

BCAN Homeless Forum
Meeting Notes
13th November 2014
Julian Trust, Little Bishop Street

Open

Present

Paul Hazelden (BCAN), Richard Drake (Julian Trust, One25) Lindsey Jones (Caring in Bristol, Strangers' Friend Society), Val Moore (St John Ambulance, Churches Together CCR, Christ Church Clifton), Jonnie Angel (Wild Goose Drop-In, Crisis Centre Ministries), Holly Lloyd (Crisis Centre Ministries), Steve Jones (Bristol Soup Run Trust), Hywel Caddy (Bristol City Council), Jenny Riley (St Mungo's Broadway), Kat Wall (Big Issue Foundation) and Sandra (Mentor Me).

Apologies were received from Val Thompson (Spring of Hope, Crisis Centre Ministries) and Ahmed Muqeen (Citizens Advice Bureau).

Previous Meeting

Minutes

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

Outstanding Business

Jenny asked if there had been any change in the availability of EDT (Emergency Duty Team) as she had called recently and only obtained a recorded message. It was agreed that more education is needed around EDT as many people are still not aware of it including the police; Paul is still waiting to hear from Bev as to whether Richard might be invited to some of their briefings.

Val is about to attend a meeting on the CTiCCR Lent Lectures and will report back to the next meeting.

Notified Business

Rough Sleeper Count

Hywel Caddy from BCC joined us to discuss this year's Rough Sleeper Count which will be carried out before the end of November. The 2013 count provided a more robust estimate than in previous years and he hopes this trend will continue by encouraging organisations who work with homeless people to complete a form notifying the counters where known rough sleepers are likely to be found, especially those who would not be easily spotted (e.g. in cars or sheds). Paul will circulate this form to all forum members and it must be returned to Jenny by 5.00 pm on 18th November. The form includes the criteria by which people can be included in the count; it was noted that people have to be asleep or in the process of bedding down between the hours of 2.00 – 5.00 am and it will not include people walking around or on buses, in night shelters or in squats. It will therefore inevitably lead to an underestimate.

The count is undertaken by 15 teams of 2 volunteers overseen by St Mungo's Broadway, who also endeavour to work with the people they find. The count is verified by Homeless Link in Bath.

42 people were counted in 2013, we expect this to rise to 50-60 for 2014. The number of Eastern Europeans is expected to remain high as it gets harder for them to access accommodation.

Kat sought clarification of whether people in caravans will be counted; the consensus was that they would probably be counted if the caravan was parked in a place not designated for residential use.

Jonnie asked if it is possible to report "hidden homeless" people i.e. who are not currently street homeless; Hywel confirmed they would share that knowledge within the group and endeavour to provide support to those people as well. Similarly, if we are aware of people outside the boundary of the Bristol count we should provide that information and it will be passed to the relevant local team.

Kat and Jonnie offered to help with the count if required.

Sleep-Out

Richard will carry out the risk assessment for St John Ambulance and send the necessary letters to the emergency services. Organisations wishing to register should use Paul's home address for correspondence. Template leaflets and sponsor forms are available from Richard, or organisations can produce their own. Only CCM and JT have registered so far; individuals wishing to be sponsored for CCM should contact Holly.

Richard and Hywel will meet to discuss how to raise the profile of the event and obtain the best media coverage, hopefully with a week long publicity campaign including social media. We believe the Anglican Diocese is writing an article. George Ferguson has confirmed his attendance; if we hear of any other high profile volunteers we should notify Paul who will mention them on the BCAN website.

Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Lindsey had circulated a draft policy as requested at the last meeting. CCM also shared their form which is signed by their guests as this addresses a slightly different scenario. There is a need for a practical procedure to back up the policy. Richard pointed out that clarity will be needed over which organisations are members of the forum and which are guests, to avoid confidential information being shared with people who have not signed the policy. Paul suggested creating a separate email and telephone list with one or two nominated contacts per member organisation; members in receipt of relevant information should use their discretion as to who to share the information with on a "need to know" basis.

Richard observed that we could use the same list to notify other agencies when our organisations are unexpectedly closed.

Further discussion will be required at the next meeting.

Homeless Forum

The BCAN Homeless Forum was set up as one of the activities of BCAN - the Bristol Christian Action Network. This provided an identity and a degree of accountability, although in practice members just got on with their own work. In the past few years, BCAN has slowly ceased to operate as a number of reasons led to most of the key people who had been involved moving away. The BCAN Homeless Forum is the last remaining activity.

Paul Hazelden is seeking support to establish a new, improved version of BCAN. If anyone is interested in contributing to this, please let Paul know.

Christmas Opening and Closing Dates

- The Wild Goose will be open from 9.00 – 11.00 am for breakfast on Christmas Eve and will then be closed until breakfast on 2nd January.
- Caring at Christmas will open at 3.00 pm on Christmas Eve and close after breakfast on New Year's Day.
- The Julian Trust will close after breakfast on 23rd December and open again on 2nd January. The Bristol Soup Run Trust will plug the gaps on 23rd December and 1st January when neither the Julian Trust nor Caring at Christmas are open for an evening meal.
- The Spring of Hope will be open from Sunday to Thursday as usual over the Christmas period.

Lindsey will find out the relevant dates for the Bristol Methodist Centre. Paul will post these opening times on the BCAN website and produce posters for member organisations to display.

Faith Action Audit

This online survey aims to assess the extent to which faith groups across the UK help their various communities. The resulting report encourages information sharing between city services and will go to the new government. Paul is the local convener and will circulate the survey to forum members for completion in February 2015.

Joint Volunteer Event (after Christmas)

Due to time constraints this item was deferred to the next meeting. Lindsey has some ideas which she will circulate before the meeting.

Information Share

Due to time constraints at this meeting members had been asked to share their information in advance.

Bristol Nightstop

For the period 1st September - 1st October 2014:

17 referrals

26 host nights offered, 25 used

Gender 47% male / 52% female

20 active hosts (some temporary unavailability due to illness / holidays)

We think the recruitment of a female keyworker is helping young women to engage.

Open Evening held 3rd November to recruit more hosts but not many people came. Annual report available on request.

Staff are increasingly being invited to speak at conferences and events and we have been asked to advise/mentor a prospective scheme in Bath.

We are undertaking a review of the Deposit Bond Scheme as it is not producing the required outcomes for young people so far; we suspect more intensive keyworking is required over a longer period.

Caring at Christmas

Shifts are filling up nicely but we are currently short for Christmas Eve overnight and the clean-up shift on 1st January. We are advertising for volunteers in the Big Issue.

The online application system has saved us several hundred pounds in postage costs, and many man-hours of administration. Applications and references are paperless; shifts and training sessions are booked online and confirmed by return email.

Shift sign-in and sign-out sheets are automatically generated and updated with any changes so will be more accurate on the door.

BDP have provided training material and the Samaritans will be giving a talk. We are expanding the training material available for Supervisors.

We have bought a walk-in fridge. Lee is returning as storesperson.

We anticipate a shortage of free parking for volunteers as the council won't grant us sufficient additional permits. Places for People and Cabot Circus have offered us some spaces but it won't be enough; we continue to look for solutions.

Caring in Bristol

The National Lottery Reaching Communities application was submitted at the end of September. The Finance Committee is considering options for the temporary investment of surplus funds if we are successful. We are developing a fundraising pack for schools and businesses, and are in the early stages of planning a nationwide cycle ride in 2015 between the various cities with Nightstop projects.

Staff have attended additional safeguarding training. On 21st November CIB is hosting a "Homeless Children & Young People, Rough Sleepers, Missing & Runaways" workshop in partnership with the University of Wolverhampton.

Strangers' Friend Society

The CAB housing dept continues to receive items for its clients on request including bus passes.

Bristol Soup Run Trust

The Bristol Soup Run Trust now has an operating storage facility in Safe Store Pennywell Road. It has initially been stocked up with blankets, socks, pants, hats, gloves, toothpaste (with toothbrushes in box), shower gel, both men's and women's. Usage will be monitored and if the teams use it enough we will look to expand the storage area.

The new magnetic car stickers have now been produced and are being issued to teams. We really hope it will help members of the public identify us, and help to bring in more volunteers or maybe just cash donations.

Bear Pit Redevelopment

Richard Hawkrige from Bristol City Council has been in touch about feeding homeless people in the Bear Pit. The Bearpit Improvement Group (chair: Alan Morris) has the licence from the Council to use the space, and one condition is that no hand outs are provided.

The two key issues seem to be:

- large numbers of homeless people congregating in the Bear Pit make the public uncomfortable and less likely to use the space; and
- this has a negative effect on the traders present, both from the reduced footfall, and also from free food being given away when they are trying to make a living by selling food.

This means that the various soup runs which operate from the Bearpit will have to cease or relocate on completion of the redevelopment.

Richard Hawkrige has also been in contact with Jonnie who will continue to work with them and provide appropriate challenge to their proposals including what alternatives they are proposing for the homeless people who currently use the space. There will be a meeting for interested people at 6.30pm on 27 November at the Surrey Vaults public house and Jonnie urged as many forum members as possible to attend and express their concern.

Val commented that the CTiCCR breakfast run operates just outside the Bearpit so they could increase their service from there if the lunchtime run is affected.

Digital Empowerment for Homeless People

Lemos&Crane have created a web site called 'SupportActionNet' (www.lemosandcrane.co.uk/supportactionnet) - "Long-term well-being and resilience for homeless people".

Close

Any other business

Richard is trying to encourage a wider range of participants to attend the forum and expressed his thanks to Kat and Hywel for their willingness to take part. He is considering other ways in which the work of the forum might be communicated as we currently suffer a degree of separation from people *working* in the sector – who can typically only attend meetings during the day – and the forum members who are mostly volunteers and can only attend in the evening. Putting common items at the top of the agenda might help (i.e. as close to 6.00pm as possible), as would inviting and circulating reports by email.

Future meetings

Thursday 8th January 2015 at 6.00 pm.

Thursday 12th March 2015 at 6.00 pm.

LJ
27.11.14