

Cardiff Multi-Agency Strategy & Advisory Planning Group for People Who Are Homeless or at Risk of Becoming Homeless

Report to Supporting People Planning Group 11/12/03

Topic: Young People and Single Homeless People.

Issues facing the single homeless population, including young people, cuts across many other needs groups and services. As already discussed in these meetings, substance misuse and mental health issues are prevalent, affecting people across all age ranges, genders and backgrounds. Those with more complex needs are also of concern and suggestions have already been made to address these emerging issues. However, this report intends to look more broadly at the issues facing young people and those who find themselves homeless.

Young People

Defining what age group categorises young people presents some differences across the sector. For instance, the categories defining 'Priority Need' under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, include 'A 16 or 17 year old' and 'A care leaver or person at particular risk of sexual or financial exploitation, 18 years or over but under the age of 21'. Some young people's supported housing projects cater for young people up to the age of 21, some until age 25. The Independent Living Support Service operated by Children's Services to provide social work support under the current legislation to young people in care and either provides, or facilitates, support for those who have been in care in Cardiff once they reach the age of 16. Since October 2001 this is formulated in a Pathway Plan and will continue until the age of 25 if required.

However, simply falling into this age bracket is no indication of a support need. Many young people are resourceful enough to leave the parental home and acquire their own accommodation, education or employment. But for some, their age is another factor in a complex range of support needs. The figures below represent the support needs of all those young people aged 16-21 who have been through the supported housing sector or who are currently resident there:

Support Need	Alcohol Use (total 40)	Drug Use (total 77)	Childhood Issues	Drug Use	Education Issues	Employment Issues	Family & Relationships	Learning Issues	Criminal Justice Issues	Life Skills Issues	Mental Health Issues	Chronic Illness	Parenting Skills	Refugee Issues	Single Parent Issues	Young & Vulnerable
Males	74	28	47	46	36	108	35	72	60	51	18	1	3	0	35	
Females	43	39	30	78	42	166	19	25	85	70	23	18	1	29	44	
TOTALS	117	67	77	124	78	274	54	97	145	121	41	19	4	29	79	

The highest reported support need is Family and Relationships, with Life Skills, Education, Mental Health and Criminal Justice Issues recording very highly also.

Further analysis of these support needs indicate that more females than males have a Family and Relationship issue, the problem being breakdown in relations with parents or wider family members caused by a number of factors including a parent's new partner and overcrowding. Mediation services have been developed to assist in maintaining relationships whilst appropriate alternative accommodation can be found where it is clear that the matter cannot be resolved.

Due to the lack of experience in maintaining a tenancy, or even in undertaking basic cooking and cleaning for themselves, many young people have identified Life Skills issues which require developing before, and often leading into, their own independent accommodation. In this area 75% of young people required practical support of this nature, which is offered by the majority of supported housing schemes and there are a number of floating support schemes to provide assistance as and when required.

Of those indicating an Education issue, 59% of young people are either motivated to enter education and training opportunities or are currently undertaking studies with more females than males doing so. A total of 29% of young people however have either no, or very low education skills or have literacy or innumeracy problems.

For those indicating a Mental Health problem, a significant 71% of these young people have identified a diagnosed problem, with a further 27% self-reporting their depression. Regarding Criminal Justice issues, of those that indicated an issue, 42% are ex-offenders, 18% are on probation and 19% have a prison record.

Looking at these five most reported issues, it can be identified that 40.2% have only the one issue, but a total of 59.8% clearly have more than one issue, broken down as follows: 29.4% have 2 issues, 20.4% have 3 issues, 9% have 4 issues and 1% have all five issues.

Statutory Services

Analysis of young people (aged 16-21) approaching the statutory homelessness service shows the following:

ENQUIRIES	Apr – Jun 2002	Jul – Sep 2002	Oct – Dec 2002	Jan – Mar 2003	Apr – Jun 2003	Jul – Sep 2003
Males	49	70	57	74	67	64
Females	139	136	125	105	107	161
Unknown	1	0	3	1	0	1
Total Young People	189	206	185	180	174	226
Total Enquiries	883	856	801	644	740	831
Young People enquiries as a % of all enquiries	21%	24%	23%	28%	24%	27%

An advice service operated by Llamau Ltd called HOPs (Housing Options Project) works closely with the statutory service to assist in undertaking assessments of need and screening for assistance under the legislation. Therefore the numbers making enquiries at the Council's office have reduced slightly. Seasonal trends such as the end of the school or university year increases presentations.

The reasons for homelessness enquiries from young people usually relates to breakdown in relations with parents and wider family under the Welsh Assembly categories of 'parent (or other relatives/friends) no longer willing or able to accommodate'. However, young people may fall into any one of the other categories but this is the best indicator.

Of those cases accepted by the Council, the following data has been collated:

ACCEPTED CASES	Apr – Jun 2002	Jul – Sep 2002	Oct – Dec 2002	Jan – Mar 2003	Apr – Jun 2003	Jul – Sep 2003
Males	16	16	19	15	12	12
Females	58	45	80	41	24	55
Unknown	0	1	1	0	0	0
Total Young People	74	62	100	56	36	67
Total Acceptances	235	222	307	202	205	232
Young People accepted as a % of all acceptances	32%	28%	33%	28%	18%	29%

Young people represent on average 30% of all acceptances made per year, again with seasonal fluctuations.

Services

For some time young people have been recognised as a priority group for service development and many projects now exist for this age group including mediation services to assist them to remain at home, emergency accommodation and a range of specialist supported housing schemes catering for needs such as offending issues, education, life skills and mental health problems.

However, a gap that has been identified is for those with high support needs that have been placed out of the county by Children's Services. During the year April 2002 to March 2003, 9 young people were placed in a variety of schemes outside Cardiff ranging in duration from 22 days to the full year, having continued from previous years. The young people have a range of complex needs - behavioural, therapeutic, sexualised behaviour, offending, drug/alcohol, educational needs and learning difficulties. There is a lack of suitable accommodation in Cardiff to cater for this range of needs, with the additional problem in that young people within placements are 'matched' for compatibility. There is a lack of placements for young people of teenage years and in general the costs of any such placements are very high, ranging from £2995 to £4752 per week, with usually additional add-on costs.

These young people, when they reach the age of 16, then return to Cardiff, usually still requiring very high levels of support and currently have to be placed in an adult-modelled scheme that 'best fits' their range of needs.

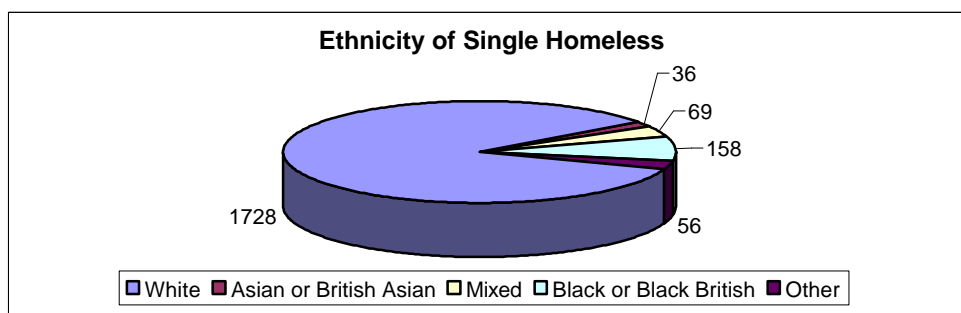
Recommended Priorities

- Priority One – Floating support within the private rented sector for all single people including young people.
- Priority Two – A 4-5 bed unit catering for young people with high support needs, providing intensive support with move-on to a less supportive scheme before an eventual tenancy.

Single Homeless People

The majority of people in the supported housing sector are single homeless and records on all those that have had an assessment form completed with them shows the following demographics:

GENDER/AGE	16-21	22-40	41-60	60+
Males	221	743	296	69
Females	245	361	118	33
TOTALS	466	1104	414	102



A total of 15.6% of all service users that have passed through or are currently in the sector are from a non-white ethnic background.

	BORN IN...	%	BROUGHT UP IN...	%	LAST STABLE HOME IN...	%
CARDIFF	1043	60%	1132	63%	1226	72%
OUTSIDE CARDIFF	710	40%	659	37%	471	28%
Of those from Outside Cardiff the breakdown is as follows:						
Caerphilly	47	7%	50	8%	26	6%
Newport	31	4%	23	3%	34	7%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	48	7%	51	8%	34	7%
Vale of Glamorgan	31	4%	50	8%	46	10%
Other Welsh	104	15%	116	18%	81	17%
England	340	48%	277	42%	223	47%
Ireland	58	8%	47	7%	15	3%
Scotland	51	7%	45	6%	12	3%

For those Welsh authorities bordering Cardiff, the totals are 22%, 27% and 30% respectively. The very high numbers of people entering the city from elsewhere add to the strain on available accommodation services. Non-Cardiff residents within the Frontline services regularly equate to almost 50% of the available bedspaces, with over a third of those arriving from other Welsh Authority areas.

Detail on the overall support needs of this single homeless population show that the highest reported support need is Family & Relationships with Mental Health issues, a Substance Misuse problem and Life Skills recording very highly also. The details of such issues have already been reported in previous discussions around other client groups and specific needs and therefore do not need to be repeated here.

Support Need	Alcohol Use (total 367)	Drug Use (total 296)	Childhood Issues	Drug Use	Education Issues	Employment Issues	Family & Relationships	Learning Issues	Criminal Justice Issues	Life Skills Issues	Mental health Issues	Chronic Illness	Parenting Skills*	Refugee Issues*	Single Parent Issues*	Young & Vulnerable*
Males	523	118	220	202	210	404	145	264	240	436	271	8	11	2	46	
Females	140	73	76	149	97	345	82	69	178	258	104	24	4	45	46	
TOTALS	663	191	296	351	307	749	227	333	418	694	375	32	15	47	92	

Statutory Services

Numbers of people enquiring at the Council has increased over the year and shows a 43% increase on this time last year. The trend has shown that single applicants are outnumbering families with 81% of people through the door in October being single.

Rough Sleepers

Information on rough sleepers in the City has been well recorded in the past few years through the Breakfast Run, which is facilitated jointly by the Wallich Clifford Community and the Council's City Centre Team. This service meets rough sleepers every morning, distributes breakfast to those found sleeping rough in the city centre, and through giving advice and assistance, aims to get people into services and off the streets. Information is then supplemented by the Council's City Centre Team, whose Outreach Workers elicit more information from rough sleepers they come into contact with during the day.

The daily count of rough sleepers during the year April to March 2002/03 averaged at 15 per day with the highest number recorded at 32 on 24th July 2002. Of these it must be acknowledged that four or five people will consistently refuse to engage with any services and a further 7-10 people will exclude themselves from services because their chaotic behaviour will lead them to be excluded.

Conclusions

There is a lack of available move-on and it is recommended that units of support are dedicated to specific social housing units in order to facilitate the move-on process.