

BCAN Homeless Forum Meeting Notes 8 March 2012 CCM, Carpenter House

Introduction

Present

Paul Hazelden (CCM), Richard Drake (Julian Trust), Val Moore (Christ Church, Clifton; St John; Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland), Debs Perkins (Christ Church Breakfast Run).

Apologies

Alan Goddard (CCM, Wild Goose), Mark Goodway (The Matthew Tree Project), Rhianan Lowes (Caring at Christmas), Gill Nowland (One25), Ian Webb (Bristol Methodist Centre).

Updates

One25

Naomi House is now closed. The process of making the place work with the various services and agencies involved did not work well enough, and One25 were carrying the cost of the gaps when it did not work. Only two women were resident at the time of closure, one was due to move anyway, and the other has been found a suitable place.

Life skills worker is engaging well with women.

Numbers of women seen on outreach has fallen significantly in recent months - some nights we are only seeing up to 5 / 6 women. We suspect this is due to high police presence and the crack down on kerb crawlers. We suspect women are working later into the night and for those in hostels, they may be setting up appointments with punters using their phones and meeting them outside the hostels (this needs further investigation).

Drop-in is busy and many of the drop-in service users are not currently street sex working but are maintaining their 'exit' from street sex work.

We are hoping to be successful with a large lottery bid for case work funding.

We hope to support / partner with 'People Can' with their bid for funding re high support hostel accommodation for women.

Caring at Christmas

Christmas 2011 saw Caring at Christmas extending our services to cover new years eve as well so we opened 24 December all the way through to New Year's Day. This was very successful, despite initial concerns; and was certainly a much needed additional service as homeless people are particularly vulnerable on New Year's Eve. In the past many homeless people have been victims of violence from "party goers" so to get as many people off the street as possible that night in particular had a good impact.

Meals served this year amounted to 2488 which is an increase on previous years even taking into account the extra day's service. (Christmas 2010 was 1849, Christmas 2009 was 1741, Christmas 2008 was 1654 and Christmas 2007 was 1528).

All the bed spaces were filled to capacity once again, but with a slow start early in the week.

There were unfortunately more guest fights and arguments than previous years, however the severity of the disputes was much less dire so all in all a successful Christmas project 2011. Unfortunately there was an massive increase in volunteer 'no shows'. We understand that people can be ill over the winter weeks, and we are not including those who did call ahead of time in this count, but the real problem is caused by those who did not turn up for shifts at all. On one shift, 15 people did not turn, making it dangerous for us to operate, and 'no shows' may also may lead to the shelter having to close! Luckily Rhianan always over allocates and we had enough volunteers.

There have been concerns about the changes in the clientèle using the shelter and how Caring at Christmas are going to respond to these changing times.

Recommendations for Christmas 2012

- Photos of banned people available from CCTV (C@C to check legalities and process)
- Low level lighting for the dormitory
- Volunteers/supervisors in the Dormitory at all times not just checking every 15 mins
- Make consistency key among all supervisors (do not change or break rules however experienced, you lose consistency you lose control-this is happening year after year)
- Pre-brief and de-brief need to be consistent and singing from the same hymn sheet, examples of feedback shown to supervisors in attendance of numerous volunteers saying that briefings were from excellent to non existent!
- Clear briefing points followed
- Consistency with rules of the day being adhered to at night, no smoking applies at night as well as the day, as with all other rules.
- Change in reference checking procedures, 2 written references per person not just verbal references.

This is a brief summary really but hopefully you will get the main points from this. Have a good meeting and I will see you at the next meeting in May, already in my diary.

No update was provided about the next survival guide.

Matthew Tree Project

Mark Goodway: Unfortunately, the Carriageworks Public Vision presentation at PRSC is on the same evening and I have committed to attend there.

FOODStORE. Attached is a review of how the FOODStORE has been operating since it opened properly on 22nd November and makes for interesting reading.

OUTREACH SUPPORT CARE. TMTP is about to sign an agreement to work in partnership with ISR (CCISR, the Churches Council for the delivery of the one-to-one Outreach Support Care strand of our work which we expect to be up and running by the end of March.

LabourBANK. I have started development working on the LabourBANK work initiative and I am pleased to say that we are in direct correspondence with the Secretary of State for Department of Work and Pensions in relation to this, see below:

Mark,

I've tried to call a couple of times. Would be helpful to have a short chat and then perhaps I can put you in touch with the right official, or can send over some written briefing.

Please do get in touch.

Kate

Kate Davies | Private Secretary to the Secretary of State | Department for Work & Pensions

The discussions centre around the very complicated area of short-term working (as a route into longer term employment), the effect this has on benefits and how to manage and operate such a scheme that makes sense for the employee (financially in the transition from benefits to employment), makes sense for the state, makes sense for the employer and protects the employee from exploitation of unscrupulous employers. It is early days for this but so far I am hugely encouraged.

In summary the 'proposed' scheme works on a local level, matching local labour (from the long-term unemployed) to local jobs in the SME sector in an ultra-flexible way. The scheme recognises that one of the biggest challenges in the growth of SME businesses is the fluctuating need for labour week-on-week against a backdrop of unpredictable income week on week in a labour market that is still geared heavily toward full-time employment, i.e. of the 29 million jobs in the UK labour market still only 1.35 million are part-time.

Julian Trust

No great changes to report. Have had some difficulty with the neighbouring flats over the past few years, intermittent complaints. Has notices by the phones telling volunteers how to respond to complaints. Recently sent a letter to all the occupants, telling them who the Julian Trust are and what they do. One response was received on Sunday and was very encouraging. Tonight, another response was received from a resident offering to volunteer.

Val

Enjoyed Friday night at the Julian Trust.

Lunch run being done by Clifton Cathedral this month. Redevelopment of the Bear Pit may have an effect, but not sure what is likely to happen.

The Lent Lectures have started again: the last one was very good, and they all look worth attending.

Val is a member of the Queens Nursing Institute Homeless Health Initiative, which provides some useful resources: see, for example <http://www.groundswell.org.uk/documents/HomelessHealthInitiative.pdf>

Debs

Been very busy recently. They normally feed 18-25 people, but recently it has been 35 people or more. Lots are regular faces who may not come every week, but they are coming more frequently.

Cathy who came last time is going to Mozambique, so Debs is looking for another leader. Also need more volunteers.

Paul

The Wild Goose is going well, very busy but finally up to full staffing numbers.

The Spring of Hope Ladies Night Shelter (note the new name!) is still functioning two nights a week. Val, the project leader, is now employed. In general, people need to arrive by 11 pm and bed down by midnight, but if One25 wished to bring someone round then we would accept the referral.

The City Road property is being redeveloped into 6 bedsits on the top two floors. People can read a full update on progress in the latest Streetwise, just out.

Business

Sleep Out

General feedback is that it went well.

We prepared earlier than usual, which was good, but we did not do the publicity as

well as before

Joining us this year were Mark Wright, Anthony Negus, Peter Main (the next mayor) and Stephen Williams MP. Also present but not sleeping was Hilary Saunders, who is organising a Housing Benefit Poverty hearing on Friday 18 May in the Council House in the evening – probably something we should publicise.

Another concern is that a number of people had come fairly unprepared, some with little insulation and more with little protection from the rain. We should point out in the joining notes that an umbrella can be useful; also we should advise people not to wrap themselves too tightly in plastic or they will get wet through condensation.

We had about 80 people with us, and are expecting at least £6,000 in sponsorship.

We want to run another Sleep Out next year. The provisional date is Friday 1 March 2013. We should aim to use Homelessness Week in 2013 to publicise the Sleep Out, but try to get organisations signed up before Christmas.

Paul will ask Jonathan to issue a press release to the Bristol Evening Post once we have an idea of the amount raised in sponsorship.

Open Space

We have three lunchtime events planned.

Thursday 15 March **Seminar - Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults**,
Bristol City Mission, Great George Street (11.00 am - 1.00 pm)

Helen: I am putting together a programme of meetings for these folks, and one of the requests was for one focussing around safeguarding principles, policies and practices for children and vulnerable adults. Many of these projects, whilst not specific to those groups of people often find themselves having to deal with situations that include them, and so knowing the current guidelines etc would be very useful.

The gathering would take the form of a 'focussed networking meeting' with some of the time being given to you to chat to the assembled gathering, some time for questions, and then time after that for general networking.

I'm out of the picture on this now, but the remit was talking about child protection and vulnerable people protection from the angle of workers involved in the various homeless and related projects, who may get people coming to their projects who fall into the categories of child or vulnerable person - what should the workers be aware of, be concerned about, is there anything they need to do to ensure they don't put themselves in vulnerable situations etc.

Jane Schulte: As we discussed this will be a session on Child protection - both looking at the impact of adult conditions on children (addictions/mental health etc) and also the long term impact of child abuse which can lead to adult difficulties. I would think we would talk for 40-60 mins and will give a bit of background of the various categories of abuse but mainly talk about the above. However this will not be formal child protection training. I will do a framework PowerPoint presentation (and will therefore need equipment for that) but am very happy to have it interpreted and

have an interactive session.

The other two sessions are:

- Wednesday 6 June **Seminar - Working with Volunteers**, Bristol City Mission, Great George Street (11.00 am - 1.00 pm)
- Friday 7 September **Seminar - What I Wish I Had Known**, Bristol City Mission, Great George Street (11.00 am - 1.00 pm)

No Second Night

Alan Goddard has been talking to St Mungos about the 'No Second Night' scheme, and finally received a reply from them.

"No Second Night" actually means that *someone who is new on the streets and from the Bristol area* should be housed the next day. This may be in a hostel, B&B, or something else. It is not clear if the 'next day' includes weekends, but we suspect it probably does not. But, in any case, it certainly does not include anyone who has been homeless before, so is irrelevant to most of the people we meet.

And it won't actually come into operation until St Mungos employ two new outreach workers, which will probably not be until the end of April.

This information was distributed internally within CCM, and generated the following response: "Right! I am a little annoyed about this then. This article back in December outlines the £229K: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-16260701>, this suggests the money is being spent on two support workers and some 'other costs', but they're cutting hostels, such as The Well, Lazarus House, Naomi House etc, places where people can go to sleep!!!!!! And spending it on a call centre to prevent people sleeping on the street. I'm sure I must have this wrong because otherwise this seems incredibly incompetent on the commissioning side of things. Rant over, apologies"

Bristol Street Pastors

A small group is in the process of setting up a Street Pastors scheme in Bristol. While they will not focus on homeless people, they will come into contact with them, so this is something to be aware of. Further information from Paul if you are interested.

Other Items

Hidden Homeless

Richard has heard about a survey of the hidden homeless happening in the Barton Hill area. We don't know any more about this at present, but it sounds like something which could be very useful.

Homelessness Survey

The survey last year didn't happen due to the pressure of other events, primarily the closure of the New Street Ladies Night Shelter.

We want to plan to run the survey again this year, in the Autumn. We will think about specific dates at the next meeting.

Summer Closures

The Julian Trust will be closed from Monday 20 August, and re-open on Monday 3 September this year.

What are other places doing?

Christmas Eve Event

Val reported from the Lunch Run that on Christmas Eve, an organisation, possibly a church, had taken over the Bear Pit and was giving out food. Their lunches were not needed. Fortunately, the lunches they had provided could be given to Caring at Christmas, so they were not wasted.

It would be good to make contact with the group who organised this event, and try to prevent this sort of surprise in the future. Please can people ask around and try to identify the group? One person to try contacting might be Maria Kent from the Filipino group meeting in Broadmead Baptist church.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at CCM again, on Thursday 10 May, starting at 7.30 pm. Richard sends his apologies for this meeting.

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