

10 killer arguments why Hope should stay in Oasis House

1. When Oasis House was set up it followed several years of extensive and widespread consultation with a host of agencies. None of this happened this time – Midland Heart made this decision without consultation. The plan to move the nightshelter into OASIS HOUSE seems to have developed entirely by Northampton Borough Council telling Midland Heart what they wanted to use the building for.
The process followed breaks all proper ways of making such a momentous decision and should have involved consultation with all relevant parties including (as HOPE does) service users; those on whom a decision like this impacts most
2. The building: Oasis House was created with government and local money acquired specifically with the purpose of bringing together homeless services, fundamental to this was providing a purpose built day centre where people can be supported and helped to overcome their problems and develop a future for themselves.
Hope has been doing this successfully and sees upwards of 120 people each day, many of whom are now actively engaged in recovery programs, training, volunteering and work.
3. If the decision is final (and we hope it is not), Hope will need a longer time frame in which to move. We are not simply a kitchen serving food, we have a day centre which offers engagement and activities for individuals seeking help, we have an internet café, creative space, consulting rooms, training facilities, showers, washing facilities, wardrobe room for storage and distribution of clothing, all of which MUST be included in any future property to ensure there is no decrease in the service offered by Hope.
We will need at least two years to find a suitable property, gain planning permission, alter, equip and fund for a suitable and well located building. It took about four years to set up Oasis House, and at great expense.
Our suggestion is that the services suggested by the council should be found alternative location. Rather than relocating two services, surely it would be more sensible to relocate and renovate only one building.
4. Hope has no alternative building it could use. The old building on Ash St, which we occupy and which housed the former soup kitchen was fine when we only had 60 people using the much smaller service, and as we have said, we are now seeing 120 every day.
We also use the old building for training, our workshop renovating tools and our training kitchen and we would not want to remove any of these facilities as these are vital to supporting individuals and moving them forward in their lives.
It has none of the facilities needed and is not accessible for anyone who has any disability.
5. The need for the day centre is proven, and it meets the needs of people homeless and those in poverty. The quality of our services is recognised by several external accreditations, has received extensive national attention for its innovation and quality and most importantly is loved by its service users (as proved through our service user feedback).

What counter argument is on offer for replacing these services?

6. The explanation given by Midland Heart for our eviction is vague and meaningless. It is very unclear what services are going to be provided there. The only slight detail is a reference to offering work related support, but this is what we do already, very successfully, as partners to two Big Lottery ESF schemes and separate Lottery funding. Our team has 30 years of experience in work support and is unmatched in this regard.
7. At Oasis house we have use of specific designed elements to offer a wider range of services: an arts room and garden. Both have been extensively used for years and attracted enormous praise, the garden winning Royal Horticultural Society Gold awards. The creative writing group, endorsed by local hero Alan Moore, publishes a book next year. Both these fantastic facilities will be lost.
8. Hope support 40 or more people a day who are not homeless and they will be no services to replace them in the new site. They come to us because they are isolated, poor, were previously homeless, need support, or have chronic mental health or addiction problems. We offer vital support.
9. Not one single argument has been made so far in criticism of Hope's work. Given the excellence of what we do, we can understand why this has not happened. Yet if we are just being cast aside and closed, they have to justify this: if they do have criticism of how we work, let's hear them and we will refute anything thrown at us.
10. Hope brings together the community of Northampton in a very constructive and positive way, involving thousands of people and many organisations to donate their time, energy, money, clothes and food to support vulnerable people. Hope is funded almost entirely by the people of Northampton. We don't drain the public purse. We generate and bring in money and this could be jeopardised by this decision.