

Manna Society's services 0420-1121

Throughout the pandemic, we have changed the way we deliver our services several times in compliance with government guidelines on infection control whilst remaining true to our mission of helping to address the needs of homeless people and those in need.

We closed our face to face services with clients from April 2020. From then until June 2020, we offered two main services. The first was a 'Meals on Wheels' project which we operated in conjunction with our local borough, Southwark. We cooked the meals here at the Manna Centre, about 100 per day from Monday to Friday, and Southwark delivered them. The recipients were either rough sleepers placed into temporary accommodation as a result of the pandemic or vulnerable Southwark residents. The second main service was a telephone helpline. This operated 3 hours a day, Monday to Friday, offering advice on housing and welfare issues. This telephone helpline service has been operating continuously since April 2020.

When restrictions were first eased in July 2020, we introduced a new regime which ran for about a year, from 1 July 2020 to 23 June 2021. We stopped our 'Meals on Wheels' project and began providing takeaway meals directly from the Manna Centre itself. This is an ongoing service which operates 7 days a week. Unlike in previous years when we closed during Christmas week, in 2020 we decided to stay open as there were no alternative day services available.

In addition to the telephone helpline, we expanded our Housing & Welfare Advice service by offering advice in the centre itself from July 2020. Again, this is an ongoing service, and the advice is given via laptops. We offer 6 appointments per day from Monday to Thursday. More information about both advice services can be found on our website at www.mannasociety.org.uk/2020/04/13/telephone-helpline-weekly-reports/

From 23 June 21 up to 15 rough sleepers regardless of vaccination status could come into the centre for tea and a sandwich and to use our washing and toilet facilities. This service operated from 8am to 9.30am, 7 days a week. We also continued to provide takeaway meals from 10.30am to 1pm. Two other services which have been operating since July 2020 are (1) our clothing service and (2) permission to use our address to receive mail.

From 18th October 21 we hoped to increase the number of those coming indoors by expanding the opening times for our indoor sessions. The first indoor session was from 8.30am to 11am and the second from 11.30am to 1.30pm. Due to the expected increase in numbers however, we added a stipulation that if you wished to come indoors you had to have been double-jabbed or have had a negative lateral flow test in the last 48 hours. Although we had a list of over 90 clients who met this criteria, to our surprise very few people came into the centre. Most days we only seen between 6 & 10. The takeaway meal service continued throughout this period and proved much more popular with between 100 & 120 people availing of this service each day.

From 29th November 21 we will remove all restrictions for anyone who wishes to come into the centre but there will be a maximum of 40 people in the centre at any one time. We will continue the takeaway meal service until our Christmas break on Wednesday 22nd December.

Throughout the pandemic our intention has been to return to our pre-Covid services. We will do so in a slow and cautious manner, ensuring that the welfare of our staff and clients dictates the pace at which this happens.

26/11/21