

Improving employment options for homeless people - policy brief

Contents

Summary	2
Second quarter 2003 statistics	3
Homelessness Statistics June 2003 and improving employment options for homeless people.....	5
The Policy Context - Homelessness Act and Strategies	6
The Role of Social Enterprise.....	7
Preparing people for work	9
Voluntary Services	11
Help for young people	13
Helping people to access work-related benefits.....	19
Regional and National Initiatives.....	21
Future work	23

Summary

This briefing is fifth in a series produced by the Homelessness Directorate to accompany the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's quarterly statistical release on homelessness. The briefings are intended to improve understanding of homelessness and to highlight issues that local authorities and other agencies should address through local homelessness strategies and services.

The key messages that can be taken from the statistics supplied by local authorities are that, as expected, numbers of homeless acceptances and the numbers of households in temporary accommodation continue to rise. However, the numbers of families with children placed in bed and breakfast accommodation by local authorities continues to fall and the numbers of rough sleepers are at the lowest since counts began.

Examples of best practice are included in this briefing from statutory and voluntary services.

Following a general description of the key issues in the latest homelessness statistics, this issue concentrates on improving the employment options for homeless people and those vulnerable to homelessness:

- Introduction
- The Policy Context - Homelessness Act and Strategies
- The Role of Social Enterprise
- Preparing people for work - Statutory Services
- Preparing people for work - Voluntary Services
- Help for young people
- Helping people to access work-related benefits
- Regional and National Initiatives
- Future work

Second quarter 2003 statistics

The quarterly statistics published by ODPM represent the number of households who approached local authorities and were found to be homeless through no fault of their own and to have a priority need for accommodation under the provisions of the homelessness legislation. This briefing accompanies the release of the statistics for the second quarter of 2003.

Between April and June 2003, 36,230 households were accepted for re-housing by local authorities. This figure is 18% higher than a year ago. Around 46% of these households were placed in temporary accommodation.

At the end of June 2003, there were 93,480 households living in temporary accommodation, an increase of 14% compared to this time last year. These households were living in a range of different forms of temporary accommodation, with 44% in privately leased or rented housing, 12% in hostels or women's refuges, 12% in bed and breakfast hotels and 32% in other forms of housing (including local authority and housing association homes let on a temporary basis).

The number of households in temporary accommodation is still rising but against this trend the number of households in Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation has fallen to 11,610, a reduction of 590 or 5% compared to the last quarter.

Perhaps, more importantly, the number of families with children, accommodated in B&B fell by 1,070 between 1 April and 30 June, giving a total reduction of nearly 2,970 families or about 44% since June 2002. Families with children now represent 32% of all households in B&B, down from 54% in June 2002. Of the 3,730 families with children in B&B at the end of June 2003, 1,980 or 53% of the total had been resident for more than six weeks. This fall reflects the good progress being made by many local authorities, with support from the Bed and Breakfast Unit, towards the Government's B&B reduction target.

The statistics provided by local authorities also show that over the same period 16,550 households were found a settled solution to their homelessness, which represents an increase of 900 on the previous quarter. Of these 92% were offered a tenancy in social housing with long term, or potentially long term, security of tenure, while around 8% accepted a fixed-term assured shorthold tenancy in the private sector. 44% of these households were provided with settled housing without having to spend any time in temporary accommodation which is 11% more than the previous quarter.

Of all households accepted as homeless during the second quarter 2003, 52% were in "priority need" for accommodation because they were families with dependent children and a further 10% of households included a pregnant women .

The highest levels of homelessness continue to occur in London, representing around one in four homelessness acceptances nationally. The number of households accepted as homeless during the quarter rose in all regions except the South West, which recorded a slight fall of under 1%. The highest regional increases in numbers of acceptances were the North West at 20% and the East Midlands at 10%.

Nationally, the top three causes of homelessness (recorded reasons for loss of last settled home for households accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need in England) remained the same and in roughly the same proportion as the previous quarter:

- **Parents, relatives or friends not being able or willing to provide accommodation.**
- **Relationship breakdown**
- **End of assured shorthold tenancy**

The rising trend in homelessness is the result of numerous complex factors, many of which are outlined in "More than a roof". In addition to the structural and personal causes of homelessness listed

Improving employment options for homeless people - policy brief

above, the Priority Needs Order has extended the criteria by which people are assessed to have a priority need if they are homeless.

The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a duty on local authorities to have a strategy in place by the end of July 2003 to tackle and prevent homelessness, based on a review of homelessness in their district. In the longer term, improvements to housing supply and increased investment in prevention should also help to tackle the problem.

Recent statistical returns from local authorities show that rough sleeping figures are at their lowest ever. There are currently 504 rough sleepers on the street, which is 73% lower than the base line figure of 1,850 in 1998. This shows what can be achieved and much credit should go to local authorities and their voluntary sector partners who have worked tirelessly in helping vulnerable people off the street and into accommodation. Reductions over the last year have been most significant in London, although the capital remains the area with the largest concentration of rough sleeping in England and further work is needed to sustain the reductions that have been achieved.

The achievements of reducing the numbers of rough sleepers and inappropriate use of B&B accommodation show that we can tackle the most extreme manifestations of homelessness.

Homelessness Statistics June 2003 and improving employment options for homeless people

Introduction

In March 2002 the Government published its report, 'More than a roof', setting out a new approach to tackling homelessness. The Homelessness Directorate was set up to take this forward and to investigate the underlying causes and trends of homelessness, collect information on homelessness more effectively, test new and innovative approaches to prevent and reduce homelessness and promote good practice.

Employment and training schemes can help to prevent homelessness. Work, be it paid or unpaid, is also a key route out of homelessness. Many homeless people can benefit from schemes that improve employability by building confidence and self-esteem through education and training leading to work opportunities which can support a permanent move to a more independent lifestyle.

The degree of support needed varies greatly from individual to individual. Some homeless people already have skills and experience from previous employment and only need minimal support to prepare for work. Others need help in gaining the necessary skills, experience, and confidence to prepare them for employment. There are now a wide range of opportunities offered by mainstream training and employment providers that are specifically targeted at disadvantaged groups including homeless people.

There are also those who are not ready for mainstream employment, but who can benefit from volunteering or work experience. Social enterprises can provide opportunities to help people not able to take up paid employment to meaningfully occupy their time.

A range of support services are in place, both statutory and voluntary, that promote employment as part of a dedicated care programme. Many of these services are set out below, in some cases with good practice examples or case studies.

Those working with homeless people and those who are homeless can also access information about the services available, including training and employment opportunities via the Homeless Pages website¹ and via the HEAT (Homeless Employment, Advice and Training) website².

This policy briefing is not intended to be a comprehensive coverage of the services available or projects in place, nor does it only cover those that are government funded. Sources of further information on each of the services featured are given in the body of the text.

¹ www.homelesspages.org.uk

² www.homelesslondon.org.uk

The Policy Context - Homelessness Act and Strategies

The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a new duty on every housing authority in England to formulate a strategy, based on a review of homelessness in their district. The objectives of these strategies must be to prevent homelessness and ensure that accommodation and support will be available for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Employment and training schemes can play an important role in preventing homelessness and in resettling homeless people, both by lifting people out of poverty and by re-integrating them into society.

The *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities*³ makes clear that, as part of the process for mapping and understanding the extent of current homelessness in their district, local authorities should draw up a profile of those who have experienced homelessness, including looking at their employment and benefits history. *Homelessness Strategies: A Good Practice Handbook*⁴ also requires local authorities to link in with other programmes and strategies, including those relating to education, training and employment.

All Authorities were required to publish their homelessness strategy by 30 July 2003. Homelessness Strategies are currently being assessed by the Homelessness Directorate and examples of good practice will be identified and disseminated. Examples of good practice and joint working in relation to training and employment are already evident from projects supported by the Directorate, including the Steady Work and Lifelong training programmes in Plymouth, the Jobs, Education, Training (JET) service in Canterbury, and the Life Skills project co-ordinated through Gloucester Emergency Accommodation Resource (GEAR).

³http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_homelessness/documents/page/odpm_home_601514.pdf

⁴http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_homelessness/documents/page/odpm_home_601517.hcsp

The Role of Social Enterprise

A social enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose profit is reinvested in the business or in the community rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit. They include local community enterprises, social firms, mutual organisations such as co-operatives, and large-scale organisations operating nationally or internationally. Social enterprises have a distinct and valuable role in helping create a strong, sustainable and socially inclusive economy. For many homeless people engaging with a social enterprise is a first step towards mainstream employment.

First Fruit

First Fruit is a close-knit group of social enterprises and charities working in the Borough of Newham. It comprises a number of companies plus a central office team which provides management and specialist support. The aims of the 'First Fruit Family' are to provide accommodation, employment and work-related training for homeless people and those who are long-term unemployed through being socially excluded in some way. The emphasis is on real work and training on the job to provide proper experience.

Good Practice examples

Aspire East London is a company distributing gift catalogues stocking fairly-traded and UK-manufactured goods. There are a number of local federated Aspires across the country providing entry level employment for single men often straight off the street who need help with the real basics of team work and attendance.

First Fruit Warehousing provides second level employment, a more complex job and slightly more pay for refurbishing unwanted office furniture and reselling to community groups.

First Fruit Trading carries out garment manufacture, textile printing and associated life skills training are conducted in two small venues.

First Fruit's Young Men's Jobs-led Hostel in Newham structures the day of the nine residents around helping them get and hold a job. The hostel provides a significant level of support in basic skills and life skills to help young single men.

First Fruit's Move-on Accommodation provides a smaller self-regulated environment for five older men giving them a significant sense of development and independence. The emphasis is again on housing and then supporting them to get and hold a job.

The initiatives outlined above are inter-linked and clients can progress through the various elements or dip into selected ones as shown by the following case study.

Case study

Jerome was 27 years old when he was referred to Aspire East London for a job interview in early August 2002. He had a history of temporary jobs and had been ejected from his accommodation and was sleeping on a friend's floor. He joined the team at Aspire and, despite feeling isolated by the number of difficulties he was facing, got back to working very well in the team.

Jerome moved into a 5 bedded house operated by First Fruit providing "move on" accommodation without a Warden. At the end of the Christmas catalogue season and New Year's sale, Jerome joined a two-week placement set up by Business Action on Homelessness. He then moved to temporary employment at First Fruit Warehouse, where the job was more demanding but with slightly more pay.

Returning to Aspire for the Spring catalogue season in March 2003 Jerome was promoted to Team Leader, which offered him a slightly higher rate of pay and a position of responsibility and informal supervision.

Another 2 week placement followed after which Jerome rejoined the Warehouse for a temporary period until he takes up his place as a trainee gas leak engineer with Transco. This will be a significant step up for him in terms of responsibility and pay and came about via his second placement.

Preparing people for work

Statutory Services

The **Department for Work and Pensions** (DWP) is responsible for a range of benefits and support services for people of working age, which are delivered through Jobcentre Plus. Benefits are available to homeless people and rough sleepers as they are to any other citizen of this country. A claimant does not need an address in order to claim what he or she is entitled to. Some of the main benefits available are outlined below. More information, including eligibility, are available on the DWP⁵ and Jobcentre Plus⁶ websites.

Income Support provides a basic income to meet the immediate needs of people without an address.

A **Social Fund Community Care Grant** may be available anyone moving into the community.

When accommodation has been found, **Housing Benefit** is available to meet reasonable rents, lodging and hostel charges.

Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) is the main benefit for unemployed people. It provides financial help during periods when people are unemployed and looking for work. The conditions for receipt of JSA apply equally to everyone, including those people who may be sleeping rough. Those on JSA can undertake unpaid voluntary work provided they are still looking for work, can be contacted quickly if a job comes up, are willing to attend an interview within 48 hours notice and able to start work within one week.

Incapacity Benefit may be paid to those who are too sick to work and have a relevant contribution record.

New Deal is a key part of the Government's strategy to get people back to work. It gives people on benefits the help and support they need to look for work, including training and job preparation. Rough sleepers are one of a number of groups that can enter the New Deal as soon as they make a claim for JSA.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Extended Payments continue for the first four weeks after starting work, regardless of earnings. The notification can be in any form (e.g. written, phone-call) and must be made within four weeks of the customer or partner starting work or increasing hours/earnings.

Rapid Reclaim streamlines the process of getting JSA and IS reinstated for anyone who returns to benefit within 12 weeks or less. It is designed to encourage people into work by reducing anxieties about reclaiming benefit should their employment not last.

The DWP has also taken a number of steps to ease the transition from benefit into work and removed some of the processes that acted as a barrier to finding work.

⁵ www.dwp.gov.uk

⁶ www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Between October 2002 and April 2003 the Department introduced a **Rapid Reclaim** process for Housing Benefit after short periods of work, similar to the arrangements introduced for Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support in October 2001.

In April 2003, the Department introduced a new **HCTB1 claim form**, which cuts out duplicate claim forms by removing the need for customers claiming Housing Benefit as well as income-related benefits to complete a local authority claim pack. Customers who claim Housing Benefit at the same time as Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance previously completed up to four claim forms.

From April 2004, the Department will remove the need for customers to make a new Housing Benefit claim when moving from benefit into work. Instead, this will be treated as a **change in circumstances**.

From April 2004, the Department is **extending the Housing and Council Tax Benefit extended payment provisions** to include those customers receiving Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance.

Currently, Housing Benefit awards are made for a set period of up to 60 weeks, and Housing Benefit cannot be paid beyond the benefit period without a new claim. **Benefit Periods will be abolished** for pensioners from October 2003 and for working age customers from April 2004. In order to ensure the efforts to reduce fraud and error are not compromised, regular targeted checks on a claimants circumstances will be carried out by Local Authorities.

DWP's Work and Welfare Strategy Directorate is responsible for developing employment policy that helps people who are at a disadvantage in the labour market to compete more effectively for jobs. Jobcentre Plus delivers a range of programmes and measures for unemployed people; in order to measure how far this provision helps those who are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market, Jobcentre Plus advisers need to be able to identify particular need. From April next year Jobcentre Plus intend to identify and count unemployed clients who are homeless in order to direct them towards suitable provision and to monitor the progress they make on programmes.

Voluntary Services

Business Action on Homelessness

The Homelessness Directorate has funded Business in the Community's 'Business Action on Homelessness' Programme for the past three years to link up statutory and voluntary agencies with the corporate sector to provide training and work placements to improve the skills and employability of homeless people.

Some people may be daunted by going to work in a large company but in many cases that is where the jobs are. Under the BAOH programme homeless people undertake a range of training in self-presentation and coping processes to help prepare them for work. The programme is based on a three stage model outlined below, which is being rolled out to 15 cities across the UK.

Ready to Go is a two-day business supported training programme that prepares candidates for a work placement and long-term employment by covering motivation and confidence building, hopes and fears, self-management and communication skills, and interview practice. Day one takes place in the voluntary sector, with the second hosted by a business which helps to support and train candidates. From June 2002 BAOH are aiming to refer up to 500 clients on a pre-employment training programme and for 80% of those clients to complete the programme by 31 March 2004.

As of August 2003, 375 clients have started Ready to Go, of which 343 have completed the two-day training.

Ready for Work provides two-week work placements with the option of extending placements for up to 13 weeks. The aim is to build candidates' confidence, develop new and existing skills, and provide a reference on completion of the placement. BAOH have a target of providing 400 homeless people with two-week placements, primarily in Marks and Spencer and for 75% of those referred to complete a two week work placement by 31 March 2004.

From June 2002⁷, 366 people have started placements with 283 completing. In partnership with Jobcentre Plus, BAOH has also introduced a New Deal option to extend work placements to give homeless people a better opportunity to build their skills base and experience.

127 clients⁴ nationally have been offered jobs having been through the Ready to Go/Ready to Work process, and 101 have started employment.

Ready for Jobs is a unique online job bank⁸ of vacancies that companies have opened up to "job-ready" homeless people in London. Customised employment programmes are available for companies that recruit many people on an ongoing basis 131 clients have secured jobs via the website, the majority of whom have straight to Ready for Jobs.

⁷ Figures as of August 2003

⁸ www.readyforjobs.com

Case study

Following the break up of a long-term relationship, Gary moved to Cambridge, where he became homeless, staying in a hostel. Since completing Ready for Work in August 2002, Gary has been employed as a permanent member of staff by Marks & Spencer in Cambridge.

'My life is now fantastic; I have my own accommodation, full-time employment with Marks & Spencer, my own transport and I am now embarking on a new challenge, trying to break into the ranks of section management within Marks & Spencer. All of this has been made possible by the vital training and two week work placement'

'During his placement, Gary immediately became part of the team, from day one he has been quick to learn and showed initiative and imagination, making impressive recommendations and improvements to backstage operations. He has quickly become a top performer in his area.' Resource Manager, Marks & Spencer Cambridge Store

Off the Streets and into Work

Off the Streets and into Work (OSW) is a registered charity with expertise in providing learning-related services to people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, across London.

OSW collaborate with a range of delivery and strategic partners to offer innovative, joined-up solutions to the complex problems that face people at the margins of society. It aims to help homeless people move towards employability by providing a wide range of services including training, advice and guidance, supported employment and a specialist jobs brokerage.

Case study

Jason had been homeless for three years and unemployed. Over the last year, he has used Oddjobs, The Beacon Project and Eastend Groundswell to learn new skills and build his confidence. Oddjobs enabled him to gain carpentry and plumbing skills. While on this programme a literacy tutor from Camden Jobtrain visited Jason once a week to help him with his reading and writing. As his confidence and skills grew, he went to Eastend Groundswell who helped him learn how to use computers.

Jason says "Now I feel that I can deal with whatever life throws at me. I feel like the sky's the limit." Jason has now got a job as a Caretaker, and is hoping to go to college in September to do an NVQ in Plumbing.

In 2002-3 OSW worked with over 4,000 people, who took positive and practical steps towards their goals. 285 people achieved an accredited qualification, or credits towards a qualification, 752 people went into further education or training, 390 people went into employment - 56% of jobs were permanent and full time. For more information visit OSW's website⁹.

⁹ www.osw.org.uk

Help for young people

Research¹⁰ has shown that young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness need holistic, flexible services that can respond to their particular needs. There is already a variety of support available specifically targeted at disadvantaged young people.

Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs)

Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) are part of the government's commitment to help young people have the opportunity to fulfil their educational potential. The EMA offers weekly payments to young people to encourage participation, retention and achievement in Further Education. Evidence from pilot schemes that have been running since 1999 has shown EMAs have had a positive impact by increasing the numbers of young people participating in post-16 education, reducing the numbers who drop out of education and by providing incentives that contribute to higher attainment. EMAs will be introduced nationally from September 2004. Further information can be found on the DfES website¹¹.

Some of the EMA pilots focused on vulnerable young people, including those who are homeless. Under the EMA pilot in Nottingham, students can get up to £40 per week plus additional termly and achievement bonuses of £50. The Vulnerable Student Co-ordinating Group meets termly to discuss progress. A number of organisations are involved, including the Nottingham Hostels Liaison Group - Nottingham Foyer is represented at this group.

There are currently 232 homeless young people in Nottingham receiving an EMA (of which 22 are in care/fostered and 56 living with friends or in hostels).

Foyers

A UK wide network of Foyers provide a stable and secure community in which young people can support one another and achieve independence. Foyers help homeless young people, aged 16 - 25, by finding appropriate employment, training or education, providing training in basic skills and independent living skills, and help finding permanent accommodation and on-going support when the young person has left the Foyer. The average stay in a Foyer is nine months.

More than 10,000 young people are supported by the 120 Foyers, which are linked together by the Foyer Federation, a UK wide umbrella body. The Federation promotes Foyers and their work to key stakeholders, ensures that good practice and innovation is shared, and ensures the quality of work of Foyer work through the Foyer Accreditation System to which all Foyers are signed up.

Figures show that, of those entering Foyers, only 5% of young people are in full-time work, 6% are in part-time work, 28 % are in Government training or are students. On leaving the Foyer 24% are in full-time work, 11% are in part-time work, and 40% are in Government training or are students. For more information on Foyers visit the Foyer Federation's website¹².

¹⁰ Homeless Directorate, Evaluation of Initiatives to Prevent Youth Homelessness. 2003.
www.housing.odpm.gov.uk/hrs/hrs194/index.htm

¹¹ www.dfes.gov.uk/ema

¹² www.foyer.net/mpn

Case study

"Having left school early I spent two years doing odd jobs and moving between friends, staying wherever I could and mostly sleeping on the floor. I tried to get out of this loop, but without an address and support I felt I was getting nowhere.

"I was introduced to my local Foyer by a friend. After several assessments it was suggested I focus on IT development. After 6 months, I enrolled in the local further education college where I took an HND in Computer Networking and Management. When this was completed the Foyer provided me with a Career Review which led to my doing two part-time courses in Advanced Basic Support and Micro installation. "The Foyer got me a three-week work placement where I was offered a full-time job. Having got this security I am planning my move-on from the Foyer into my own accommodation.

I can't believe that only two years ago I had never touched a computer. Nor had I thought I would ever be qualified to get a job. The Foyer has provided me with all it takes to look towards a real future."

The Depaul Trust

The Depaul Trust offers disadvantaged young people opportunities to fulfil their potential and move towards an independent and positive future. The Trust's *Drive Ahead* course offers pre-vocational training with a difference. For every week each client completes, they have the incentive of a free driving lesson. Although the driving element is a hook to attract young people, the project also uses it as a way to begin to address key life skills, such as anger management issues (exploring the area of road rage), literacy and numeracy (preparing for their theory driving test using CD-ROMs at the project). Since April 2002, 28 clients have completed a practical based course and gained a fork-lift truck licence and 9 of these have gone on to further training and 6 into Employment.

The *Next Step* project is a Supported Employment scheme offering young people the opportunity of a real job for 6 months, in a supportive environment where they can address the areas that have led to them losing previous employment. They work with the project team collecting and transporting donated furniture to the Depaul Trust Step Ahead job creation scheme on the Wirral, which offers long term unemployed people the opportunity of a real job with training in the restoration of furniture.

Case study - Next Step Project

Abdul has a background of a very basic school education and an unstable home life. He fell into rent arrears after being unable to sustain casual employment and lost his flat. This led to him sleeping rough for three months before he could secure a place in a hostel. Abdul heard about the Next Step project recruiting a new Project Assistant, for its second hand furniture scheme which collects unwanted furniture from households in Northwest London and redistributes it to ex-homeless people and others in need.

Abdul attended an interview with the project staff and after a week working on a voluntary basis Abdul was offered the job. Abdul has commented that being back in employment means an incredible amount. His day is now structured and fulfilled and he is very proud when he leaves the hostel in the morning to go to work.

Abdul is being supported by Next Step to gain a driving licence and has begun lessons. This will also provide him with the opportunity to gain the six months of experience as a driver he needs to put in for a successful application as a London Bus driver.

Since August 2001 the Depaul Trust has employed five Project Assistants, two of whom have completed 12 months in post and 2 of whom have moved on into full-time employment.

The Depaul Trust also have a mentoring scheme, Working Out, for homeless young people, who are entering employment of further education/training. The project matches each young person with a

mentor from the field of employment/training they are about to enter, and the mentor supports them for a period of six months.

The *Step Ahead* project uses furniture restoration as the vehicle to offer individuals to develop a suite of transferable skills, which should in turn make them more employable. For more information on the work of the Depaul Trust visit their website¹³.

Case study - Step Ahead Project, Wirral

Joe had been unemployed for 8 years before he started at Step Ahead. His marriage had fallen apart and he became homeless when he left his children and home. He heard about the project and started in October 1999.

Joe studied for an NVQ II in Producing Hand Crafted Furniture, a certificate in first aid and a manual handling certificate. He achieved all three with flying colours. Step Ahead also funded his driving lessons and tests, which he passed.

Joe made new friends who were in a similar position to him, and with the help of the staff team, his confidence grew. After a period, Joe found somewhere to live. At the end of Joe's Intermediate Labour Market employment Step Ahead were able to offer him a full time position as a Furniture Restorer.

His job was progressing well, but he received constant interruption from the Social Services as his ex wife had turned to alcohol and his children were not being looked after properly. Joe decided to fight for custody of his children and eventually gained full custody of his children with the support of Step Ahead.

Joe has since been promoted to a trainer mentor and helps other people who have been affected by similar problems to him. He is an indispensable part of the team, enthusiastic, skillful, supportive, and is looked up to by others.

The Connection at St Martin's

Since its launch 12 years ago, the Connection at St Martin's (CSTM) has attempted to address the way in which homelessness and unemployment combine, not only to create exclusion, but also to make it even more difficult for homeless people to move away from the streets and/or out of hostels to reach sustainable independence. It offers a whole package approach of integrated support for homeless and socially excluded people:

- The *Workspace* programme provides vocational and careers advice to homeless and socially excluded people who want to continue their education, participate in training courses or enter employment.
- *Vocational Guidance* is provided by a team of 7 fully qualified Careers Guidance Advisers who deliver a fully accredited Advice and Guidance Service comprising Jobs Search, Careers Guidance and Advice & Support.
- A *Pre-Vocational* Training Team of 3 fully qualified of 3 fully qualified Trainers/Teachers who deliver a fully accredited pre-vocational training course (OCR/CLAIT) comprising of IT, and Personal Development consisting of Communication Skills, Motivation & Self Esteem, Interview Techniques, and Team Building & Leadership Development.
- CSTM is currently in partnership with Alone in London Services and New Horizon Day Centre to provide a Connexions Service to homeless young people in Central London.

¹³ www.depaultrust.org

- *Dyslexia Service* operates within the Pre-Vocational Training service to engage, assess and test those with Dyslexia, and tailor services to their needs.
- the "*Good Moves*" partnership (part of Preogress2Work) with Kaleidoscope and Odyssey Trust partnership is designed to work with those who have or had substance misuse in Central London who cannot or do not access mainstream vocational training provision.
- The V.I.P Club is a Meaningful Occupation programme giving rough sleepers and other homeless people the opportunity to take part in interesting and useful activities away from the streets, for example skills, art, creative writing and discussion groups.

Between April 2001 and September 2003, CSTM's Education, Training and Employment services engaged 2,500 clients, of which 432 completed a pre-employment Training Course, 425 entered employment and 1100 entered further education and training.

More information can be found on CSTM's services will be available on their new website¹⁴ which comes on line in mid September.

Case study

Lizzie was referred to Workspace in April 2000 by the youth work team. Before becoming homeless Lizzie was planning to start her career with a university degree and had completed Business and Finance GNVQs. Lizzie gave up this goal when her circumstances left her without any support network or a roof over her head. She was simply looking for any kind of work, regardless of her long-term aims.

Over the years Workspace has supported Lizzie's career aims by providing access to the drop-in job search and careers information service, one-to-one careers advice and guidance and working flexibly to support her through a six week personal development and IT course. Lizzie has had a number of addresses and periods of homelessness which have presented a number of barriers to securing work and progressing with academic goals.

After a number of attempts, Lizzie finally accompanied a careers adviser from Workspace to a women only residential college where she completed a four-week course called "Chance to Change" in July 2003. Lizzie has now been resettled in her own flat where she will have a support worker to help her maintain her tenancy.

St Mungo's

St Mungo's has 18 years experience in providing work and learning services, for homeless people in four key areas: engagement and meaningful occupation, advice and guidance, training, and employment. In 2002-2003 St Mungo's helped:

- 1,964 people become engaged on work and learning service programmes
- 252 people into full-time employment and 56 people into part-time employment
- 648 people into training
- 436 people to receive CV and interview training
- 37 people onto work placements.

For information on the work of St Mungo's visit their website¹⁵.

¹⁴ www.connection-at-stmartins.org.uk

¹⁵ www.mungos.org

Good practice example - Putting down roots

Frank, a 40 year old resident at a St Mungo's south London hostel, spent 13 years in prison in one stretch and slept rough in Brixton for six months after his release. A day centre referred him to a St Mungo's hostel where he got involved in the gardening scheme 'Putting Down Roots'.

Taking part in the gardening scheme helped build Frank's confidence -

"I developed a sense of my own worth. I really liked having something to do because it gave me meaning" - and he talked to the Putting Down Roots staff about his desire to get a job in gardening.

PDR staff linked him into the St Mungo's programme centre where he could start looking for work. The programme centre staff helped him put together a CV, and encouraged him to send it out to as many landscaping agencies in his chosen area as possible. He had a number of responses and an interview, for which staff at St. Mungo's helped him prepare.

Frank got the job and the company has offered him day release so that he can study for an NVQ level 2 qualification in amenity horticulture. Frank is currently awaiting resettlement.

Street League Lifestyles Development Programme

The Street League has set up football leagues in London and Leicester to engage homeless people in sport and to enable teams from hostels and day centres to play on a weekly basis to build fitness and self esteem. The league has gone on to introduce a Lifestyles Development Programme (LDS) pilot to help players into employment in the sports and leisure industry.

The LDS, which is optional, aims to build on the confidence gained through the football programme. It gives disadvantaged individuals access to skills, training and employment within the sport, leisure and health sector. It is integrated into the football programme through a credit scheme, therefore players must continue to train and obtain football-training credits to progress through the LDS, thus maintaining an incentive approach. Programmes are tailor-made to the client's specific interests and have good employment links once completed. The LDS is currently coming to the end of its pilot phase which has been a great success and the aim is to roll out the programme officially from September 2003. Further information on the Street League can be found on the website¹⁶.

National Learning and Skills Council: Learning Zones/Learning and Resource Centres

The former Rough Sleepers Unit funded 10 Learning and Resource Centres ('Learning Zones') for up to a two-year period ending March 2002. The aim of the project was to engage rough sleepers and former rough sleepers in training, development skills, build confidence and improve social networks with a view to future employment and enhanced tenancy sustainment. The initial funding period mainly covered the recruitment and salary costs for Zone managers/ tutors. Learning Zones have become financially self-sufficient pulling in funds on a franchise basis from local further education colleges.

The Homelessness Directorate is now working closely with the National Learning and Skills Council to take forward work based on the Learning Zones model and is currently focussing on development of programmes to train staff and volunteers working in the homelessness sector in order to enhance learning for clients.

¹⁶ <http://www.streetleague.co.uk/home/index.shtml>

Case study - Arch in Stoke on Trent

The Arch Learning Zone has worked with over 25 rough sleepers, and over 75 other clients varying in age from 16 to 59 years since it began in July 2002. Many clients lack basic education skills and are accessing learning for the first time in many years.

One male client had been sleeping rough for over 6 years and had a history of offending behaviour and substance misuse. He was initially uncommunicative with Day Centre staff and his behaviour was unpredictable and often aggressive. A year ago he joined the computer skills workshop, which he attended weekly, and he is now undertaking an accredited CLAIT computer course. He has accessed other learning opportunities at the Day Centre, including cooking skills. Since regularly accessing the Day Centre's learning opportunities his lifestyle and behaviour have become more stable, he has significantly reduced his substance use, and he is currently the client representative on the Day Centre Forum. With the support of the Rough Sleepers Resettlement Team he has been living successfully in a private tenancy for the past few months.

Helping people to access work-related benefits

Jobcentre Plus delivers services to working age people. New style Jobcentre Plus offices, offering a fully integrated work and benefit service, will be in place across the country by 2006. Jobcentre Plus offers:

- active help from personal advisers to find work to meet individual needs
- a more efficient and effective service for everyone who needs help.

Expert staff provide advice on the benefits available and the best steps for moving towards work, including to those who are homeless. They also help clients by discussing the type of work that suits them, and how best to prepare for that work.

The Jobcentre Plus London Homeless Services Team (LHST) was set up in July 2001 to specifically address the needs of homeless people across London in relation to welfare benefits. Its function is threefold:

- To deliver training and awareness sessions to DWP staff, homeless sector staff, other government departments and other statutory organisations. The aim being to ensure that all key players involved in homelessness and benefits, are aware of all the problems involved, and can influence a quick and accurate gateway to the benefit system.
- To deliver outreach work in day centres, hostels, rolling shelters, hospitals and prisons. The aim being to take new claims for benefits, sort out complex benefit issues, and maintain these benefit claims. This includes claims for all social security benefits, access to national insurance numbers and habitual residency tests.
- To explore the different way housing benefit is delivered across the 33 London boroughs, with an aim to setting up a network to expedite provision of housing benefit to homeless customers.

Case study - Benefits Outreach

A 42 year old single man living in the Croydon area was refused benefit because he had no evidence of his identification. He had been living in a shed for five years, sleeping on park benches and relying on soup kitchens for food. He had no birth certificate, as his birth had never been registered. His mother died when he was six months old and he did not know who his father was.

The LHST was able to gather information to establish the man's identity by contacting the day centre and soup kitchen he used in Croydon and talking to people who knew him. With the information obtained the LHST was able to complete an evidence of identity interview which was accepted by the Contribution Matching Service. The man is now receiving income support and incapacity benefits - his first regular income in years.

He has now joined Westminster library is doing a course in reading and writing and has started to compile his own life story. He is doing life skills training and learning to cook but most importantly he now has accommodation.

The LHST currently engage weekly with 80 outreach organisations across London, and have a physical presence in 53. They see on average 700 customers per month, and this will be a combination of fresh claims for social security benefit and resolving very complex benefit enquiries. Of the new claims taken for benefit, on average, there is a success rate of 67% which, considering the complexity of most claims and the chaotic lifestyle of LHST's customers, is a very high figure. The work of the LHST is the first step on the ladder to social inclusion for these clients. The LHST helps them to get money, which leads to accommodation, which then leads to assessments for training, and hopefully a job, independence and social inclusion.

Good practice example - Southwark Social Security Office Homeless Person's Unit Outreach Team

The outreach team within Southwark SSO delivers a specific outreach service within Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals. They work in the psychiatric wards, to ensure that patients ready for discharge, are advised of their rights, and their claims for benefit are determined before they leave. These customers are extremely vulnerable, and will often find it hard to engage with officialdom. This service enables them to be seen in their own environment, and removes the need for them to take that very difficult first step into the benefit system on their own. This service is crucial, as without it, there is every possibility that they could be discharged without any money, any chance of accommodation, and end up homeless.

Earning a wage doesn't mean paying it all back to cover rent, as housing benefit is tapered. The St Mungo's housing benefit calculator has been widely used to show people in hostels that employment can give them a reasonable amount of cash in their pockets. The calculator can be accessed via St Mungo's website¹⁷.

Tenancy Sustainment Teams are in place in London and other cities around England to help people who have moved from hostels into their own flats to resettle permanently. TSTs have targets to help people to engage in employment, training and schemes to meaningfully occupy their time.

¹⁷ www.mungos.org

Regional and National Initiatives

There are specific regional and national initiatives already in place to help improve skills and access to employment opportunities.

Progress2work

Jobcentre Plus' Progress2work (p2w) is an initiative to help recovering drugs misusers into work. Many p2w participants have housing issues and p2w providers will usually have links with agencies in this field.

Progress2work raises awareness of substance misuse issues with decision makers and will fund a co-ordinator in each district who will agree local employment focused plans between Jobcentre Plus and key agencies, especially Drug Action Teams.

The key elements of progress2work are:

- joint planning, support and referral with drug treatment agencies;
- training Jobcentre Plus staff to spot and refer those with drug problems;
- specialist employment caseworkers (also known as p2w providers) under contract to Jobcentre Plus;
- use of mainstream programmes like the new deal;
- help with job placement and continuing support for the first 13 weeks of employment.

An Interdepartmental Advisory Group has been set up including officials from: Home Office, Treasury, National Treatment Agency, Welsh Assembly and Scottish Executive. All Department for Work and Pensions Job Centre Plus districts will have Progress2Work coverage of some sort.

Providers come from the private and voluntary sector and those traditionally associated with the drug treatment sector. Referrals to Progress2Work are anticipated to come from a wide variety of sources especially criminal justice agencies.

Progress2work/Link Up

Progress2work Link Up builds on the p2w's model by piloting a similar service to ex offenders, alcohol misusers and the homeless. It will operate in 24 of the 90 Jobcentre Plus districts. Link Up aims to help 250 clients in year one and 1500 in year 2 and has a budget of £3m for 2003/04, £5m for 2004/05 and £8.5m for 2005/06.

Hoxton Share

In September 2003, the Homelessness Directorate announced that it was providing £475,000 funding to support an innovative centre training 30 homeless and ex-homeless people in cooking and catering. Hoxton Share in London, a multi-storey Victorian building currently under refurbishment, will offer a wide range of sporting and training facilities aimed at supporting and developing the vocational skills of those who have been excluded from learning and employment.

The funding will go towards developing a training suite, business start-up units, a gym and a sensory learning centre for children, under the leadership of Training for Life¹⁸, a charity dedicated to improving employability of disadvantaged groups, including homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.

¹⁸ www.trainingforlife.org

The cornerstone of the initiative is a 100-cover restaurant, which will combine catering professionals with 30 homeless and ex-homeless unemployed trainees, who each year, will learn catering and cooking skills with a view to gaining full-time employment.

Frameworks for Regional Employment and Action (FRESAs)

In February 2002 the UK Government asked Regional Development Agencies within England to co-ordinate the development of FRESAs to provide a single regional plan based on evidence from key stakeholders on issues such as industry growth, population trends, employment patterns, labour market and skills information to promote a collaborative, proactive approach to employment and skills. FRESAs give a focus to what needs to happen in a particular region to maintain and grow a healthy labour market.

FRESAs are opportunity to target groups that experience particular disadvantage both within the labour market and in accessing education and training, including homeless people. For example, the London FRESA recognises that:

"homeless people suffer particularly acute multiple barriers to participation in the labour market. Rough sleepers often have very low skill levels, low levels of physical and mental health, and some have severe problems with alcohol and drug abuse. Homeless people in temporary accommodation also face barriers to entry into the labour market, owing to factors such as the lack of a stable address. In addition, they lack awareness of the benefits to which they are entitled, due to the complexity of the benefits system."

FRESAs are more about developing partnership than about a final product. The core partners are Jobcentre Plus, Local Learning and Skills Councils, Local Authorities, Government Offices, TUC and CBI. In addition each region consults widely with other agencies and involves them as appropriate. The first FRESAs were launched in Autumn 2002. For more information on FRESAs visit the relevant Regional Development Agency's website which can be accessed via links on the Regional Co-ordination Unit's website¹⁹

¹⁹ www.rcu.gov.uk

Future work

Homelessness strategies provide the framework within which local authorities and other agencies can work to improve the training and employment opportunities for homeless people. The examples in this briefing highlight some of the good practice already taking place - further examples should be identified from the homelessness strategies.

The Homelessness Directorate will continue to identify, pilot, evaluate and promote effective approaches to help local authorities and their partners tackle and prevent homelessness more effectively through employment and training projects.