

## Thank you for your interest in joining the Rahab team

Rahab is part of The Mustard Tree Foundation, and we are passionate that everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Rahab supports women who work in the sex industry, to support them to break free from the cycles of abuse, poverty and addiction. This includes:

- Sex workers working on the streets.
- Sex workers offering services off the streets (i.e. brothels, massage parlours, escorts and those working from their own homes).

We do this by:

- Providing a Christian chaplaincy outreach service on the streets.
- Advocating on behalf of the women.
- Referring women to our partners for support including housing and benefits.
- Visiting in prisons and hospitals.
- Supporting women as they come out of prison.
- Providing well-being support and promoting sexual health.
- Having a regular prayer walk in partnership with local churches.

### Our History



Rahab began in 2005. A local newspaper article posted pictures of women who were sex working on the streets of Reading. This resulted in people from local churches and Christian social action organisations joining together to form a Steering Group to see how they could offer support.

The first night-time outreach started in November 2005 and the project then became a part of The Mustard Tree. Nearly two decades later, we continue to provide a night-time Christian chaplaincy outreach and have developed our service to offer day-time support, referrals to our partner organisations and advocacy for the women.

### Contact the Rahab team

Main number: 0118 956 7000 | Email: [rahab@themustardtree.org](mailto:rahab@themustardtree.org)

07443 487191

If you would like a large print version of this information pack, please call us.

## Our Values

As a project of The Mustard Tree we aim to:

- Reduce health and social inequalities.
- Build stronger more connected communities.
- Give a voice to the unheard.

The values of the Rahab project are rooted in our Christian faith, and are created to serve all sections of the community. Our values are:

- Integrity: *Honest, transparency and trustworthy in all operations.*
- Compassionate: *A relational approach that demonstrates empathy and care.*
- Innovative: *Creative, holistic, solutions tailored to the need.*
- Professional: *Excellence in leadership, developing special teams.*
- Inclusive: *Working in partnership, enabling community, celebrating diversity.*

The Rahab team seek to restore hope and belief. Many of the women we support face barriers and challenges, so we journey with them to make positive choices and access opportunities.

### A holistic approach: Centred on the needs of the individual

We offer a service that is centred around the needs of the individual. Many of the women have complex needs and change can often take time as behaviours have often become entrenched due to adverse childhood experiences and prolonged trauma. We follow the five principles of trauma informed care:

**Safety:** Our outreach supports the safety of the women. We recently worked with multiple agencies to relocate a sex worker whose life was in danger following an incident with men involved in gangs.

**Choice:** We talk to the women about the choices that they have in their life and help them seek out opportunities and to engage with other services.

**Collaboration:** We work flexibly with the women to develop our support and put in place what they want and need. For example, one woman was not engaging with the probation service, but when supported by both us and her friend, she reengaged and is in the process of being housed.

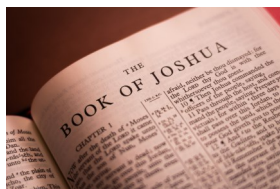
**Trustworthiness:** We cannot do what we do if the women do not trust us. One of the women said to us recently that if they ask for something, we will always try to help and deliver on what was promised.

**Empowerment:** We listen and do not judge. We walk alongside them supporting them to change their lives, empowering them to make a positive change for good.



Our holistic approach is surrounded by prayer which enables us to facilitate the best possible outcomes and sustained change. Jesus loved the marginalised and misunderstood. He spent time with people who were excluded from society and created opportunities for change. All of our volunteers and team aim to follow His example by seeking to reflect that inclusive nature and compassion to those we serve as we recognise each person's value.

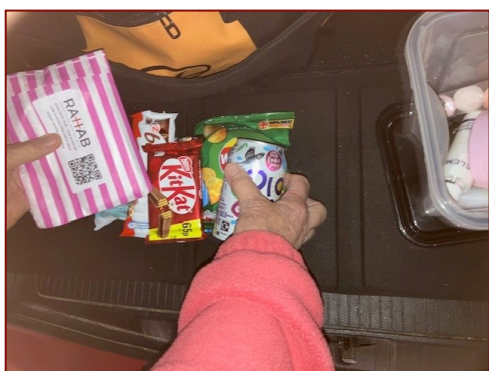
## Who was Rahab?



Rahab was a woman whose story is told in the book of Joshua in the Old Testament in the Bible. She was described as a prostitute and lived in Jericho in the Promised Land. She was brave and helped the Israelites by hiding spies who had come to scout the city.

In the New Testament, she is mentioned as a woman of faith. She was rewarded for her obedience to God, and she and her family were kept safe when the city was destroyed. She is listed in the lineage of Jesus.

## Chaplaincy outreach: What is a typical night like?



Different teams are out three or four nights a week from 9.30pm to 11pm in a place where the women know where to find us. There is no typical night out – sometimes we see eight women other times we see two. However, below we have used a mixture of night-time experiences to share with you what a night may be like.

When the volunteer team meets up, the first thing to do is pray together.

We have a thermal jug full of hot water and bags loaded with chocolate, toiletries, condoms – which we give out in a pack of six, personal alarms, gloves (in the winter) and any other supplies that the women have asked for or that we feel they will need.

**9.35pm:** A arrives, she has just come out has a hot chocolate, chocolate and condoms. She is about to be evicted and cannot find a new place to live. The team offer to refer her but she knows that they will not house her partner with her.

**9.45pm** B walks past us and tells us she will be with us in bit – just got to do a job first!

**9.55pm** C arrives, she is angry, in a low mood and depressed. She hates this life but knows no other. She was recently put on a prescription for methadone and didn't keep it going so she is now back on the waiting list.

**10.05pm** B comes back for a coffee, chocolate, toiletries and asks us to refer her to a charity that provides kitchen equipment as she has a new flat but no pans.

**10.25pm** D arrives for a can, chocolate and condoms. She's in a good mood and is happy.

**10.40pm** E is homeless, we use the Street Link app to let the service know where she is so they can liaise with her.

**11pm** As they finish, the Rahab team pray for women they have met with and for those they know who are already out.

## Volunteering with the Rahab team

Our volunteers are absolutely amazing! They are out in all weathers and never know what situations they will encounter on the outreach sessions, but they are there ready to do God's work on the streets. Our volunteers come from churches all over the Reading area.

*'I just wanted to comment that it's a privilege to be able to go out on the streets and meet these lovely ladies. Most of them are very chatty and appreciative of us being willing to meet them. Some are amazed that we give up our own time to see them voluntarily.'*

We ask our volunteers to commit to just two nights a month, although some are out more.

We provide training and each outreach is led by a team leader. Our training includes:

- Safeguarding training to Adult Safeguarding to Level 1.
- Sexual Exploitation Awareness: The signs to look for to identify sexual exploitation.
- Rahab induction.

Regular training opportunities and updates are provided to the volunteer team.

*'I started volunteering for Rahab because I wanted to help a group of women who are often marginalised and who are so vulnerable to sexual violence. Over the past two to three years, though, individual people with real lives and diverse personalities began to merge from the many faces we see, I feel so privileged to see beyond a blanket group and come alongside individual women as they go through the ups and downs of life.'*

## FAQs

### **What hours do the Rahab night-time chaplaincy work?**

We are out three or four nights Mon-to Fri from 9.30pm to 11pm.

### **What kind of time commitment do you ask from your volunteers?**

We ask volunteers to commit to two evenings a month (three hours in total).

### **Do Rahab volunteers need to be Christians?**

Yes. This is a chaplaincy outreach and we pray at the beginning and end of the outreach and regularly with the women.

### **What are the risks of night-time outreach?**

We have a risk assessment in place and if any team feel threatened or insecure in any way the team leader will make the decision to call the police and/or leave.

### **What skills does a volunteer need?**

The skills needed are the ability to chat to anyone and everyone, not to judge, to be compassionate and care.

### **What are the next steps?**

Give us a call (07443 487191) or complete a volunteer application form which can be downloaded from the website or by emailing [rahab@themustardtree.org](mailto:rahab@themustardtree.org).