needs. It provides social interaction and a sense of community with others in similar situations and with the volunteers.

Our aim

St Martin's wishes to encourage and support other churches in providing similar international groups and to help provide a framework and to share our experience about how this might be possible. Each new initiative would of course depend on the needs of your area and the resources you have available.



The basis on which this could be done is as follows:

Guests

The International Group is there for migrants who are destitute because they are: not entitled to benefits; not receiving benefits; or vulnerable re housing/employment. Additionally, those with accommodation who are, nevertheless, experiencing isolation.

Aim

To create a place of welcome, hospitality and care for those who are not welcome elsewhere. Church as safe space and sanctuary.

Frequency

Regular ongoing pattern of group meetings e.g. Sunday afternoons.

Ethos

Here we are all human beings together. Everyone is a guest, not a consumer, and guests can become hosts and helpers.

Invitations

Organised by invitation – invitations should be given out each week building up a regular community of guests but also with space to provide new invitations for new guests.

Openly Christian

Include prayers. Christian ethos of mutual respect- providing a secure and inclusive space and respecting other faith groups.

Volunteer teams

Volunteers need to commit to coming once a month. Ratio of one volunteer to five guests i.e. if you start by inviting 10 – 15 people, this means you need 3 – 4 volunteers initially.



Provision

Simple, hot food is a must – rice, flatbreads, salad, vegetarian and meat dishes-respecting the eating requirements of other faith groups. Interaction – games and discussions. Other options include: Hairdressing; Volunteer Doctor or nurse; Volunteer Immigration lawyer; Volunteer Counsellor. Day trips and other special events.

Rules

Kept to minimum essential to provide a safe welcoming and inclusive space. Guests are treated as guests, welcomed and thanked for coming. Volunteers should eat with the guests. Opportunities for guests to get involved with the running of the group. First names are used through the use of name badges

Training

Health & safety/boundaries, Listening skills, Migrant experiences and Definitions of asylum seekers/ refugees and legal processes.

(continued overleaf)



Equipment

Rice cookers, chafing dishes (to keep food hot), washing machine etc. (for laundry), washing facilities (ideally showers). Basis provisions – socks, underwear, shoes, bags, trousers, shirts, sleeping bags.

Finances

Start-up funding of up to £5,000 to cover cooking and washing equipment (i.e. rice cookers, chafing dishes, washing machine, dryer etc.) from the

Vicar's Relief Fund at St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Support

Visits to Sunday International Group at St Martin-in-the-Fields, advice from St Martin's staff, copy of Guide to running Sunday International Group, and start-up funding.

Processes

St Martin-in-the-Fields will provide a good practice manual.

If you would be interested in exploring this possibility and/or visiting the Sunday International Group, please contact Revd Jonathan Evens, Associate Vicar Partnership Development, on 020 7766 1127 or jonathan.evens@smitf.org.