

BCAN Homeless Forum
Meeting Notes
8th January 2015
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), Steve Jones (Bristol Soup Run Trust), Jode Mayhew (Big Issue Foundation) and Helen Riddell (Avon and Somerset local policing support team).

Apologies were received from Val Thompson (Spring of Hope, Crisis Centre Ministries), Elaine Brightwell (Bristol Methodist Centre), Jackie Stephenson (Churches Together CCR) and Ahmed Muqeen (Citizens Advice Bureau).

Kat Wall (Big Issue) and Bev Douglas (Avon and Somerset Police) have handed their representation over to Jode Mayhew and Helen Riddell respectively.

Previous Meeting

Minutes

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

Outstanding Business

Full details of the 2015 CTiCCR Lent Lectures are now available from Val Moore.

Helen will pick up the outstanding issue of EDT to make sure the team understands the criteria for when it is appropriate to refer people to the Julian Trust.

Notified Business

Rough Sleeper Count

Initial indications are that the number is very similar to last year. The forum agreed this is an underestimate.

Lindsey expressed her disappointment that so few agencies had responded to St Mungos' request for information to make the count more accurate. The historical cynicism about the count needs to be addressed.

Bristol Homelessness Awareness Week – 23rd – 27th February 2015

Plans are well under way for an awareness campaign on homelessness in the week leading up to this year's Sleep Out on 27th February 2015. Partners in the campaign include BCC, the Julian Trust, Caring in Bristol, The Big Issue, One25, St Mungos Broadway and Second Step. The broad theme of the campaign is "Homelessness is our responsibility" and the aim is to challenge the common perceptions of homelessness beyond the images of rough sleeping. BCC have developed a media campaign plan, and events during the week will include:

- A homelessness volunteering page on the Voscur website
- A video filmed at the Compass Centre
- An article in the Big Issue
- A Homelessness Fair in the Galleries, at which organisations will be able to have a stand to publicise their work, raise funds and seek volunteers
- The 2015 Sleep Out

Contributions, case studies and interviews are required for the media items. Please contact Richard Drake if you would like more information or to be involved in any of the week's events.

Sleep-Out

There is still time for organisations to register for the sleep-out on 27th February 2015. Template documents are available on the BCAN website. We believe George Ferguson is taking part again; due to the election, we will not encourage other politicians from participating unless they are doing so in a personal capacity. Please let Paul know about any other prominent people who are taking part in the Sleep Out.

Information Share

Up to date news from Bristol Nightstop, Caring at Christmas, Caring in Bristol, the Strangers' Friend Society, the Bristol Soup Run Trust, the Bear Pit Improvement Group, the Matthew Tree Project, Jackie's Feed Programme, the Julian Trust, the Life Recovery Group, Digital Empowerment for Homeless People, the Rucsac Project, the Mayor's Fund 2015 and the BCAN Homeless Forum was circulated in advance of the meeting and can be found here: http://www.bcan.org.uk/bhf/meet/BHF_Meeting_150108_News.htm

It was noted that the Soup Run and the Spring of Hope both operated throughout the Christmas and New Year period.

Churches Together CCR are currently service over 80 people a day on their lunch runs. They will be running hustings in 2015.

St John Ambulance provided additional sessions at Caring at Christmas which was very helpful to the guests. They saw 108 guests during the week, several on a daily basis, whose condition had improved noticeably by the time the shelter closed. Several guests had run out of their prescriptions, raising the question as to whether GP surgeries were closed for a longer period this year.

Information Sharing and Confidentiality

The forum continues to discuss the adoption of the previously drafted Confidentiality Policy and Client Confidentiality Agreement. While members agree it is a good idea in principle, there are practical difficulties for some members. Helen suggested that it would be a useful point of contact for the police and Lindsey reminded the group that information sharing is often for the benefit of guests (e.g. when they are very vulnerable and requiring additional care) as well as the safety of volunteers.

Survival Handbook

Copies remain available for collection from Caring in Bristol including a new insert from BDP. A small number of these inserts are available to be added to copies distributed earlier.

Faith Action Audit

This survey aims to assess the extent to which faith groups across the UK help their various communities. The resulting report (which will be released in June) 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 with an invitation email to encourage as many organisations as possible to take part. Most of the mainstream denominational churches are backing the audit and assistance may be available to anyone who finds the survey difficult to complete online. The survey is open to groups of all faiths.

Toilet facilities for homeless people

Richard again highlighted the pending closure of several 24 hour public toilets across Bristol, leaving the remaining facilities primarily in shopping centres which are not easily accessible for homeless people.

Close

Any other business

Helen informed the forum of the work of the Bristol Cable social action group.

Jode described the forthcoming "Your kindness can kill" campaign which consists of stencils sprayed onto pavements in the City centre with a telephone number for the public to text donations to homeless charities instead of giving cash to people begging. The campaign has already taken place in several other cities but BCC hopes to project a more positive message than has been seen elsewhere.

There appear to be no current issues with Positive Causes.

Future meetings

Thursday 8th January 2015

Thursday 12th March 2015

Please note the new start time of 6.30pm. Members are encouraged to share as much material as possible before the meeting to enable a prompt finish at 8.00pm.

LJ

17.01.15