

**BCAN Homeless Forum**  
Meeting Notes  
11<sup>th</sup> September 2014  
Julian Trust, Little Bishop Street

## Open

### Present

Paul Hazelden (BCAN), Richard Drake (Julian Trust, One25) Lindsey Jones (Caring in Bristol, Midland Road Review Group, Strangers' Friend Society), Val Moore (St John Ambulance, Churches Together CCR, Christ Church Clifton), Val Thompson (Spring of Hope, Crisis Centre Ministries), Jonnie Angel (Wild Goose Drop-In, Crisis Centre Ministries), Martin Firth (Crisis Centre Ministries), Ahmed Muqeen (Citizens Advice Bureau), Bev Douglas (Avon & Somerset Police), Kat Wall (Big Issue Foundation) and Debs Perkins (Christ Church Breakfast Run).

Apologies were received from Steve Jones (Bristol Soup Run Trust).

## Previous Meeting

### Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

### Outstanding Business

Bev clarified the legal position on sharing information about clients. There is no reason why we cannot share information with other service providers where there is a concern for someone's welfare or safety (be that staff, volunteers or clients), or if the person is being sought by the police. The information should be restricted to what is directly relevant and should stay within the service group. When the police contact us, we can assume they will have also contacted the other organisations which they think need to know. Care is needed not to leak information into the public domain, e.g. in minutes of meetings. Ideally BCAN should have an agreed policy which its members can sign up to. Lindsey offered to produce a draft for the next meeting.

### Matters Arising

The next meeting of Churches Together regarding their Lent Lectures is due in the week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> September.

## Information Share

### Big Issue Foundation

BIF are seeing a few more rough sleepers than usual for the time of year including some new faces. They are holding a "Health Week" in November to encourage their vendors to engage with healthcare services and improve access and awareness. This will be held at their office in York Street. Val M offered to make a presentation on the health issues facing homeless people, which was gratefully accepted. BIF advised that there are some unofficial vendors causing problems on the streets and reminded the meeting that all official vendors will have an up-to-date ID badge. Positive Causes still have collectors on the street and have started knocking doors.

### Citizens Advice Bureau

Ahmed asked the meeting about recent trends especially among young people and EU nationals. Lindsey replied that Bristol Nightstop had been quiet. Val T clarified the criteria for EU nationals to obtain a permanent residence certificate. The Wild Goose has started to see families who are housed but need help with food. Jonnie thought many of these are new cases but they don't all share their situation. Kat advised that some people have started sleeping in caravans in domestic locations which is illegal. Bev confirmed that the police try to avoid taking a hard line but will ask people to move on if they are causing complaints. The CAB is doing some research on the impact of recent benefit changes. Jonnie offered some assistance from the Wild Goose though they will need to spend some time with the guests if they are to obtain any meaningful information.

### Spring of Hope

The shelter had recently been quiet with typically 4 – 7 ladies per night, though there was a new face every day. Some of the guests are in great need and the age group is getting younger. They are working in partnership with other agencies to carry out assessments. This includes One25 who will be employing a member of staff to provide an all-night drop-in at the shelter. Hopefully this will be in place before Christmas.

### Churches Together CCR

The lunchtime soup run continues at the Bear Pit despite the construction work.

### St John Ambulance

SJA are increasing their presence at Caring @ Christmas this year and producing first aid packs for the shelter.

## Christ Church Breakfast Run

Christ Church is very committed to supporting the North Bristol Food bank. The breakfast run has seen no decline in numbers and people are very hungry. They have seen several young people from Romania though they quickly build up connections within the community who can help them instead. The Free Church near St James is providing support and this relationship will be developed.

## Avon & Somerset Police

Bev reported that pockets of people are moving around, so what looks like an increase or decrease in numbers can be deceptive. But overall she perceives an increase in rough sleepers in the City.

## Wild Goose drop-in

The drop-in had to close for two weeks for maintenance at the request of Health & Hygiene which unfortunately coincided with the period when the night shelter and the Methodist Centre were also closed. However they worked with the Bristol Soup Run Trust to ensure their guests had at least one meal a day during the period. Future maintenance work will be carried out at planned intervals to avoid this happening again. The drop-in is as busy ever and they regularly run out of food, even with controlled portion sizes. It is busier at night than during the day so they may adjust their resources accordingly.

## Crisis Centre Ministries

Jonnie appealed for people to help with the annual CCM count in the City centre. Rev Andy Sewell, Bristol's retail chaplain, is to visit CCM shortly to discuss rough sleeping in shop doorways.

## Bristol Nightstop

The new key worker has started and is doing well; the project is now fully staffed again. It was quiet during August, with 14 referrals and 21 host nights provided. There are 25 active hosts. Statistics are 57% male / 43% female. Lindsey has requested ethnicity and causal statistics for the next meeting. The project has progressed to the 2nd stage of its Big Lottery application for four years' running costs. They currently have full time funding to 30th June 2015.

## Caring at Christmas

The online volunteer application system will be available shortly. Paper applications are still available on request. All shifts are expected to be filled including supervisors. Training should be improved this year with more sessions in smaller groups.

## Caring in Bristol

The final new trustee has been appointed – a medical doctor with a special interest in securing equal access to medical services for vulnerable people. She has access to the full research facilities at the School of Social & Community Medicine at Bristol University and will head up a local research programme for CIB addressing various health-related themes relevant to homeless people. Funding has been set aside for this project and the research will be shared with partner agencies.

## Midland Road Review Group

The Group has finalised its recommendations for the next 5 year plan for the work of the Bristol Methodist Centre. Their report will go to Synod on 20th September.

## Strangers' Friend Society

SFS has made two small gifts to clients of Bristol CAB as a direct result of last month's agenda item.

## Julian Trust

The shelter was closed for two weeks major rewiring work which is now complete. There has been a temporary lull since it reopened – numbers 10 – 13 a night and around 45 for meals. This doesn't reflect Kat and Bev's observation of an increase in rough sleepers so will probably change when the weather turns. It may just be that guests temporarily changed their habits while it was closed. JT will be closed from 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2014 to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 inclusive; Richard and Lindsey will speak to Ed to ascertain if Caring @ Christmas is opening on 23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> December, and if there will be any gap in provision.

Note: It has since been confirmed that JT will be open up to and including 22<sup>nd</sup> December. The shelter will be closed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December for the handover and will re-open under C@C on 24<sup>th</sup> December.

## One25

Richard summarised the main features of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Step / Golden Key project, providing an intensive long-term programme of assistance for people whose deep seated and complex problems take up a disproportionate amount of resource within the sector. One25 has been awarded funding for a worker who will run a drop-in at the Spring of Hope ladies' shelter.

## Notified Business

### Crisis at Christmas

The forum will take every opportunity to remove any confusion between this London based charity and Caring @ Christmas and Crisis Centre Ministries. The similarity in names has caused volunteers and donations to go to the wrong organisation by mistake.

### Survival Handbook

The new Handbook will be available on 19<sup>th</sup> September. Ed will email recipients when it is ready for collection. Consideration is being given to redesigning future issues to make them more accessible for people with poor English or literacy skills. A search engine is also being considered for the CIB website.

Richard asked Bev if there might be a way of making the police better informed about what is available and when as JT are still getting referrals at inappropriate times. Bev will enquire about inviting Richard to their briefings.

### Sleep-Out

The date of the next Sleep-Out is confirmed as 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015, at Pip 'n' Jay. Help with publicity is required. Jonnie confirmed that drinks, soup and rolls will be available as usual with the help of Pret and Costa who might also advertise the event in their outlets. Participating organisations should register with Paul. We will try to expand the event next year to agencies outside the BCAN forum, and also to increase coverage in the media. Jonnie will speak to his contact at BBC3 who filmed recently at the Wild Goose.

## Close

### Future meetings

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at 6.00 pm.

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 6.00 pm.

LJ

02.10.14