

The Whitechapel Centre

Performance Report 2010/11

The Whitechapel Centre's Aims and Objectives

The Whitechapel Centre believes that every individual has the right and should be given the opportunity to achieve their full potential. At the heart of the organisation's ethos is the belief that each individual should be valued, appreciated and have the basic right to be treated as an individual who deserves respect and carries an innate dignity.

The aims of our charity are to improve the quality of life of people who are homeless, in housing need and / or have additional support needs through the creation of a comprehensive web of service provision that fills the gaps in current services and ensures that each person who becomes homeless or finds themselves in housing need is given the opportunity to change their situation. Recognising the diverse routes into and through homelessness Whitechapel delivers a variety of services in different settings, including:

- Rough Sleeper Enablement Services
- Rough Sleeper Outreach & Cold Weather Services
- Floating Support and Resettlement Services

The Focus of Our Work

The main objectives and activities for the year continued to focus upon the delivery of effective and innovative services to meet identified housing and related support needs of people who are homeless or inadequately housed. The strategies employed to assist the charitable company to meet these objectives included the following:

- Delivery of effective services that provide immediate help, opportunity and support to enable and effect lasting change and solutions for people most in need.
- Delivery of targeted, person centred services.
- Contributing towards and influencing relevant local and national strategic initiatives, social policy and debates relating to homelessness and housing.
- Challenging exclusion in all aspects of people's lives, supporting initiatives that encourage inclusion, particularly in relation to housing, supported living, health, education, and employment.
- Development and furtherance of joint partnership work with other agencies to ensure more effective service delivery.

Achievements and Performance

During 2010/11 a total of 1848 different individuals / families received services from Whitechapel, all of whom were homeless, in housing need or socially excluded. Almost all had additional support needs, for example 56% had alcohol problems, 45% had drug use problems, 36% had mental health problems and 18% were offenders / ex-offenders.

The Whitechapel Centre's three main areas of service provision include Outreach Services; Enablement Service; and Floating Support and Resettlement Services.

1. Outreach and Cold Weather Services

The Whitechapel Outreach Service is funded by Liverpool City Council's Homelessness Grant and Supporting People to provide assertive street outreach support to prevent and eradicate rough sleeping in Liverpool.

The service continues to build on the success achieved in 2009/10 when Liverpool recorded its lowest number of rough sleepers during the official Rough Sleeper Count.

In 2010/11 the service assessed 104 different individuals and found accommodation for 99 of them. The service takes a holistic approach to meeting the needs of rough sleepers, and supports individuals to address the issues which have caused them to begin or sustain a rough sleeping lifestyle. As well as seeking individualised solutions via case-working, the team also go out onto the streets two early mornings per week and during the day to actively identify and seek out rough sleepers, encouraging them to access services and come indoors.

During 2010/11 a system of ring-fencing beds in hostels specifically has been extended and is co-ordinated by the Outreach Team Manager. This allows for greater flexibility and further options for entrenched or hard to place rough sleepers. 2010/11 also saw the piloting of the street resettlement service which helped place rough sleepers directly into Private Rented Accommodation.

The winter of 2010 to 2011 was particularly cold and our cold weather outreach service opened earlier than the planned December 2010 start date due to the low temperatures. The service comprises of a shelter which opens when trigger temperatures are predicted and an intensive support service to find longer term accommodation solutions.

Between 26 November 2010 and 31 March 2011 the cold weather shelter opened for a total of 30 nights, with an average attendance of 18 rough sleepers per night. In total, 82 individuals who did not have any other accommodation option attended the shelter over the winter. Of these, 31 did not have entitlement to welfare benefits and no longer term accommodation could be obtained. However, of the 51 who were entitled to benefits, 31 were helped to obtain hostel or other housing solutions. It is felt that the cold weather service is a ground-breaking model which combines a short term harm reduction approach alongside longer term options for rough sleepers.

2. Rough Sleeper Enablement Service

In April 2010 The Whitechapel Centre successfully bid for funding from Liverpool City Council to deliver a Rough Sleeper Enablement Service. The contract lasts for 3 years and aims to build upon, and transform, our previous day centre services, into a welcoming and energising Enablement Centre that provides an incentivised place of change.

The expected outcomes to be achieved by the centre are clear:

- Prevent rough sleeping where possible and aim to reduce the number of rough sleepers to zero
- Support Rough Sleepers into treatment and health services
- Increase the numbers of rough sleepers accessing training, education and employment

In order to achieve these targets and become an incentivised 'Place of Change' we initially had to ensure that our existing centre users had their needs met. Everyone who attended the former Day Centre was given an exit interview and those who were not current rough sleepers or at risk of rough sleeping were signposted to other services such as floating support or benefit maximisation.

The Rough Sleeper Enablement Service began on 2nd August 2010, staffed by a Manager and 4 Learning and Enablement Workers (including one worker who specifically supports migrants from Eastern Europe) as well as a team of newly recruited volunteers. Rough sleepers are welcome to use the centre on a drop-in basis between 8am – 10am to eat a hot breakfast, take a shower or wash clothes. At 10am each day the clients are encouraged to attend one of the activity sessions which take place – the aim of these sessions is to improve confidence and self-esteem, learn new skills and simply have fun. Those who attend the sessions are eligible for a packed lunch. The Centre also runs afternoon sessions which are aimed at developing specific skills to help people move forward in their lives – e.g. job search skills, life skills, alcohol awareness and so on. A range of agencies also host surgeries at the centre including a GP, District Nurses and a JET worker.

Between 2 August 2010 and 31 March 2011 the Rough Sleeper Enablement Service Team assessed 174 different individuals and found accommodation solutions for 82. 15 individuals were supported into paid work. An average of 230 different individuals access one or more of the services offered at the Centre each quarter – these are people who are either case-worked by the Learning and Enablement Workers or by other teams based within the organisation (e.g. Street Outreach, Housing and Welfare Rights or Floating Support).

Supporting the work of the Enablement Service is the Big Lottery funded Housing and Welfare Rights Advice Service. In 2010/11 this service worked with and completed assessments of need for 795 new individuals. Of these, we enabled 223 to resolve their housing need by securing suitable accommodation; prevented a further 50 individuals from becoming homeless; enabled 119 to claim appropriate welfare benefits / maximise their income; and enabled 151 to access and take up appropriate welfare services.

3. Floating Support and Resettlement Services

The Whitechapel Centre has continued to provide specialist floating support services to enable homeless individuals and those at risk of homelessness to access and sustain their own independent tenancies. This is done through joint working with other agencies that work with vulnerable groups and accommodation

providers to ensure that the best package of support is put in place to give individuals confidence, skills and motivation to move onto independent living or to maintain their independence. 2010/11 saw the first complete year of our 4 new floating support services following the tender for services for socially excluded groups. The successful award of these projects meant that the services provided were strategically relevant to the city and its analysis of what was needed for the local vulnerable population.

Move on Move in Resettlement Service

This project worked with more than 170 homeless individuals at any one time to help them access and sustain an independent tenancy with support for up to 6 months/9 months if an older person and assist with the changes necessary to cope with independent living. Clients on this project had a variety of support needs such as substance dependency, mental health issues, poor physical health and offending histories. 253 new clients were accepted onto this project during the year and 98% of clients who closed during the year were successfully maintaining their tenancy at the point of closure.

Two workers on this project were dedicated to working with older people with support needs who faced barriers to accessing sheltered accommodation. Referrals predominately came from ACCESS Liverpool with whom they worked very closely and this joint working helped to address the housing needs of older homeless people whilst addressing the under utilisation of some of these schemes. The success of this fed into the Older Persons Housing Strategy as another means to safely support and accommodate the fast growing population of older people with more complex needs.

The Whitechapel Centre also co-ordinates Liverpool City Councils housing allocation panel for excluded individuals. This works to offer a panel approach to finding suitable independent accommodation for those with support needs for whom PropertyPool does not work such as care leavers, high risk offenders and those needing to move on from short term accommodation based services quickly. Each case is presented to representatives from local Registered Social Landlords and offers of accommodation matched to those accepted.

Harm Reduction Floating Support Service

This project provides an opportunity for clients with a drug and/or alcohol dependency to access support to obtain or maintain a tenancy with support provided for up to 12 months. Many clients referred to this project were at risk of losing their tenancy due to their substance use and therefore homelessness has been prevented by providing high quality support in a non-judgemental manner to the home. More than 75 individuals at any one time were supported by this project which works closely with drug and alcohol treatment providers to find strategies to reduce the harm substance use has on the individual and their housing. 84% of clients closed as either substance free or sustaining substance treatment during this year.

The Whitechapel Centre is represented at the Treatment Working Group to ensure strategic relevance and joint working as well as being able to address issues effecting our particularly vulnerable client group.

Dual Diagnosis Floating Support Service

During 2010/11 the Dual Diagnosis project worked with over 90 individuals at any one time with a substance use issue and severe and enduring mental health diagnosis for up to 2 years. This is one of the very few services available in the city for the complex dual diagnosis client group and a close working relationship has continued with substance treatment agencies and mental health services. This consistent support has enabled individuals to become more independent and sustain their own accommodation. 98% of clients who closed during this year did so as successfully maintaining their tenancy.

The manager of this project sits on the steering group for the Rotunda Project, a support group for people with a diagnosis of personality disorder as we recognise that this is something that affects several of our clients.

Key to Living Service

The Key to Living service provides support to at least 20 young people at any one time who have a substance use issue that effects their accommodation. During this year the service has worked with vulnerable young people in a variety of accommodation settings and sought to provide support and stability to enable the young person to address their alcohol/drug issues. A total of 32 new young people have been supported on this project during the year.

Joint work is done with both substance use agencies and youth services such as OKUK, YPAS, The Door, Connexions and YOTs and the service has taken an outreach approach to engage with potential clients by holding surgeries in some of these agencies.

Street Resettlement and Bond Scheme

This was a new service that started in October 2010 initially as a 6 month pilot project funded by Liverpool City Council to help rough sleepers access accommodation through the Private Rented Sector. This project provides a cashless bond to Private Sector Landlords to encourage the availability of private tenancies for our rough sleeping clients. 22 clients were assisted to obtain a private tenancy through this pilot project. A dedicated support worker holds a smaller caseload of these clients so that more intensive support can be provide to ensure that the tenancies are sustained appropriately. This project works directly to achieve the aims of the Homelessness Strategy to reduce the numbers of rough sleepers. The success of the pilot has meant that The Whitechapel Centre has been successful in its application to the Crisis PRS Service Development Programme and has been awarded funding to develop this service during the forthcoming year.

4. Service User Involvement

The Whitechapel Centre's service user involvement group, Whitechapel Altogether continued to hold its monthly meetings throughout 2010/11. This

group provides an opportunity for current and ex-service users to get involved in the organisation, have their say and help shape future services in a supportive peer group environment. A member of senior management sits on this group to help facilitate and ensure that ideas and suggestions are taken forward.

Throughout the year 36 different individuals attended the meetings with a further 20 clients regularly receiving copies of the minutes through the post. The group has taken part in other service user involvement events within the city such as The Supporting People Forum and Community Voice and helped The Whitechapel Centre review some of its policies and literature. This year some of the group completed a training session in Whitechapel services so that they are able to attend events and help give information about the organisation and also delivered an engagement session on service user involvement at the Enablement Service.

The group have also been kept informed of any changes in funding and service development and helped to gain client feedback as part of the review of the Enablement Service. This group also helped identify the need for a volunteer programme as it was recognised that former service users have a lot to offer the organisation and some would like to do this in a more structure way which also develops their confidence and skills.