



CRISIS INNOVATIONS FAIR

Compassion or Coercion? Exploring Crime,
Anti-social behaviour & homelessness

22nd October 2003 - Conference report

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media solutions to the third sector

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Crisis Innovations Fair: Compassion or coercion?



Our fifth Crisis Innovations Fair, on 22nd October 2003, was another success. More than 200 people, from across the housing and criminal justice sector, came together to explore the theme *Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour and Homelessness*. During a packed day, everyone shared ideas, opinions and innovations on our work, and found common ground where experiences overlapped. Through a series of keynote addresses, break-out workshops, a diverse exhibition and our Big Debate to round off the day, we were able to explore in more detail the government's anti-social behaviour agenda and our often diverse responses to it. We also had the opportunity to learn about some of the most innovative projects at the front-line of these important issues.

This report is our attempt to reflect the atmosphere of the day, record some of the main points made by our speakers, and to highlight some of the key features of the debate. It is not intended to be a verbatim account of the proceedings, but our attempt to illustrate a busy but inspiring day. We hope you find it useful, and look forward to another successful Innovations Fair next year.

Jo O'Rourke & Tarig Hilal, Crisis

WELCOME:

Shaks Ghosh, chief executive of Crisis

Shaks Ghosh began with thanks to the conference sponsors, in particular ABN AMRO who provided the venue. After relating a brief history of Crisis, including how the organisation was at the forefront of helping homeless people during the 1980's when "the sheer scale of homelessness seemed to overwhelm us all", she went on to discuss the passion with which Crisis is still tackling the homelessness issue.

"The challenge is now far greater," she said. "The problem of homelessness is more complex, the solutions less obvious and most worryingly, the numbers of homeless people are on the rise."

She went on to warn delegates about the negative effect some aspects of the government's anti-social

behaviour agenda, especially its 'crack-down on begging', would have on homeless people and others who are among the most excluded in society.

"In essence, anti-social behaviour is a consequence of social exclusion – it is the result of a failure of community and of public service," said Ghosh. "These are the tricky issues of our time, and there are no easy solutions. No quick fixes."

in essence, anti-social behaviour is a consequence of social exclusion

"Beggars are the most vulnerable and neglected people in our society and the way in which we

respond to their plight is a litmus test for social policy and a measure of the kind of society that we wish to create," she said.

Ghosh went on to say how government plans to make begging a recordable offence were nothing particularly radical or new, but "what is worrying are the changes in attitude and language that are coming from the heart of government, changes that effectively

VOX POP: Karen Grundy, chief officer at First Stop Darlington

How was your day? It went really well. I went to the government's break out session on the anti-social behaviour bill. It was the first time someone was sitting down and explaining the government's approach and what their issues were.

Best thing the government has done for homeless people? Making local authorities look at their homelessness strategies. Its made them develop them, however good or bad, and take some responsibility.

Worst thing? Taking away the Rough Sleepers' Unit. We've still got major issues of rough sleeping and that needs to remain high on the agenda.

Set Tony Blair a target. More money for the sector, including for areas outside of London. We don't rate as high but our problems are comparable.

put people who beg outside the boundaries of society.”

“The solution to begging is not enforcement,” she concluded, “it is constructive engagement and compassionate alternatives. Show me a world in which proper services for homeless people are in place, and then talk to me about enforcement. People who beg have no place in the pantheon of bad behaviours that the anti-social behaviour agenda seeks to tackle, and the solution it offers will not help them nor solve the problem of begging.”

KEYNOTE:

Adam Sampson, chief executive of Shelter

Terrie Alafat, director of Homelessness Directorate

Adam Sampson began his talk, *Are the government's policies on anti-social behaviour, crime and asylum creating a new class of excluded poor?*, by comparing words quoted by Conservative Prime Minister, John Major, and the present government's approach to anti-social behaviour. “It is common currency of government to pick on a particular issue that can be seized on as an excuse for them to be tough on law and order,” he said. Our responsibility as a sector, was to respond in a rational and proper way and not lay cheap points.

rejecting a role for sanctions tackling these problems is equally wrong

He warned that since most beggars and homeless people already had a history with the criminal justice

system, criminalising beggars was unlikely to have a significant affect on their actions. But he said the conference should not immediately dismiss enforcement in all cases.

“Drug treatment under sanction has just as good effect, if not slightly better outcomes, than treatment voluntarily entered into,” he said, but criticised the “stupidity and immorality” of using policing methods against begging, “but rejecting any role for sanctions in tackling these problems is equally wrong.”

Sampson went on to call on housing associations not to begin “squeezing out” the most risky tenants, warning the government's anti-social behaviour agenda could make it more difficult for vulnerable people to find accommodation in housing associations. There was a danger social housing would move away from “risky” tenants to housing those more pleasing to funders from the City, he said.

“Housing associations are moving away from prioritising housing from the most vulnerable, to key workers,” said Sampson. “By housing people who are economically attractive and secure, those who are not economically attractive may get squeezed out. Some housing associations appear to be moving away from their charitable aims.”

Terrie Alafat, used a slide presentation to provide the conference with a perspective on the latest work of the government's Homelessness Directorate. “Anti-social behaviour and homelessness

it's a complex issue and requires a range of solutions,” she said in her talk, *Promoting inclusive communities through homelessness prevention*. “Its about finding real solutions that work.”

“Many of the problems in relation to housing conditions, like crime and anti-social behaviour, have a major impact on sustainable communities,” she said. “Many of these problems which make community's places where people don't want to live are the same that cause homelessness and vulnerability.”

The government's role was about balancing service delivery and appropriateness, said Alafat, but also enforcing some kinds of behaviour on the street. “We're going to work very closely with the Anti-social Behaviour Unit to do our best to ensure that the police are able to make appropriate referrals. I hope it doesn't look like only an enforcement agenda,” she said. “Finding the right balance will help foster better communities.”

In questions, **David Fairhurst**, project co-ordinator of First Stop Darlington, asked why the government's concentration on tackling homelessness always seemed to be concentrated on the

BREAKOUT: Community problem solving in relation to young people

Sergeant **Paul Dunn**, anti-social behaviour advisor to the Metropolitan Police, showed delegates slides of where crimes are committed in north London, compared with anti-social behaviour, illustrating that they are not necessarily the same place. The affluent are more likely to report their windows being broken as anti-social behaviour, while those living on estates don't think police will turn up if they do report.

“If we're going to tackle anti-social behaviour, we need to be clear about these factors,” he said, adding he reckoned the root cause of most anti-social behaviour among young people was actually caused by adults.

big cities. Alafat replied that the Homelessness Directorate was providing £260m across the country for local authorities to tackle rough sleeping, though they were not all getting the same amount. All local authorities are obliged to address the problem, she added.

She said consulting homeless people was “a very difficult question” in response to a challenge from the floor. She said the Directorate works with agencies who do focus group sessions with clients: “What comes out of these groups needs to be put into action,” she warned.

KEYNOTE:

Gareth Crossman, head of policy at Liberty

Speaking on the theme, *Can the government's policies on crime and anti-social behaviour make us safer,*

Gareth Crossman from the civil liberties group said the government's policies on these issues were having a negative effect on some of the most vulnerable in society. He warned that the government's approach to these issues "needs more than setting up a unit in a government department."

He told the conference how proposed new criminal justice legislation could mean homeless people and beggars could be imprisoned without actually committing a crime. He also said that because homeless people are more likely to have a past record with the criminal justice system, plans to disclose past convictions in court were likely to mean more were convicted.

In response to another question, Adam Sampson said that what was most at issue was not what the government's new bill actually said, but the effect language from politicians can have in practice among the public, judges and police.

“Ministers are not challenging it and taking a more positive approach. They won't say stuff publicly that would encourage local authorities to act in a way we would like them to,” he said.

finances and court costs won't deter people from begging



After lunch, delegates were treated to a short performance from homeless people's theatre company, Cardboard Citizens.

The play told the story of a 17-year old who, driven out of her home by the cruelty of her step-father, leaves for London in search of 'freedom'.

Meeting with seasoned street walker, JD, on the pavements of The Strand, she initially thinks she's found the freedom she's looking for, but as the realities of street-life kick-in, her search for 'real freedom' leads her to drink, drugs and eventually theft to feed her habit.

“I'm having a really good time,” she continually tells herself, sending chills down the spines of the audience who have seen her life spiral into a cycle of drug abuse and helplessness.

The play ends with the woman curled on a bench on Hampstead Heath, watched over only by a bewildered park keeper. ‘What's this girls story?’ he wonders. “How did she get here? Who's responsibility is she?”

The play is part of a series that the theatre company performs in hostels and shelters to help homeless people discuss their experiences and inform their choices.

VOX POP: Bill Pearce, support worker at Calderdale Smart Move

How was your day? There's some very interesting things going on, but not enough time. I've not been able to ask the questions I'd like to ask. Maybe it would have been better over two days.

Best thing the government has done? I don't think they've done anything so good. There's lots of promises and nothing stands out as an action. Access to services and providing identity is still very difficult, engaging with government agencies is still very difficult.

Worst thing? The begging issue, because it directly affects people that I'm working with now. People are not turning up for appointments because they've been arrested for the fourth time this month.

Set Tony Blair a target. More coherent funding and more funding that doesn't run out after 12 months.

BREAKOUT: The Harrow Initiative

Andy Gale, housing needs manager for the London Borough of Harrow, addressed the issue of multi-agency working with single homelessness. He discussed the history of housing provision for homeless people, saying there has always been a lingering view of the homeless as the being worthy of scorn. He argued that local authorities were not doing enough for non-priority homeless people.

"We play one group of marginalised people against another group of marginalised people, and often it's the single homeless that come off worst," he said, before outlining practical steps local authorities could take to redress the balance.

"The problem is that those most affected will always be those least able to protect themselves," he said, warning that plans to introduce identity cards and the government's crack-down on begging would also disproportionately affect the homeless. He criticised the government for failing to properly think through the impact of its proposals.

"Without a holistic approach to the impact of legislation, it is difficult to appreciate the full impact it can make," he said. "Fines and court costs won't deter people from begging, and if they genuinely need to beg, it will actually exacerbate the problem."

In questions, **Sue Strickland** single homelessness and rough sleeping manager for Bristol City Council, challenged figures used by the speaker about the number of beggars imprisoned in her city. "We have not taken Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) against beggars," she said. "If we help those who beg to get access to services then we help the community and help those who feel intimidated by begging." **David Walker**, policy advisor at prison reform group Nacro, replied

BREAKOUT: Beyond enforcement

Policy manager at Shelter, **Jim Bennett**, gave his workshop a potted history of legislation on housing and anti-social behaviour, highlighting where the two have overlapped. He said new legislation on anti-social behaviour took things one step further, by defining it as something 'capable' of causing nuisance or annoyance.

"All you will have to show is that someone is behaving in a particular way, not that anyone was actually annoyed by it," he said, before criticising a 'Shop the Yob' campaign run by *The Sun* newspaper.

that ASBOs were a way of dealing with the attitude "that we need to be doing something, but when they come through there's not the services and these people end up going to prison."

KEYNOTE:

Anthony Lawton, chief executive of Centrepoint

Those working in the homelessness sector should take a long look at the perspectives and beliefs they are coming from in the anti-social behaviour debate, **Anthony Lawton** told the conference in his talk *To Label is to Libel*.

After quoting extensively from a story in the *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* about an electronic monk who believed the world was pink, he challenged the audience to reconsider the foundations on which their own beliefs are built. "Its very important that we're clear about where we come from with our beliefs in this debate, and also how we approach the beliefs and opinions of those others working on this issue."

He also spoke about the language that was being used in discussions

about anti-social behaviour, criticising the way that all begging acts are now automatically described as 'aggressive begging'. Using cases from history, he explained how the term 'aggressive begging' has never been defined, yet it is used by the media and politicians in a derogatory way. He then turned his attention to what the homelessness sector should do to combat this negative tide:

we shouldn't get angry we should get even

"We have to take a step back," he said. "We shouldn't just get angry about what's going on, we should get even. We should take a step back and that will help us to gather our forces and make more progress on this."

Finally, he said, he would "make a plea for charity", saying people should give to beggars without asking why, or what they would do with the money. "Our community should promote charity in and for itself."

Following his talk, one delegate asked whether there was a contradiction between organisations challenging the government on this

issue, and also being funded by the government. Lawton replied that it had been an issue for many organisations for many years. He warned “this is a lever this government is more than willing to pull”.

“Its become more of a pressure because of the determination of this government to deliver many more public services through charities and the voluntary sector,” Lawton said. “They do expect us to work and manage and lead in a particular way to achieve the aims we want. I hope that we have got clear policies and values that will help us through that.”

Another delegate said that it was ‘moral panic’ that acted as the driver to how the government acts, and asked whether we should use legal channels to challenge some of the worst effects of the new legislation. Lawton replied that he wanted to avoid the “language of confrontation”. He said the sector had a duty to demand inclusion at the very beginning of policies, so it could influence the language of the debate from the start.

works with hundreds of prisoners on remand or short sentences.

He explained that as well as helping those prisoners on the receiving end of advice, the project allowed “hideously under-utilised” expertise among inmates to be put to good use, which also provides them with better opportunities when they are released. “We wanted to offer a meaningful qualification that they could use on release,” he said.

Delegates were able to hear first hand the experiences of a young offender who said his life had been changed by the scheme. **Matthew Ferguson**, who is serving three years Bullingdon prison in Oxfordshire, was allowed on day release to talk to the conference.

“It is life changing work, for me and for the prison inmates I’m working with,” he said. “It gives people like me a real opportunity to change my

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outlook and my life, and prevent me from coming back to the prison system. We all know the role that drugs issues play a in the housing issue for release prisoners. That’s why they need the right support network.”

One delegate asked the group how difficult it was to get prisons interested in the project. **Maria McNicholl** replied at the beginning it “was a totally alien concept” to prison officers. “Even one year on, there’s still only a grudging acceptance,” she added. Ferguson added that though some inmates make fun of him for his position, it was more likely to be prison officers who gave him a hard time.

THE BIG DEBATE:

Shaks Ghosh, chief executive of Crisis, Frank Field MP, Adam Sampson, chief executive of Shelter, Simon Hughes MP, Tim Bell, director of housing at Nacro, and Councillor Simon Milton, leader of Westminster City Council. Sandi Toksvig chaired.

KEYNOTE:

St Giles Trust

Led by the organisation’s head of prisons **Mike Rose**, a group of representatives from the St Giles Trust told the conference of the work of the organisation providing training and housing advice in Bullingdon prison in Oxford, and Pentonville prison in north London. Rose explained how, because it trains prisoners to deliver housing and resettlement advice to other prisoners, the project has been able to reach many more prisoners than it otherwise would. The Trust now

VOX POP: David Glynn, director of The Bridge Trust

How was your day? I’m enjoying it. Its been very informative. The workshops I went to were excellent. I managed to speak to Terrie Alafat after her talk, and was able to ask her significant questions. She was honest and open about it.

Best thing the government has done? Their Supporting People initiative. I hope the sponsors of that money will continue to give the same levels of support into the future.

Worst thing? There are certain aspects of the anti-social behaviour bill I’m very uncomfortable with, especially the begging issue. It’s very socially naïve to consider people as criminals if they ask for money.

Set Tony Blair a target. Over the next 10 years, there needs to be at least 45,000 social houses built a year, if we don’t do that things are going to get worse, not better.

Broadcaster **Sandi Toksvig** opened the debate, *Anti-social behaviour is a distraction – the real issue is social exclusion*, by telling the conference delegates this was their opportunity to act in an anti-social way by firing difficult questions at the panel. She began by asking **Frank Field**, Labour MP and author of a controversial book on anti-social behaviour, to define what was meant by the term.

"Ordinary behaviour can be anti-social behaviour when it is repeated or becomes of such nuisance to others," he said, before claiming society had changed over recent years to become much more anti-social in general. "We are in a new ball game here," he said. He later added that if people claimed they were on drugs it made no difference as to whether their behaviour was anti-social.

But Liberal Democrat MP and former spokesperson on home affairs, **Simom Hughes**, replied that anti-social behaviour needed to be more than just behaviour that worries or annoys people. "It should be defined as behaviour that is threatening people or causes intimidation for people," he said. "We have to be very careful we don't draw the line on the wrong side of that."

From the floor, **Martin Kinsella**, chief executive of the Good Shepherd Trust, said a root of the problem why children were being labelled as anti-social was that there were no longer social activities for them to do. "There needs to be development of leisure activities," he said.

Director of housing at prisoner resettlement charity Nacro, **Tim Bell**, said that by stamping down on everything that makes people's lives a misery there is a danger of making it a law to be happy. "We need a reality check," he said.

But **Joseph Bergman**, speaking from the floor, told delegates how his life, and that of his family, had been made very difficult by the anti-social behaviour of people on his estate. A speaker from Croydon YMCA said the problem

EXHIBITION:

A diverse mix of organisations took stands at the Innovations Fair exhibition this year, ranging from front-line organisations to consultants.

Centrepoint took the opportunity to showcase a new model for helping homeless young people discuss their difficulties and worries about life on the street.

Business in the Community outlined how working with business through its Business Action on Homelessness scheme, it was able to offer homeless people training and employment opportunities that could help them find full-time work.

The BigLife Company used the opportunity to tell delegates about problems faced by Big Issue vendors in Liverpool, where the council has banned them from selling the magazine.

At The Future Foundation stall, delegates were able to learn about a new roadmap for homelessness agencies which has been created to help organisations think more innovatively around the problems they and their clients face.

Off the Streets and into Work told delegates about the training and employment services it provides to homeless

BREAKOUT: When Daily Mail readers attack

Nick O'Shea, research manager at the Revolving Doors Agency, shared the typical views of his neighbour 'Bill' who he said was the average Daily Mail reader, and compared Bill's opinions with statistics on homelessness and anti-social behaviour.

He demonstrated how the idea that the homeless were 'always getting services all the time' was wrong, and that it actually takes months to receive assessments, drug and alcohol services and housing support.

with anti-social behaviour was that it "politicised what people's prejudices are."

Shaks Ghosh, chief executive of Crisis, then said politician's and the media's use of language about beggars and other vulnerable people risked making us an intolerant society. She appealed to the government to drop their plans to make begging a criminal offence in forthcoming anti-social behaviour legislation.

"Our appeal is to leave beggars out of this," she told the conference. "These are the most vulnerable people in society, and this punitive approach to challenging anti-social behaviour is not going to solve the problem of begging."

Leader of Westminster City Council, **Simon Milton**, said we increasingly live in a 24 hour society where our neighbours are likely to come from different countries. "For communities to work there needs to be codes and standards to live by." Begging is a big problem that emerges from complaints he receives, he said, and it is part of the whole issue of drugs.

But Simon Hughes replied that begging should never be something that is criminalised. “We should never send someone to prison for begging. “The reality is that there’s a lack of public services, and they are not to blame for that.”

Following a straw poll by the chair, in which only five delegates said they agreed with criminalising begging, **Emma Faragher** from the Big Issue in the North, asked panellists for their opinion of Liverpool City Council’s decision to ban the sale of the magazine after police said they had arrested some vendors for drug related crimes.

Adam Sampson, chief executive of Shelter, condemned the action, but added that the issue of begging and drugs was an issue that the sector had to deal with, “but there’s not the services that are appropriate to deal with these, and to get people off the streets.”

But Frank Field replied, saying it was a “cop out” to say you couldn’t use punitive measures against beggars until full services were provided. “That we can do nothing until the Garden of Eden is ridiculous,” he said. “Though of course you have a right to lobby for better facilities.” He warned that the audience was not representative of voters at large, many of whom has a right to ask “why should I pay taxes for services for these people who’s behaviour I despise.”

Amarantha Pike, director of communications at Hact, responded by saying Field was “disregarding the knowledge in this room”.

Tim Bell argued that there is no real public demand for the criminalisation of begging. “The public know about the correlation between homelessness and drug use, and if they choose to give to beggars then they’ve a right to do that,” he said.

Responding to another question from the floor, about what the sector was doing in a positive way on these issues, Simon Hughes agreed that if local authorities banned people from street drinking, they have to provide an alternative place for street drinkers to go.

that we can do nothing until the Garden of Eden is ridiculous

“We have to do things gradually, and we have to deal with the housing crisis in this country,” he said.

Simon Milton then spoke of the record of Westminster Council providing some of the services referred to, but warned the homelessness sector needed to take

BREAKOUT: Locked up and somewhere to go

Dominic Raffo, manager of St Mungo’s Prison Services, demonstrated a new electronic service that has been installed in Pentonville prison to help inmates get the information they need.

“When people come into prison, often they’re not in the best frame of mind to listen to the instructions given by officers,” he said. “This system provides them with information when they are ready.” The electronic terminal uses images to direct inmates to information on everything from settling-in to health advice. Behind the scenes, the computer is able to record which information is being looked at in which language.

“If there are lots of hits in Russian about bullying, you would know there was a problem that needed looking into,” he said.

a step back in perspective when looking at the issue of anti-social behaviour. “If you fail to distance yourselves from problems like begging and anti-social behaviour you damage your own credibility,” he said. “I do get letters from constituents who do feel intimidated by people begging.”

Speaking from the floor, **David Chater**, press officer for Turning Point, asked where ASBOs could lead. He said sending beggars to prison would be too late to help them, even if services were available. “If there is going to be enforcement, it would need to be very early on.” Another delegate asked how would ? the panel tell the difference between a ‘neighbour from hell’ and someone with mental health difficulties.

BREAKOUT: Adding purpose, beating boredom

The Crisis Skylight project in east London was introduced by head of Skylight, **Helen Leech**. She spoke of the importance of giving homeless people a place to go, that was welcoming and interesting, and where they could be referred to services if they need them.

“What we’re trying to do is provide variety so that anyone coming into the centre will find something that they want to engage in,” she said. More than 80 homeless people a day are currently using the centre, which provides classes in information technology, salsa classes and creative writing sessions. “We’ve been able to demonstrate that our members have gone away with more confidence and better life chances,” she said.

VOX POP: Tessa Flament, housing case worker at Women's Link

How was your day? Its been interesting, and the workshops have been quite thought provoking. Networking here is good because I meet organisations that I've not heard of and there's lots of chief executives, so you can find out what's going on at a high level.

Best thing the government has done? The Homeless Act 2000 was a good thing because it extended the priority need category and forced local authorities to concentrate on these issues.

Worst thing? The new legislation that we're talking about today. Groups we target and young people will come off worst.

Set Tony Blair a target. I'd like to see more access to hostels, and more hostel places.

Adam Sampson said the reality was very often that there was no difference, which is why "instead of moving them from where they are or implementing sanctions, we need to put in place the services they need to improve their situation."

Frank Field summed up his contribution by questioning the link between drugs, mental health and anti-social behaviour. "Most of the irritable behaviour is not caused by these issues. I've found a real challenge in ordinary people's behaviour. There's a major culture change in how nations behave," he said.

James Francis, director of street and hostel services at Thames Reach Broadway, asked the panelists why the sector was so reluctant to force people to change their behaviour, in the light of general support for compulsory treatment for those with mental health difficulties. "Aren't we being duplicitous?" he asked.

Simon Hughes said: "'We have to have a decision. We can do nothing, we can criminalise someone, or we can intervene in a non criminal way.

Once you give someone a criminal record, you have started something they can't get out of. A personalised response should always have a non-criminal outcome."

Adam Sampson said there was a difference between intervening in someone life who has no choice [as to their behaviour] and those who have chosen to use drugs. "We might not agree with those choices but we have to be careful that we don't break down the human rights of those who don't have the privileges we have."

Shaks Ghosh concluded the debate by saying there were four ways in which coercion was wrong. "It makes us an intolerant society, and it demonises people," she said, adding that it also wears down the trust that agencies are able to build with their clients. Finally, she said "we will have more success in helping people off the street if we do it with their consent, rather than doing it by enforcement."

BREAKOUT: Tackling anti-social behaviour: the government's agenda

The workshop, led by **Ian Brady**, director of the Anti-social Behaviour Unit, discussed what different boroughs were doing on the issue, and how varying it was. In Wolverhampton, for example, street drinkers are arrested or moved on, while in Westminster street drinkers are first warned to stop their behaviour, before being dealt with by police.

Brady said he knew that the young homeless and vulnerable were more likely to be victims of crime than perpetrators of it. "We want to know about how best to deal with that in the homelessness sector," he said, adding, "we shouldn't shy away from using the criminal justice system to get people into treatment if we have to."

BREAKOUT: Street begging and the criminalisation of the social

Toronto University's **Joe Hermer**, from their criminology and sociology department, laid out his thesis that begging was essentially a social behaviour between the person begging and the person deciding to give. "It makes us reflect on the character of our social obligations," he said.

He added there was very little evidence of 'aggressive begging' at all, and that the UK government's use of language, and of statistics, was "a government spin job". "They been selective in the facts that those begging actually have a food and hunger problem," he said.

Delegates at the workshop also spent time discussing a new scheme in Camden, north London, which paints yellow boxes around cash-points, apparently to keep beggars away, to keep those using the machines safe, or a combination of both.