

REPORT FOR THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE PLANNING GROUP

on

OLDER PEOPLE

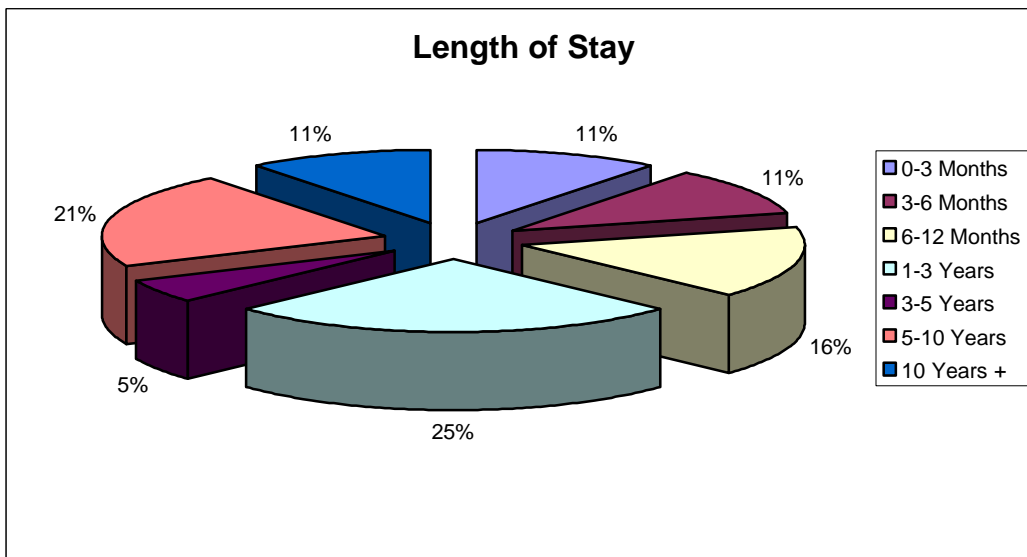
from the

MULTI-AGENCY STRATEGY AND ADVISORY PLANNING GROUP FOR SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF BECOMING HOMELESS

FRONTLINE AGENCIES

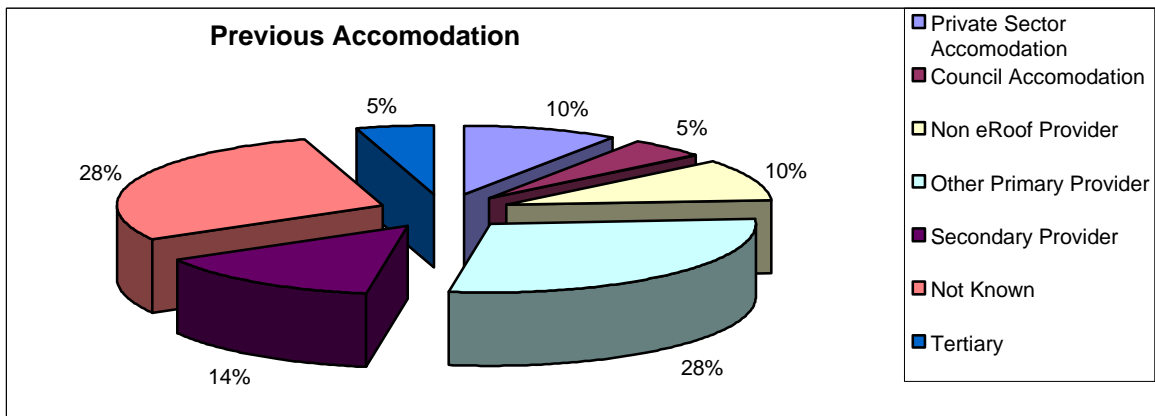
These statistics have been collected to show the characteristics and support needs of people aged 60 and above, currently accommodated within direct access hostels in Cardiff.

Currently, there are 19 people over 60, 18 males and 1 female. This total accounts for 10.5% of the total residents within these hostels. There are a further 6 people who are aged between 55 and 59. One of these residents has been accommodated in the same hostel for more than 3 years.



Of the 37% of residents that have been accommodated with the same provider for 3 years or more, 6 are resident in the Salvation Army hostel and 1 is resident with Cardiff Action for the Single Homeless.

Previous accommodation to the current hostel placement shows that 28% had moved from another direct access hostel; 14% had returned from a secondary provider; 10% had come from private sector accommodation (including family homes); 10% from an agency either outside Cardiff or outside the multi-agency partnership working arrangements; 5% from Council tenancies; and 5% from tertiary provision (Community Care placements or housing association tenancies). A total of 28% had not specified or made clear where their previous accommodation was. This is shown in the following chart:

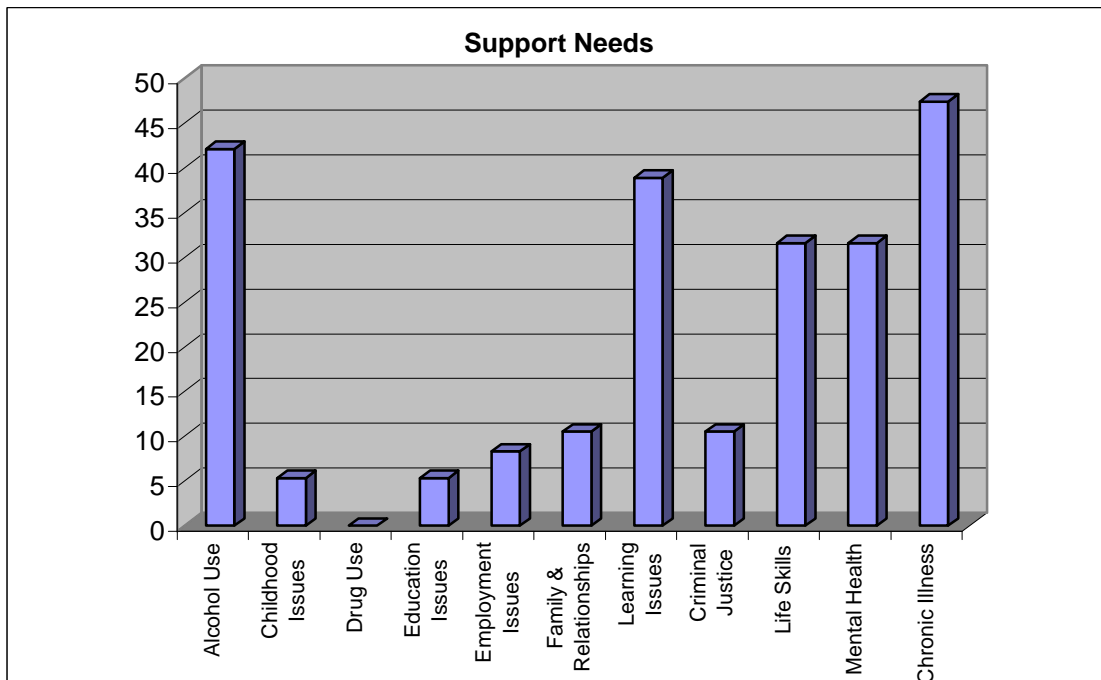


The local connection of these older people to Cardiff is shown below:

Area	Born In	Brought Up In	Last Stable Home In
Cardiff	37%	42%	52%
Outside Cardiff	52%	53%	37%
Not Known	11%	5%	11%
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%

As with the majority of residents in direct access hostels, these people show a degree of migration into the area.

Within these frontline services, it has been found that these residents have indicated the following support needs:



Of these residents, 11% have no support needs, 46% have only 1 support need, 11% with 2, 11% with 3, 16% with 4 and 5% with 5 support needs. A total of 5 people (20%) have indicated a chronic illness issue coupled with an alcohol issue, and 2 people indicated a chronic illness issues and also a life skills support need.

The Frontline Strategy Group have made the following comments regarding the Commissioning Paper for Older People:

- Nothing is specifically mentioned about older people living in hostels.
- The strategy refers to older people who have an assessed care need – older people in hostels are generally not assessed apart from City Centre Team clients.
- There is a reluctance for some older people that have definite care needs to be resettled into more appropriate accommodation for a number of reasons including financial -residential care can leave a person with very little “spending money” and thus little autonomy.
- Another issue is about institutionalisation. Some clients (with care needs) have been institutionalised to the extent where they at present feel very reluctant and afraid to move on from a hostel setting. This however presents a funding dilemma to the hostels if they are funded to provide support and accommodation for a short period of time, and considering the impact of the tenure review, this could have a bearing on the type of tenure hostels are allowed to give for this group. There is an issue about choice here also.
- The paper outlines the importance of older people with a diagnosed mental health problem accessing appropriate services – this is certainly not reflected in practice for older residents with diagnosed mental problems in the hostel settings.
- The paper also outlines how critical it is for care staff to administer and monitor the effects of psychotropic medicines for older people with mental health problems. This does not happen at present. Frontline agencies do not have care staff and are not in a position to administer medicines.

STATUTORY HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

Relatively few elderly people approach homelessness services – just over one in 200 of accepted cases are classed as elderly and therefore in priority need. However, there is no fixed age above which an applicant is classed as elderly and therefore vulnerable – discretion is used to assess each individual case. Many elderly applicants will be classified according to another priority need such as chronic illness, physical disability or mental illness.

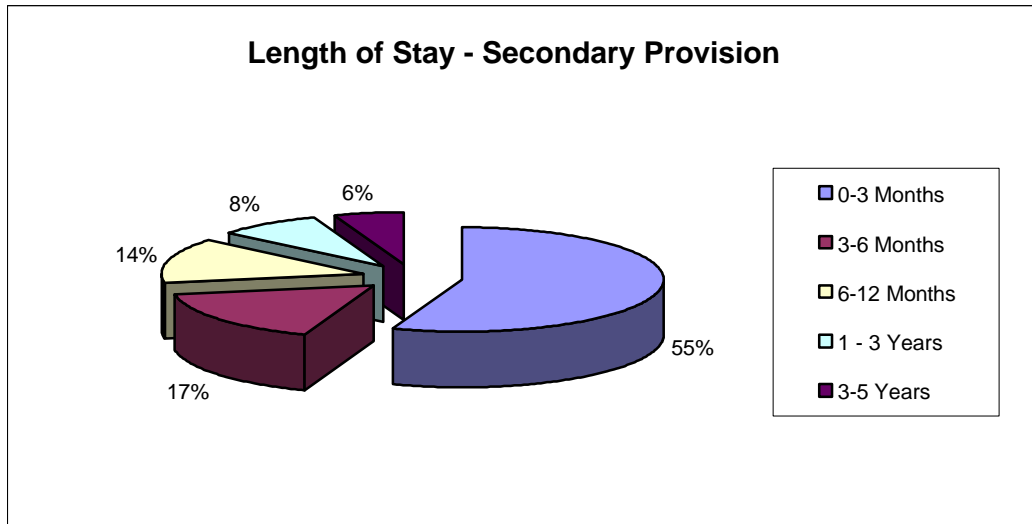
During the year 1/4/02 to 31/3/03, a total of 971 cases were found to eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need. Of these only 5 were accepted cases where priority need category was Old Age. However, it could be presumed that a small number of older people may be included in figures for other priority needs categories such as Physical disability and mental health.

Within the same period the number of homelessness enquiries totalled 3184 and of these only 21 related to single people over pensionable age.

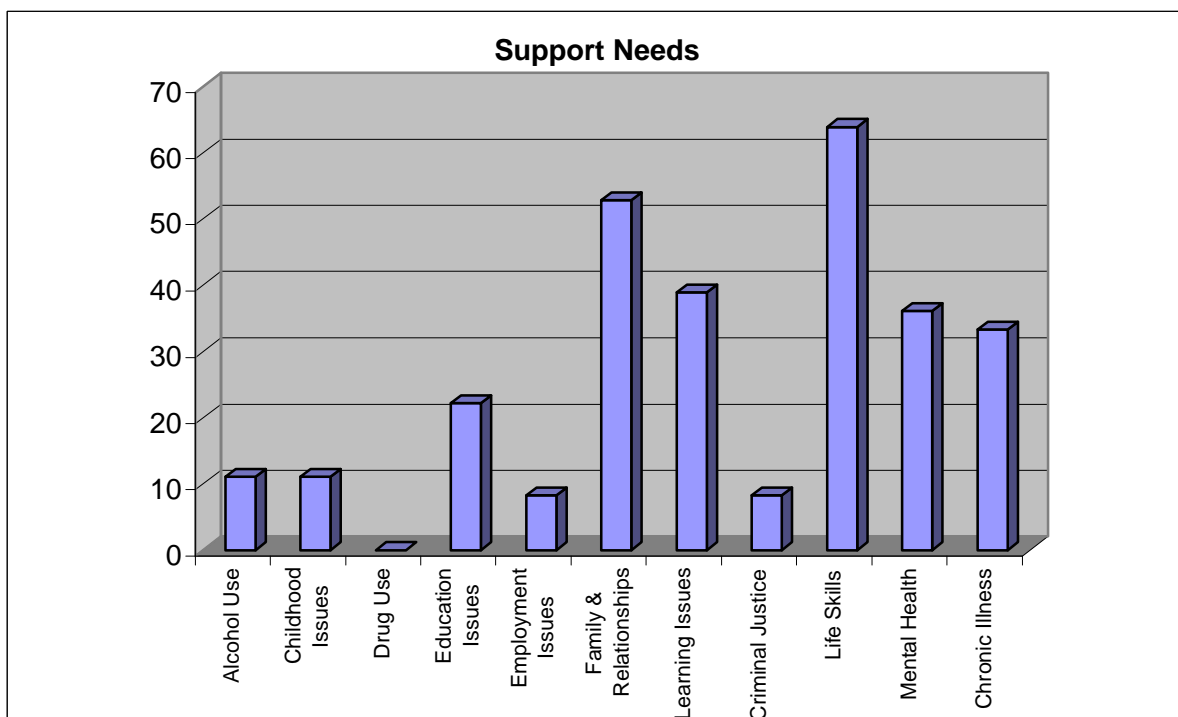
SECONDARY SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS

Currently, there are 36 people over 60 within Secondary Provision comprising 17 males and 19 females. This total accounts for 7.5% of the total residents currently accommodated within Secondary Provision.

The length of stay within secondary provision accommodation is not as long as that recorded for frontline services. Here only 6% have been resident for over 3 years.



Previous accommodation before the current supported tenancy has been noted as 31% in private sector accommodation (including family homes); 6% from a direct access hostel; 6% from another second stage supported accommodation provider; 8% from an agency either outside Cardiff or outside the multi-agency partnership working arrangements; and 3% from Council tenancies. A total of 46% had not specified or made clear where their previous accommodation was.



The support needs recorded for these older people reflect more issues with life skills than any other. However, it should be noted that some agencies are yet to begin completing the common assessment on their residents and, based on knowledge of those agencies, issues such as alcohol and mental health are likely to record much higher results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Multi-Agency Strategy and Advisory Planning Group for People who are Homeless feel that the older people within frontline services is of great concern to sector as this type of service is not best suited to meet their longer-term needs and additionally reduces the available emergency support to others. For many of these older people their length of stay has meant that they have become institutionalised and the prospect of an independent tenancy is not appropriate. They have come to rely on the company of others, regular meals and the continuance of their high levels of benefits. A scheme, which allows these residents to continue to live together in a shared accommodation setting, with low-level support and specialist support being brought in, is more suited to their needs.

There is a large amount of sheltered housing that caters for people from the age of 55. Unfortunately there is very little take-up of such provision, as people below the age of 65 do not want to move into accommodation that is designated as 'sheltered'. What would benefit the homelessness sector is the re-designation of some units to more general provision, which would then allow for more move-on accommodation out of temporary and direct access accommodation.