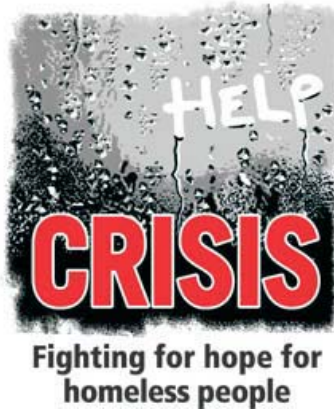


Daytime Homelessness

Anwen Jones and Nicholas Pleace

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Centre for Housing Policy

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

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Executive Summary

- In September 2002, Crisis commissioned the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York to conduct research to explore the concept of daytime homelessness and to examine the role and nature of daytime provision, meaningful activity, education, training and employment opportunities for homeless, formerly homeless and vulnerably housed people.
- The research had three stages. The first was an extensive literature review exploring the concept of 'daytime homelessness'. The second stage was the selection of case study areas and the identification of projects, agencies and organisations for inclusion in the study. The third and final stage of the research was the fieldwork. This stage involved in-depth interviews with 86 individuals. These included service providers from a range of agencies providing daytime services, training and routes into meaningful activity and homeless, vulnerably housed and formerly homeless people.
- 'Daytime homelessness' refers to sets of needs and characteristics associated with homelessness and potential homelessness. The term originated in the United States where it was used to describe the situation of homeless people who were resident in shelters at night, but who were ejected from those shelters during the day. As these individuals lacked basic services, their 'homelessness' effectively stopped only at night, leading to the term 'daytime homeless' being adopted to describe their situation.
- There is growing recognition that factors other than accommodation and resettlement support are important in ensuring that formerly homeless people resettle in their new homes and communities. A range of needs and characteristics including social and economic exclusion, emotional poverty, boredom, lack of meaningful activity and poor social support networks, are associated with homelessness. These 'daytime' needs may be found among people who are homeless, those who are potentially homeless and those who have one or more past experiences of homelessness.
- In the past, daytime provision for homeless people tended to be restricted to the provision of food, clothing, washing facilities and basic health care. More recently, service provision has developed in line with the recognition that the alleviation and prevention of homelessness requires a more holistic approach that addresses a wide range of problems and needs experienced not only by homeless and formerly homeless people but also by other marginalized and vulnerable individuals.
- There is currently a strong policy emphasis on forms of training, education and meaningful activity for potentially, currently and formerly homeless single people, particularly those that are seen as facilitating entry, or a return, to employment. Not all formerly homeless people will be able to enter employment, but involvement

in some form of meaningful activity is regarded as important, both in helping to avoid boredom and isolation and in helping people to develop or regain self esteem, confidence and the skills required to reintegrate into society and sustain a home of their own.

- Most day centres provided some form of meaningful activity for their service users but this was still a relatively small part of their wider role. Much of this provision was informal and unstructured but providers believed that all forms of meaningful activity, including social events and leisure pursuits, could help people develop the confidence and motivation required to move on in their lives and help prepare people for more formal training, education and possibly, employment.
- There was some disagreement about the role of traditional homelessness services such as day centres and soup runs, as some respondents saw these as encouraging dependence. Providers of traditional daytime services felt they continued to have an important role in providing food, shelter and other basic support to people who were sleeping rough, people living in hostels, formerly homeless people and other vulnerable individuals. These basic services were often accessed by the most marginalized individuals who would find it difficult to access more formal services.
- There are a number of barriers to individuals becoming involved in any form of meaningful activity. These include: a lack of confidence and low self esteem and the difficulties that those with more chaotic lifestyles find in accessing and regularly using services; the benefits system, and the attitudes of some employers and society in general, towards homeless people.
- While most service providers recognised that these barriers existed there was nevertheless evidence of programmes being run or developed with unrealistic expectations of the clients they worked with. There was an assumption among some that people could make the transition from low levels of informal activity straight into a more structured setting and that once employment, training or education was secured there would be no need for continued support.
- There was little agreement about what 'meaningful activity' might be but the research findings suggest that having something to occupy one's time, including informal activities, education, training and employment, has a beneficial impact on people's self esteem, self confidence and general well being.
- It was also suggested that engagement in some form of meaningful activity could help people with multiple needs begin to take an interest in moving on and to take control of their lives and plan for the future. However, the actual process was less well understood and many respondents stressed that engaging some 'daytime' homeless people was problematic and often a lengthy process.
- Access to sustained, reliable funding for daytime services was a problem encountered by all service providers. Some service providers found the administrative work involved in applying for funding and in meeting funding requirements difficult to meet but appreciated that this was a necessary, if time consuming, part of their role.

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- Many service providers found the tensions between their role with daytime homeless and homeless people with whom they worked and the demands of funding bodies problematic. While most service providers appreciated the need for target setting and the monitoring and evaluation of services, they felt that funding organisations did not understand the needs of service users and set unrealistic hard targets.
 - Many service providers felt that unrealistic or inflexible funding requirements and targets would discourage providers from working with the most marginalized people. Service providers were likely to select the most employment ready individuals rather than work with people with complex needs and problems who might never be ready for formal paid employment, but who might, nonetheless, benefit from some form of meaningful activity.
 - The research suggested that further work is needed in understanding and developing a realistic set of aims for services working with 'daytime' homeless people. Simple economic reintegration may not be practical, as a host of factors from a lack of local employment through to long term health or support needs can mitigate against someone seeking an economic route away from daytime homelessness. Many homeless, potentially homeless and formerly homeless people who are experiencing daytime homelessness have been subject to compound disadvantage, which has given them poor life chances, little chance of productive personal development and sometimes left them both highly alienated and vulnerable. For some 'daytime' individuals, the securing and sustainment of paid work is a realistic prospect, given the right support services, for others, it is unlikely to be possible or practical, but this does not mean that meaningful activity, help with developing social supports and other services cannot help stabilise and improve their situation, as well as reduce their risk of experiencing homelessness or repeat homelessness.
 - The evidence base for many daytime services is poor. Services have arisen through providers trying to develop ways of countering and preventing homelessness, by drawing upon little more than assumptions about the needs of homeless, formerly homeless and potentially homeless people. Common assumptions that are open to question include the belief that a lack of 'daily living skills' or the 'life-skills' needed to run a home contributes significantly towards the inability of some 'daytime' homeless people to sustain their own tenancy.
 - The new Supporting People programme has created a stable funding source for low intensity support services for daytime homeless people for the first time. However, the focus of Supporting People funding on housing related services delivered to people in their own homes (including supported housing), means daycentres and education and training services may still lack a secure funding base.

Introduction

In September 2002, Crisis commissioned the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York to conduct research to explore the concept of daytime homelessness and to examine the role and nature of daytime provision, education, training and employment opportunities for homeless, vulnerably housed and formerly homeless people.

Background to the research

Recent research findings suggest that factors other than the nature of accommodation and resettlement support are also important in ensuring that formerly homeless people resettle in their new homes and communities. Many homeless people, formerly homeless people and vulnerably housed people experience emotional poverty, boredom and isolation, social and economic exclusion as well as health and support needs. The lack of social support networks or any meaningful occupation can compound the difficulties faced by people who have been homeless in moving on and resettling, while the lack of these protecting factors is thought to place vulnerable people at particular risk of homelessness and repeat homelessness.

There has been little research specifically on the need for, or the use of, daytime provision by potentially, currently and formerly homeless people. However, some research suggests that some individuals continue to use services and or associate with homeless people following a period of homelessness. The reasons for this are not clear, but it is suggested that these social networks provide some structure to the day and an important source of support and companionship (Jones, 1999).

In the past, daytime provision for homeless and formerly homeless people tended to be restricted to the provision of food, clothing, washing facilities and basic health care. More recently, service provision has developed in line with the recognition of a need for a more holistic approach to resettlement, which includes the promotion of self-esteem and the development of social and other skills through life skills training, education and employment training.

There is currently a strong policy emphasis on forms of training and education for formerly homeless people that facilitate entry, or a return to, employment. Research suggests, however, that not all individuals are able to enter employment or education (Squirrell, 2001). Nevertheless, much of the resettlement and tenancy sustainment literature suggests that some form of meaningful activity may be important in enabling formerly homeless people to maintain and sustain independent tenancies and to become reintegrated into their community (Jones et al, 2001).

The report structure

Chapter One presents the findings of the literature review on the concept of 'daytime homelessness' and discusses how this may be defined. The following four chapters present the fieldwork findings. **Chapter Two** reports on the use of daytime provision by homeless and formerly homeless people. **Chapter Three** focuses on the nature and role of programmes developed to help homeless and daytime homeless people into education, training and employment and examines the problems and barriers faced by those entering or re-entering training, education or employment. **Chapter Four** examines the views of service users and service providers on the importance of having some form of meaningful activity. This chapter also considers the problems and barriers that prevent some daytime homeless people from becoming involved in any meaningful activity. **Chapter Five** reports the findings of the research on the funding of daytime provision, the difficulties associated with the nature of funding and the demands of funding bodies, and the respondents' views on the future funding of services. Finally, **Chapter Six** presents the conclusions and recommendations for the future development of daytime provision.

1 Defining daytime homelessness

1.1 Introduction

Traditionally, the lone homeless population has been defined by either its lack of any accommodation or by the inadequate or unfit accommodation to which it has access. Over recent years, our understanding of the nature of homelessness has changed, so that we now increasingly view lone homeless people as being within a larger 'socially excluded' population and recognise that they confront many issues and problems beyond their lack of suitable accommodation. Policy debates in recent years have begun to focus on the difficulties faced by lone homeless people and towards the development of services that enable them to manage those difficulties that might affect their ability to successfully secure and sustain suitable accommodation.

The concern of this report is what Crisis has termed 'daytime homelessness'. Daytime homelessness refers to the alienation, social marginalisation, and economic and political exclusion, alongside health and support needs, that can characterise many homeless, formerly homeless and potentially homeless individuals. This report is both concerned with defining these needs and with informing the development of suitable service responses, with respect to preventing homelessness, alleviating homelessness and working to minimise repeat homelessness.

The first section of this chapter traces our changing views of single homelessness. There is then a discussion as to how daytime homelessness might be defined and how the term and concept might be effectively utilised. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the current policy context and the opportunities for service development.

1.2 Changing views of homelessness

By the 1980s, research was showing that homeless people quite often had support needs that could make it difficult for them to secure and sustain their own home. Initially, among groups such as people sleeping rough, this was seen in terms of a lack of the practical 'life skills' needed to run a home. However, by the early 1990s, it had become apparent that some formerly homeless people were encountering problems in managing in their tenancies for reasons other than a lack of 'life skills'. In some instances, health and personal care needs, such as mental health problems or drug or alcohol dependency, were not being met, quite often because of poor coordination between housing, health and Community Care services. In other cases, a lack of financial and personal resources made it difficult to sustain a home. There were also problems linked to accommodation being unsuitable in design or location (Pleace, 1995; Franklin, 1999).

Researchers were also finding evidence that many lone homeless people lacked social supports. Many were excluded from family relationships, friendships and sexual relationships. Former rough sleepers, for example, were quite often without a partner, a family or friends, prior to, during and following an episode of homelessness (Dant and Deacon, 1989; Vincent *et al*, 1993).

Similarly, lone youth homelessness appeared to be strongly associated with a lack of familial support. Research found a strong association between young people experiencing a disruptive or damaging childhood and subsequent homelessness (Van der Ploeg and Scholte, 1997; Pleace and Quilgars, 1999; Fitzpatrick, 2000). Young people who had been in care were also much more likely than other young people to experience homelessness (Biehal *et al*, 1992).

Previous research for Crisis has shown how escaping violence can often mean women find themselves homeless without any resources at all. When they have to leave an area, they leave behind their social supports of family and friends. Women may also have needs associated with the aftermath of escaping violence and can also experience sexual abuse and violence while homeless. Homeless women sometimes avoid using services dominated by homeless men because they may be vulnerable to attack or assault (Jones, 1999).

Other research suggested that negative public attitudes towards homeless people could increase their isolation. Mass media representations of lone homeless people are often overwhelmingly negative, with few households or individuals seen as being in 'legitimate' need and the majority characterised as 'scroungers' or 'dossers' (Carlen, 1996; Platt, 1999). Some research suggests that when homeless people encounter this sort of hostility, it leads to feelings of rejection, further undermining their sense of self esteem and promoting a withdrawal from social life, turning what had started as isolation into alienation from society (Farrington and Robinson, 1999; Pleace, 2000; Lemos, 2000; Lemos and Durkacz, 2002).

Homeless people with a Black or minority ethnic (BME) background may experience negative attitudes because they are homeless and through encountering racial or cultural prejudice. This can create a situation of 'double' exclusion from mainstream society. Prejudice may also lead homeless people with a BME background to avoid services dominated by White homeless people. It can also be difficult for some homeless people with a BME background to use services that do not respect, or make any provision for, their specific cultural needs (Steele, 1997).

Some sociologists and psychologists in America have come to see sustained experience of homelessness as causing behavioural changes. They argue that the longer someone is homeless, the more likely it is that they will become isolated and withdrawn, losing the social skills and social supports that they need in order to find a route out of homelessness (Snow and Anderson, 1987; Grigsby *et al*, 1990; Boydell *et al* 2000).

Withdrawal and isolation, coupled with low self esteem (Grigsby *et al*, 1990), can be associated with what some US research has described as the '*devalued self*' (Boydell *et al*,

2000). In other words, homeless individuals can be in a position in which self esteem and social skills have deteriorated to a point at which normal social interaction has become difficult. A devalued self image makes the 'normal' social interactions to get the services they need, to access education or training, or secure a job, too much for some homeless people. This alienation may create barriers to services, employment, education and training, as well as to establishing friendships, sexual relationships or re-establishing family relationships (Boydell *et al*, 2000).

British research on the difficulty some homeless people have in using the NHS has shown how the devalued self esteem of some homeless people acts as a significant barrier to treatment. Some homeless people view themselves as 'not worth' helping, or assume, without checking, that because they are homeless, they will be refused treatment. Others cannot manage the simple interactions involved in using the NHS, or avoid being in public waiting areas, because of what they think the reaction to their presence will be (Shiner, 1995; Pleace and Quilgars, 1996; Pleace *et al*, 1999).

British research also suggests that 'risky' behaviour, such as unprotected sex with multiple partners, may be associated with a low sense of self worth (Attenborough, 1998), as may the use of drugs like heroin and crack cocaine. The relationship between homelessness and mental health remains unclear at present, however, mental health problems like depression can be associated with social isolation and devalued self image (Gill *et al*, 1996). It has also been long established that, if other factors such as income are equal, people with good social supports (strong partner, family and friendship ties) tend to have better physical and mental health than those lacking such supports (Cohen and Wills, 1985).

Research on the resettlement needs of formerly homeless households has identified that the following sets of support needs may continue to be present after a lone homeless person has been rehoused (Pleace, 1995; Franklin, 1999):

- **support in establishing and maintaining a suitable home** - help, advice and support in finding and maintaining suitable accommodation, including preventing the reoccurrence of homelessness;
- **support in accessing benefits, health and community care services** - homeless households may need information, advice, help and advocacy support to claim benefits, access community care or NHS services;
- **help in establishing and maintaining social networks and social support** - rebuilding social networks can be very important in helping households avoid re-entering homelessness;
- **help with reintegration into economic life** - homeless households may also need help in accessing education, training and employment.

Our understanding of homelessness and of the causes of homelessness has reached a point at which it is no longer seen as a 'housing problem'. Whether single homelessness or rough sleeping is being discussed, certain issues recur; the high levels of isolation, the

frequent presence of health or care needs and the frequent need for other support. As Lemos argued in his 1999 research for Crisis:

“We have mistaken the 'abnormal' fact of having nowhere to live and given rise to the false 'truth' that the overriding need is only for somewhere to live...if we understand homelessness as a metaphor for so many interacting agents, then we may reveal the real meaning of the current lives of many single homeless people” (Lemos with Goodby, 1999, p.55).

1.3 Defining daytime homelessness

1.3.1 The characteristics, needs and experiences associated with homelessness

Our increased understanding of the needs of lone homeless people has led to a better understanding of the causation of homelessness. Significantly, it appears to be the case that many of those characteristics associated with homelessness often appear to *predate* an experience of homelessness.

Previous research for Crisis has shown how certain sets of needs and experiences are associated with an *increased risk* of homelessness among lone people. These risk factors include:

- drug or alcohol dependency;
- long term relationship breakdown;
- mental health problems;
- unemployment;
- leaving prison or trouble with the police;
- being forced to leave the parental home;
- eviction or abandonment of former home;
- leaving care;
- experience of violence or harassment.

(Lemos with Goodby, 1999, p.7)

Further research for Crisis has identified additional risk factors associated with becoming homeless or sleeping rough for the first time (Randall and Brown, 1999), including:

- school exclusion and lack of qualifications;
- time in local authority care;
- multiple needs: combined mental health drug/alcohol problems;
- contact with the criminal justice system;
- time in the armed forces;

-
- previous experience of homelessness;
 - lack of a social support network;
 - difficulties in furnishing or maintaining a home;
 - debts, especially rent or mortgage arrears;
 - causing nuisance to neighbours (often linked to multiple needs).

The research evidence shows that such issues and difficulties confront many homeless and potentially homeless people (Fitzpatrick *et al*, 2000).

However, it is also clearly the case that there is a much larger group of 'socially excluded' people in the UK nations who also often share these sorts of characteristics, needs and experiences (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000). Successive research projects have also shown us that this 'socially excluded' population has become concentrated in the social rented sector across the UK nations (Lee and Murie, 1997). In policy terms, single homelessness and rough sleeping have been seen as part of the wider problem of 'social exclusion' since the 1997 election brought New Labour into power.

Some research has suggested that specific combinations of these non-housing needs can act as the catalyst for homelessness (Vincent *et al*, 1993), whereas others dispute this, referring to the diversity of the homeless population (Neale, 1997). Certainly, it is the case that a simple 'cause and effect' model cannot be established, there is no set of experiences, needs and characteristics that seems to make an experience of homelessness inevitable, but at the same time, some characteristics, for example having been in care as a child, do appear to make homelessness more *likely*.

1.3.2 Defining daytime homelessness

The term 'daytime homelessness' was first coined by the voluntary sector in the United States. It was originally used to describe the situation of homeless people who had beds in homeless shelters, who, during the day when these shelters closed, were left without anywhere to go, no access to services and no activities they could pursue. The lack of services for their 'non-housing' needs was described as 'daytime homelessness'.

Clearly, the situation in which homelessness occurs across the UK nations is very different from that found in the United States, yet a concise way of describing the non-housing needs associated with homelessness is useful in the British context. However, if we are to make use of the term 'daytime homelessness', it must be firmly rooted within our changing understanding of the nature of homelessness, an understanding that shows us that the same sets of non-housing needs are found among potentially homeless, homeless and formerly homeless people.

The needs defined by daytime homelessness are as associated with the causation of first time and repeat homelessness as they are with the experience of homelessness itself.

Drawing on the research literature, it is possible to provide a broad list of the kinds of non-housing need that can be categorised in this way:

- unemployment;
- lack of access to education, training and employment services;
- lack of meaningful or productive activity during the day;
- lack of social support, including friendships; family and sexual relationships;
- alienation from society and its cultural norms, sometimes combined with a difficulties in relating to and communicating with others;
- devalued self-image, undermining capacity to develop social or economic relationships and access support and care services;
- health problems that can undermine capacity to live, work and interact independently, sometimes including drug or alcohol dependency or mental health problems (or multiple needs);
- lack of skills for independent living, although it is not clear how widespread this is as an issue outside groups like young people or those who have been long stay residents in institutional settings (Jones *et al*, 2001).

Using this definition, we can both describe the needs that seem particularly associated with both the causation and experience of homelessness and drive forward service development to meet those needs. There is a simple logic in this approach, as has been illustrated by the recent emphasis on prevention to counteract rough sleeping (Rough Sleepers Unit, 2000). If successful services to help people with the needs, characteristics and experiences associated with homelessness can be developed, it seems reasonable to surmise that this will have a positive impact on the prevalence of homelessness.

1.3.3 *The limits of 'daytime homelessness'*

While using the shorthand of 'daytime homelessness' to help categorise and meet the non-housing needs of homeless, potentially homeless and formerly homeless people may be useful, there are limitations in this approach. It must be made clear that 'daytime homelessness' does not provide a taxonomy by which a 'potentially homeless' population can be defined, nor can it serve as an 'explanation' of homelessness. There are real dangers in approaches that seek to understand homelessness by examining the 'biographies' or 'housing pathways' of homeless people.

These dangers centre on the use of a method that emphasises needs, characteristics and experiences to the exclusion of everything else. Such approaches 'explain' homelessness through factors like poor education, experience of care, drug use or mental health problems, because of the disproportionate representation of people with these characteristics in the homeless population.

Yet these patterns cannot be the sole explanation, if for no other reason than the fact that the vast majority of poorly educated people, care leavers, drug users and people with mental

health problems, never experience homelessness. To ignore structural factors, such as housing stress, changing labour markets or changing access to benefits, is both a failure to understand homelessness in context and a failure to understand the overall causation of homelessness (Neale, 1997).

Following on from this point, it can be seen that addressing individual needs associated with homelessness is likely to be effective only within a context in which other appropriate service responses are in place. Interventions designed to enhance social support, improve access to education, training and thereby the labour market will be of little use in a situation in which suitable, affordable housing is not available. Equally, there will be little point in seeking to counteract economic marginalisation within a locality in which little or no work, or other productive activity is available, because regeneration has yet to be effective.

In other words, interventions designed to counteract daytime homelessness have to be within a context in which structural factors associated with homelessness, such as high housing stress or high unemployment, are also being counteracted. A shorthand used in relation to making the NHS available to homeless people is useful here. Delivering even a highly efficient health service to a homeless person who remains sleeping in a cardboard shelter will only ever have a limited benefit, as if their health needs are ever to be properly addressed, their housing needs must also be met.

1.4 The policy context

1.4.4 *More than a roof – new responses to homelessness*

Services and policies for lone homeless people have changed considerably over the last decade. Traditional large direct access hostels and small nightshelters have been replaced with more supportive forms of temporary accommodation. There have also been developments for specific groups of homeless and potentially homeless people, such as the development of foyers, designed to provide stable accommodation and access to education, training and employment for vulnerable young people (ODPM, 2003).

There have been major developments in the fields of resettlement and tenancy support services. These floating services are sometimes for those at risk of repeat homelessness, sometimes for those at risk of a first experience of homelessness and sometimes for both groups. There are also services for specific groups, such as former rough sleepers, women and young people (ODPM, 2003).

These new services have a holistic approach aiming to address a range of support needs that may accompany their housing need. Many place particular emphasis on joint working, with a central role for many tenancy sustainment services being to coordinate the other services that are required. This might include coordination with health and social services, referral and support in accessing education, training or other services designed to help formerly homeless people secure employment and coordination with a wide range of other services.

New national strategies have been developed that focus on potentially homeless people in Scotland, Wales and England. In March 2002 the English government published the *More than a roof* report (ODPM, 2002), setting out a new approach to tackling homelessness and announcing the creation of a new Homelessness Directorate (now part of the Homelessness and Housing Support Directorate), within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). A new Act, the Homelessness Act 2002, was also passed, placing 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 are to prevent homelessness and ensure that accommodation and support will be available for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (DTLR, 2002).

The Homelessness Directorate is intended to provide funding, advice and practical assistance to local authorities and the voluntary sector to tackle and prevent homelessness more effectively. The Directorate will have a budget of £260 million over 2003/04-2005/6 to support its work. There is a particular strategic emphasis on prevention, with services such as:

- specific support services for young people;
- rent deposit schemes to help access the private rented sector;
- improved advice services on homelessness prevention;
- services for rough sleepers;
- family mediation services, to help prevent young people leaving home in an unplanned way.

There is a similar emphasis on the prevention of homelessness in Scotland's homelessness strategy as detailed in *Helping Homeless People* (Scottish Executive, 2002). Local homelessness strategies are expected to make arrangements for the early identification of people getting into housing difficulties and towards the development of advice and support services for people known to be in housing difficulties, or at particular risk of homelessness. There are also plans to provide 'leaving home' education in schools and projects and services working with young people.

Local authorities in Scotland are also expected to review the availability, accessibility and quality of services including:

- financial and debt management advice services;
- family mediation services;
- counselling services;
- drug and alcohol counselling;
- services to proactively manage neighbour disputes.

Scottish local authorities will also be expected to have mechanisms in place to ensure that homeless and potentially homeless households and individuals are made aware of the

support available and, where necessary, given assistance in accessing this support. There are also targets in relation to developing intensive support services for individuals and households threatened with eviction. Authorities and other social landlords will also be expected to review their anti-social behaviour and rent arrears management strategies, to ensure they do not cause unnecessary homelessness.

The national strategy for Wales is again designed along similar principles. There is a clear emphasis on recognising the complex nature of homelessness and in developing a strategic and service level response that recognises homelessness as a problem that cannot be seen simply in terms of housing need. As is the case in England and Scotland, there is an equal emphasis on both the prevention of repeat homelessness among those who have already been homeless and on preventing those at risk of homelessness from ever experiencing it. The key principles of the Welsh National Strategy include:

- services should be designed to be accessible to homeless people, taking account of their varying circumstances and lifestyles;
- strategies and services should focus on what is effective and enables people to find and sustain secure and appropriate housing;
- homelessness must be tackled by different organisations working together, both to meet individual needs and at the strategic level;
- homelessness must be prevented wherever possible, and this must be reflected in an emphasis on advice and other preventative work;
- homelessness is normally associated with a range of other issues such as family crisis, debt, ill-health and many others, and the appropriate support services should be available to help people avoid losing their home or help them establish and sustain a new one;
- responses to homelessness should reflect the views of homeless people, who should be encouraged to contribute to the development of appropriate services;
- homelessness should not just be tackled with short term measures at the point of crisis, but through longer term structural solutions.

(Welsh Assembly Government, 2002, p. 6).

Many of these projects and services will be supported in whole or in part by the Supporting People programme. Introduced in April 2003, Supporting People creates new opportunities for the development of housing related support and supported housing services. Each housing authority has been required to map needs and supply for housing related support services in its area and to produce a Supporting People strategy. As in other areas of current policy, there is a particular emphasis on the development of *preventative services*.

Although there are slightly different arrangements in Scotland, Wales and England, housing authorities are expected to integrate their homeless strategies with their Supporting People strategies (DTLR, 2002). Just as is the case with the homelessness strategies, the Supporting People strategies for an area must include *all forms* of homelessness and potential homelessness.

The services that can be funded by Supporting People include ¹:

- Advice, advocacy and liaison
- Help in managing finances and benefit claims
- Emotional support, counselling and advice
- Help in gaining access to other services
- Help in establishing social contacts and activities
- Help in establishing personal safety and security
- Supervision and monitoring of health and well-being
- Peer support and befriending
- Help finding other accommodation
- Provision of community or social alarms
- Help maintaining the safety and security of the dwelling
- Liaison with Probation
- Risk assessment
- Advice and support on repair work/home improvement work
- Liaison and advocacy support from the same ethnic group
- Culture-specific counselling/emotional support
- Access to local community organisations
- Security support related to racial harassment
- Signposting to culture specific legal services
- Signposting to culture specific health/treatment services

1.4.5 Opportunities for service development

These new approaches are focused on sustaining independent living and preventing the occurrence or reoccurrence of homelessness, among potentially and formerly homeless people. The intention is that many Supporting People services will be delivered to a tenancy within the community, with the remainder being delivered within a supported housing setting, such as a hostel. Supporting People will only fund what is termed 'housing related support' and it will not fund services delivered outside of these housing settings². This means that daycentres, drop-in centres and services such as soup runs will generally be ineligible for Supporting People funding. Homelessness strategies are similarly concerned with developing service responses that keep those at risk of homelessness housed.

¹ Source: *SP3 Form Eligible/Non Eligible Services* ODPM

² Source: *SP3 Form Eligible/Non Eligible Services* ODPM. Supporting People also does not support rough sleeper services in England that are directly funded by the Homelessness Directorate.

A key question surrounding the capacity of the new arrangements to meet daytime homeless needs is the extent to which the Supporting People and homelessness strategies for each locality can coordinate with the other services required to meet the full range of daytime homeless needs. Several services are not provided through Supporting People, including:

- Advice, advocacy and liaison *outside the home*
- Help in managing finances and benefit claims *outside the home*
- Emotional support, counselling and advice *outside the home*
- Help in gaining access to other services *outside the home*
- Help in establishing social contacts and activities *outside the home*
- Peer support and befriending *outside the home*
- Culture specific support *outside the home*
- Services providing meaningful activity during the day

It is also important that Supporting People services and services provided through local homelessness strategies, including services directly funded by the Homelessness Directorate, work jointly with:

- Personal care (community care/community care trust services)
- Health care (NHS/community care trust services)
- Training and education services
- Employment services

In some instances, mainstream services will be coordinated with services developed under the homelessness and Supporting People strategies for a locality in an attempt to provide a coordinated 'package' of services in response to daytime homelessness. In other cases, specialist services may also be developed, such as NHS provided health visitor services specifically for formerly homeless households or those households at risk of homelessness.

Overall coordination between local authorities, housing associations (registered social landlords), voluntary sector organisations working with homeless people and the NHS and social services is also likely to be improved by homelessness and Supporting People strategies. These changes create a new policy context within which 'daytime homeless' services may be developed.

Services providing meaningful activity, social support, peer support, befriending, advocacy and education, training and employment services, outside a housing setting, are often based in daycentres and drop-in centres. Daycentres may also provide free or subsidised food and care or support services. A survey of 150 day centres and drop-in services conducted by the National Day Centres Project found that 8,300 people used these services on one day in March 2001. Of these, 6,600 were men and 1,700 women. The majority were aged between 25 and 55 years (60%) and well over half the users were sleeping rough (17%) or living in temporary accommodation (38%).

Daycentre and drop-in centre services are disproportionately focused on homelessness 'hot-spots', which are those urban areas and larger towns that are, or have been, characterised by relatively high levels of people sleeping rough and by relatively high levels of statutory and non-statutory homelessness. For example, the London Borough of Westminster, with a population of 181,300, has 11 daycentres³ for homeless people. In contrast, the City of Doncaster, which has a population of 286,900⁴, has just one daycentre for homeless people. Doncaster is by no means unusual. A great many towns and smaller cities, as well as most of the rural areas of the UK nations, either have restricted daycentre provision or do not have any such provision at all. The National Day Centres Project (Homeless Link, 2003) had a membership of 240 day centres and drop-in centres in 2001 but, at that time, there was only one day centre for homeless people in Wales.

Those areas with limited or non-existent daytime provision also tend to have fewer homelessness services. This lack of service development reflects a lack of perceived need, as many areas have low levels of homelessness, or the homelessness that does occur is scattered over a wide area, whereas most of the major urban areas, and cities like York, have reacted to a visible and obvious problem.

The recent changes in the approach to homelessness across the UK nations will mean that many areas will be thinking about homelessness strategically for the first time, which creates many opportunities for the development of new services that can help address daytime homelessness in underserved areas. There will be a need for creative thinking, as in areas where homelessness and potential homelessness are scattered or unusual, as there will not be sufficient need to develop a range of specifically targeted services. There are also practical considerations such as public transport, which is relatively expensive and difficult to access in rural areas, meaning that a fixed site service like a daycentre in one village would not be easily reachable by a small number of homeless and potentially homeless scattered widely over a surrounding rural area.

1.4.6 The evidence base

Some of the services that will help address the non-housing 'daytime homelessness' needs that are associated with homelessness have been relatively well researched or are based on service models that have been evaluated. For example, NHS services designed specifically for homeless people have often been the subject of research, meaning that there are a number of service models on which Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) or Community Care Trusts (CCTs) can base new services. Equally, services for tenancy sustainment, which will often be funded by Supporting People, are based on the resettlement service model that was developed for people sleeping rough during the 1980s, which has been the subject of quite extensive academic research.

³ Source: Resource Information Service.

⁴ Population figures from the 2001 Census.

However, some of the services that might be used to help address daytime homelessness have not been the subject of very much evaluative research, meaning that we do not have a clear picture of their effectiveness. There has still been relatively little work that has examined the efficiency and effectiveness of services that seek to promote meaningful activity, education, training or the formation of social support networks among potentially homeless people during the day. This is particularly the case for many daycentre and drop-in services. Only a limited amount of research has been completed on training and education programmes for homeless people, with what research there has been suggesting only very limited effectiveness among groups like former rough sleepers (Squirrell, 2001).

One illustration of this evidence gap is the common assumption that potentially and formerly homeless people are 'institutionalised' or lack the 'life skills' to manage a home or other aspects of their life, putting them at risk of homelessness. Research has been suggesting since the late 1980s that this is perhaps a mistaken assumption, as the needs of formerly and potentially homeless people are multifaceted (Dant and Deacon, 1989). Yet the development of 'life skills' training and support remains a central feature of many services, despite a lack of evidence that this is effective, often for no other reason than it is the accepted practice (Jones *et al*, 2001).

The 'life skills' problem is illustrative of the much wider issue about the gap in our understanding of what kinds of services can help address daytime homelessness. While our knowledge of pathways into homelessness has increased, our understanding of the services needed to prevent homelessness, or provide pathways out of homelessness, is still developing (Jones *et al*, 2001). In part, this is a result of the relatively recent acceptance of 'more than a roof' responses to homelessness.

The remainder of this report is devoted to the results of a research project that examined the developing practice in the field of daytime service provision, designed to address the social and economic exclusion, and the lack of meaningful activity during the day, experienced by many homeless and potentially homeless people. The report is intended as an overview to help in the taking of the first steps in developing effective and efficient 'daytime homelessness' services.

2 Use of Daytime Provision

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the use of daytime provision by homeless and formerly homeless people. The first section of the chapter discusses service users and service providers' views on the role and nature of what might be described as the 'traditional' daycentre or drop-in for people who are homeless. This section considers how services have changed over recent years and how they might develop in the future. The second part of the chapter considers the use of homelessness services by people who have been rehoused.

2.2 The role and nature of daycentres and drop-ins

Daycentres and drop-in services for homeless people have traditionally provided for the most basic needs of homeless people, for example, providing food, washing facilities, shelter and basic medical care.

Most daycentre and drop-in providers commented that the service they provided had changed over the years to provide, or arrange access to, a far wider range of services. However, there was often a difference between how these services saw their role and the way in which they were perceived by some other professionals and policy makers.

A daycentre or drop-in centre might offer, or be able to arrange drug and alcohol counselling, resettlement and tenancy sustainment, health and related services, housing advice and advice on training and education opportunities, as well as providing some form of activity for their service users rather than simply providing a safe sheltered space. These services were seen by some, though not all, statutory providers and providers engaged in meaningful activity or training projects, as being 'traditional' services that were reactive rather than 'proactive', which by extension, meant they were seen as failing to recognise the increasing trends towards 'preventing' homelessness.

Although the daycentres and drop-in centres would have disputed this portrayal, some saw them as responding to need, but not as attempting to challenge the behaviour of their clients, or as making any effort to engage people in any form of meaningful activity. However, some other respondents recognised that many daycentres, like the homelessness sector as a whole, were beginning to change and developing more holistic services.

"It used to be just the night work – food, clothes and a medical service but now we do a lot more – we recognise that we can't do it all, we are in many ways the first stop for many people and we can feed them into other places

and agencies. There is also a lot more liaison with other agencies now...also we do a lot more one to one work. We are happy to work with anyone who can further better the lives of the people we work with – the perspective is different because we are a faith based ministry but I don't think that is incompatible when it comes to the care of people" (service provider).

These developments reflected the current English government's '*More than a Roof*' approach to homelessness, as described in chapter one, although many respondents also felt that change had resulted from improved interagency working in their local area. Most daycentre providers believed that the aim of their service was to meet basic needs, for example, for food, shelter, health care and companionship and in doing so, to act as a route by which homeless and daytime homeless people could be brought into a setting that could provide the opportunity to begin to think about change. In other words, basic services were almost seen as a kind of 'bait' to encourage users to begin a process by which they could access the services necessary to begin to progress on from daytime homelessness.

"Our customers probably see the service as providing food but a lot else is provided...what we are really about is being available...a place where someone can talk through any situation they have but there is no pressure...we do ask questions but no-one has to answer them. If we pick up on a need it is possible to signpost people to the other agencies that can help" (service provider).

In one area, resettlement workers would attend 'breakfast runs', which were used by the most marginalized and hardest to reach people who did not access any other services. Although such food runs are not normally considered in discussions of daycentres or daytime provision their importance as a first step in the progression from homelessness or daytime homelessness and, possibly, toward economic and social integration, was stressed by a number of respondents.

The breakfast run provided an opportunity for resettlement workers to make contact with these individuals and begin to build a rapport and engage with them. Service users, particularly those who had slept rough at some stage, saw basic provision as vital but also thought that daycentres and drop-ins had a very important role in engaging individuals and helping them access other services.

Such services were usually seen as the first step for the most socially excluded daytime homeless people, who lacked the confidence and motivation to begin to change their lives without support and encouragement. The need for services at the most basic level to begin a process of gradual engagement with people who will not, or cannot, access other forms of provision on their own, was clear among most of those providing daycentres or drop-in services.

However, the providers of these services felt that the need for 'basic' services that could act as a 'starting point' for finding routes out of homelessness and daytime homelessness was

not appreciated or recognised by Government, or other funders. As noted, there was a strongly held belief among a significant minority of service providers, and particularly among statutory providers, that 'basic' services rather than creating a route to services that would lead people away from homelessness and daytime homeless, instead *encouraged* dependency and allowed people to maintain undesirable lifestyles.

"If you provide food and sustenance for people then they will continue to use it...I am convinced that the traditional soup kitchen does keep people in dependency" (service provider).

"We do not give people food so that they can continue their existence of sleeping rough...we give them enough to get them here [to the drop-in] so that we can talk to them, link them in – that can take months" (service provider).

"I think it is about the motivation of the individual, if someone wants to be sustained in that way then who are we to say that is wrong? It is too easy to look at someone else's lifestyle and to disagree with it because it doesn't match up to what we believe...what it should really be about is empowering people and if we believe that someone's lifestyle is really damaging them then we need to work with them and empower them to recognise what their behaviour is doing to them – but you can't force things onto people because it won't work, you're not working in partnership with the individual" (service provider).

"We will always need direct access accommodation and emergency provision and we will always need outreach work. This is a support network, we might not be getting people into provision but we are providing them with support – even if it is only giving them breakfast every now and again and providing advice...some people say it is counter-productive because people get too cosy living on the streets...well living on the streets is not cosy whether we provide breakfast or not. We do it because it is also a way of being there and catching people when they want help" (service provider).

There were also disagreements about the role of basic provision between formerly homeless people and people who had never experienced homelessness, as the following quote from a focus group interview of homeless and non-homeless people demonstrates:

"Homeless people aren't charity cases...you have to be wary about people's motives – are they just earning their stairway to heaven? Being benevolent is not doing anyone any favours...Yes, but homeless people live well below the poverty line and the level of benefits is so low – daycentres that provide food and clothes are an absolute lifeline for people who have nothing" (focus group).

The 'traditional' daycentres and drop-ins have always tended to be tolerant and accessible places and often the only type of service that some of the most difficult to reach homeless people are willing to use. A number of respondents said that their client group had in many ways become more chaotic and more difficult to engage in recent years. A number commented that although they continued to work with older men with alcohol problems the profile of client users had changed over the years and they were now seeing far more young people with multiple needs and drug users and poly users (those who use combinations of drugs and/or alcohol) of all ages.

“There is a high incidence of multiple needs. Substance misuse is a huge issue, mental and physical health” (service provider).

“People who use places like that [traditional drop-in centre] are often the 'difficult' people and they are the ones that end up being barred, they don't play the game and they aren't well behaved and part of the reason is that they have a personality disorder and they are incredibly frustrated people and we need to work with that” (service provider).

There was a feeling among some providers, though not all, that voluntary sector workers were not well enough supported or trained to work in a holistic way with clients who had a multiplicity of needs. It was certainly clear that staff working in daycentres and drop-ins, who were often volunteers or generic workers with no specialist training or experience, were working with some of the most difficult clients.

2.2.1 Activities in daycentres

Despite the difficulties described above, most daycentres were trying to provide some form of activity for their clients and most had tried to involve service users in planning activities and events or, at least, had given their clients the opportunity to decide what they would like to do. The main aims of involving service users in events and activities were to engage individuals and to encourage them to take an interest in new pursuits and activities and to begin to think about changing their lives. It was thought that such involvement also helped people regain or improve their self-confidence, self-esteem and their social skills.

“Our aim is to help people with a background of rough sleeping to start thinking about moving on and helping them to develop the self-confidence and motivation to move on” (service provider).

The projects provided a range of activities, these tended to be quite informal and less structured than the training and pre-employment programmes discussed in the next chapter. Unstructured or flexible activities allowed people to try different activities without feeling compelled to turn up for every session. In many centres service users decided what they would like to do – although this was not always the case. Activities included art classes, music, creative writing, photography, trips to local attractions and outdoor pursuits such as fishing, hill walking and canoeing.

Most daycentres had limited space and facilities and some providers chose to limit the drop-in service they had provided in the past in order to create an appropriate atmosphere for activities. Some service providers, however, wanted to provide a service that was accessible to everyone and whilst providers and service users appreciated this, there was some criticism of projects for allowing people into centres when they were clearly disturbed or under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Service users themselves were generally unwilling to complain but a focus group representing an organisation that worked with homeless people in a wide variety of projects commented on the difficulties caused by the behaviour of some people.

“I have never met a more tolerant group of people but sometimes tolerance can be mistaken for them not minding – but they do mind, they mind desperately but they don’t want to complain so it appears that everything is all right but it isn’t, they’ll tell us that they really don’t like it and that they are not going to come back...I’m really worried about what will happen when the weather gets bad and even more people come in” (focus group of providers).

Service users found it difficult to condemn the behaviour of other homeless people and were often upset when people were asked to leave projects. The feeling was that people with complex problems needed help and that any project operating an open access policy had to be equipped to deal with chaotic individuals and to help them access appropriate help and support.

“They need drug counselling and rehabilitation but if this place could work with different needs and abilities then perhaps they could get the more chaotic people using the place – they might benefit from starter classes” (focus group of service users).

Nevertheless, service users did appreciate being in a space that was relatively quiet and calm and compared activity and resource centres to the more traditional daycentres they had used.

“No disrespect to the other places or to the people there but you don’t want to see people shoving needles up their arms and things here...in other places people would be arguing and fighting” (service user).

Those providers who worked with a chaotic client group found that attempts to involve and engage service users in activities often failed. Almost every provider gave accounts of classes, activities and events that had to be dropped because ‘no-one turned up’ and service users sometimes complained that other service users were either not interested in participating or that they disturbed activities.

“People will say ‘let’s go to the pictures’ so we’ll get things organised, set a date and time – transport even – and then they don’t turn up – they’ll have forgotten or they’ll be busy with something else” (service provider).

“The problem is that half the people who come in here are either drunks or smack heads so they are in no state – so basically there is not a lot the staff can do with the place – it’s because of the people who come here” (focus group of service users).

Service providers had not abandoned their attempts to provide some form of meaningful activity and had thought carefully about how to make the event or activity a success.

“A group of our service users wanted to have guitar lessons – so we found guitars and a tutor and then when we held the first session in [a local project] no-one turned up. What we did next was to move the class here [to the drop-in centre] and had the session in the late morning – just after we’d cleared up after breakfast – but by then most people had left. In the end we started the class during breakfast – then people joined in and then they would stay on for it - now they are happy to go elsewhere to do activities – we had to do the same with our art class and that became very popular and well attended” (service provider).

There was a significant difference between what some service providers said they provided and the experiences of service users. In some daycentres there was little more provided than board games, books and a television and a few hours of activities a week. It was difficult to provide activities where there was a lack of space, resources and staff to supervise, and many service users appreciated these difficulties. They talked about activities that were provided for only an hour or two a week or activities that had stopped because a member of staff was ill or because there were no volunteers available.

“There is not a lot going on at the hostel – there is some controversy about it actually. There is an IT room but it has never been used – I’m not sure why. I’ve heard that the computers are not connected, they can’t get anyone to teach IT and that they haven’t got any insurance – whatever the reason it is a real waste” (service user).

“ It would be good if they used the skills we already have...there are things that need doing like the garden here, we could do gardening and cooking and things but there isn’t the space or facilities. They do things but only for a couple of hours twice a week” (focus group service users).

It was also important that staff or volunteers were available to help and encourage service users where there were facilities available.

“There is a lot of provision on the face of it but there is a huge difference in quality between providing a programme that is run at weekends where you are really pushed along and supported all the way to a project where there is a computer in the corner and people are just sitting there” (service user).

Not all service users were interested in becoming involved in activities and one of the main issues raised in this study were the difficulties involved in engaging and motivating people who were still leading unsettled lives. This problem was made even more difficult when service users had multiple or complex needs such as substance dependencies and/or mental health problems. One way of doing this, as described above, was to take the activity to drop-in centres or hostels in the hope that people would become interested and wish to participate.

“I attended a theatre workshop because it was there [at the hostel]. I just wasn't interested in finding anything to do, partly because I didn't have any money and partly because I wasn't aware of what was available for free...I decided it wasn't for me at first but then I really got in to it” (former service user now employed).

Where it was not possible to take activities or programmes to daycentres or hostels respondents felt it was very important to ensure that potential service users were motivated and able to attend sessions. Respondents were reluctant to talk in terms of inducements or incentives but it was clear that these had an important role in encouraging participation. One man, who at the time of interview was nearing completion of a twelve week Information Technology course, had attended a meaningful activity course at a drop-in centre in the past. He acknowledged that the training had not been his main motivation but that he had benefited from attending.

“I used to go to [basic level training course] – I managed to stick with that basically not to learn anything but because I got a travel card and a dinner everyday – so I turned up there two or three days a week – I was probably learning something but I went because of the meal and the travel card. It was somewhere to go, it opened at 9 in the morning so I had to get up and get there...it was safe there and there was learning as well” (focus group of service users).

There was some disagreement about the provision of free meals and transport costs to people who attended activities and courses. A small number of service providers felt that people should attend activities because they wanted to whilst others thought that there was nothing wrong in providing some inducement if this resulted in engaging service users. Other providers and many service users saw the payment of travel costs as necessary, as people could not otherwise afford to participate in activities. It was also thought only reasonable to offer food to participants, especially when people were attending courses or activities that lasted for a number of hours or all day.

“The major block is getting people to workshops and events is travel – it takes such a huge proportion of people’s income – it would be the equivalent of someone earning £70,000 going to a macramé class in Prague...and we provide lunch, people come here and work hard all day – you or I’d be pretty upset if we went on some training course for a day and no food was provided” (focus group of service providers).

2.3 The use of homelessness provision by formerly homeless people

Many people using daycentres and drop-ins were people who had been homeless in the past but who had been rehoused, often for a number of years. Some of these people used daycentres only occasionally, but many used the drop-ins frequently. Respondents almost always gave the same reasons for the continued use of homelessness provision, most mentioned the problems of isolation and boredom and the ongoing need for support and companionship. Although all providers agreed that it was important for people to be resettled in their own homes, many raised concerns about people being rehoused before their problems had been resolved. The difficulties associated with resettlement, the responsibilities associated with sustaining a tenancy, boredom and isolation were thought to be a problem for many formerly homeless people and particularly problematic for individuals who had a substance misuse problem or other unresolved issues such as mental health problems to deal with.

“We know young guys, some who were drug users but not all, who have been given tenancies and they are trying to get on in a community where they have no links and where they don’t know anyone, trying to maintain themselves on methadone – one guy died, he collapsed in the bathroom and I wonder if he had been in a hostel with people around then they might have noticed what was going on – another lad, he moved into a tenancy and he threw himself out of a window after a few days...I think it was because he was on his own, at least in the hostel there were people around and he could pop down here and see us” (service provider).

“There is someone that I am working with at the moment, her chaos has increased, she has temporary accommodation and she is about to be rehoused but she is absolutely not ready. She was quite stable, her alcohol use and her drug use were stabilising but over the past few weeks she has become even more chaotic but she is being re-housed and she won’t be a statistic anymore” (service provider).

Providers hoped that individuals would receive the support and advice they required to integrate into their new community and to make new lives for themselves. However, most recognised that this was often difficult and that some people who would continue to need the support offered by daycentres and drop-ins.

“People must have a route out but also a route back in if they need help and support – before they reach a crisis point and possibly end up abandoning a tenancy” (service provider).

“I would love to see it all being available in the community so that people don’t have to migrate back here but having a house doesn’t solve any problems. I think we are all social creatures and need people but community structures have fallen apart – that is why we need places like this” (service provider).

2.3.1 *The danger of returning to homelessness*

Many respondents believed that there was a danger of individuals being drawn back into their former lifestyles and eventually becoming homeless again and the view that people should ‘leave homelessness behind’ was common among service providers and service users. It should be made clear, however, that respondents did not believe that anyone would choose to abandon a tenancy or choose to sleep rough but they did recognise that the difficulties people continued to experience after being re-housed might result in them becoming homeless again.

“People might go back [to the streets] because they can’t manage in a flat without furniture and no means to furnish it or because they are placed in the worst housing miles away from anyone they know” (service user).

Only one respondent, an alcoholic who had spent many years travelling the country and sleeping rough, said he missed his former life and friends. He had recently been hospitalised and recognised that a return to his former lifestyle would inevitably mean a return to heavy drinking and he knew that this would seriously endanger his life. At the time of interviews he was undertaking a basic information technology course run by a homelessness organisation, this he said gave him something to do and provided an opportunity to meet new people. None of the other service users interviewed had any desire to return to their former way of life but many talked about the dangers of slipping back into homelessness.

Many service providers and service users talked about the ‘homelessness culture’ but they were, in the main, referring to the most damaging aspect of many people’s former lives, that is, substance misuse. Respondents often felt that formerly homeless people who had no problems with alcohol or drugs had nothing to fear from meeting with their old friends or using homelessness provision but those individuals with an addiction or a history of addiction, had to avoid people they knew and places they frequented in the past. The danger was not that homelessness itself was in any way attractive, but that addictive behaviour might re-emerge. This finding raises questions about the validity of the concept of ‘homelessness culture’, when what is actually being talked about is a drugs culture, which might also exist in other situations and among other groups of people.

“Coming here keeps me away from the streets and they are very nice people – you can tell that they genuinely want to help people and that they like

people – but I don't come here at night [because of drug users] and I don't go to the [another daycentre] because I have to keep away from the old crowd" (service user).

"A lot of people who come here have mental health problems, some big, some small and if they were just stuck in a flat with nowhere like this to come you don't know what might go on in their head...They wouldn't be able to speak to anyone, the people here are the only ones they can talk to" (focus group of service users).

As noted earlier, the difficulties faced by people with a substance misuse problem who were trying to resettle were in many ways greater than those faced by other homeless people. Many had been through rehabilitation or detoxification and knew that cutting links with the past and with former acquaintances was an essential part of their recovery.

"I know a couple of people where I live but I don't go to their houses or anything...the other friends I had were all drinkers so...I come here [to daycentre] a few times a week" (service user).

These individuals were extremely isolated and vulnerable, they had no desire to associate with people where they lived because this would almost certainly have resulted in their being offered street drugs, they had no social life or friends other than the staff and volunteers of the daycentres.

"I don't know anyone here but I've kept myself to myself. I am off street drugs and on methadone now so I have to keep away from people I used to know – and that is not easy. I have been in and out of rehab and on and off street drugs... I can't go back to places I used to go because I will see old friends there and I would find it very hard to pass them by without speaking" (service user).

"It is much more difficult for lots of people who have been homeless to stay off drink or drugs. They don't have nice homes or relationships, they might not have work or only a poorly paid job – they haven't as much to lose as say a reformed alcoholic with a good job, a nice home and a relationship" (service provider).

While the continued use of homelessness provision by daytime homeless people concerned service providers, they also recognised that people had no other support networks.

"What does concern me is when we have younger men with a drug using past wanting to come back and hang around here because you don't want them slipping back – we try to encourage them to come back during the day when it is not so chaotic and then we can go for a coffee and a chat – we do want to know how they are getting on and help them if we can" (service provider).

There were other reasons why people who had been resettled and some people who had never been homeless used homelessness provision.

“There is one centre that provides meals and some of our service users used to go there – basically because they were skint...and I know a woman with children who used to go there for food – she’d never been homeless but she went there because she had no money – I think the line between being homeless and not being homeless has really blurred over the years” (service provider).

“This is a bit like a front room for people – a social space. We don’t encourage people to bring their children but if they do so there is a separate play space for them...people who are housed will get the bus from their home to come here – this is very much their social area...It is not something people would need in affluent areas but in a poor area things are very different” (service provider).

2.3.2 Accessing generalist provision

As noted above, most service providers would have preferred their service users to integrate into their new community and become involved in activities provided outside the homelessness sector. Many service providers talked about community centres and activities, lunch clubs and drop-in centres but there appeared to be little generalist provision in most areas.

“There is not much in the way of generalist provision – daycentres and so on... there is some provision for older people but that is localised. There were lots of lunch clubs but the funding has disappeared” (service provider).

Many formerly homeless people lacked the confidence to access provision where it was available. One woman explained that she used a local woman’s centre as well as a resource centre for homeless and excluded people. She was an alcoholic and had suffered from depression; she had felt isolated at home for many years and had never enjoyed a rewarding social life. She had found it very difficult to build up the confidence to use provision in the community but with some encouragement from support workers and a good deal of self motivation, she had begun to involve herself in activities both within and outside the homelessness sector.

“No one can drag you out – you have to want to – but it made me feel brilliant. At the women’s centre I see a counsellor and then I go and talk with the other women – there is a wee crèche and we drink tea and chat. There is loads going on – all sorts that make me feel good about myself, made me feel part of society...I’ve done it and now I’ve had a taste of it – that is the real world and there is a lot of pleasure out there...and it doesn’t cost more than your bus ticket” (service user).

One major service provider had established an activity centre especially for people who had been rehoused. This development was a response to the research evidence that showed that people resettled under the Rough Sleepers Initiative found it difficult to sustain tenancies. The evidence suggested that many people continued to use the homelessness provision they had used when sleeping rough and this was thought to be detrimental to their efforts to leave homelessness behind. The project had to make it clear to service users that the project was an activity centre and not like the daycentres or drop-ins they had used in the past. Service users were expected to participate as members of the project and they were actively encouraged to become involved in the running of the centre and to take part in activities.

“We tell people very clearly when they come here that the centre is here for them to develop their skills – because their whole experience of going to daycentres is sitting and smoking and complaining...the people who use this project are members, the place belongs to them and they are expected to put something back – they attend members’ meeting and take turns to chair them, take the minutes and so on” (service provider).

“This is an activity centre and not a café – we can’t come here and just sit around...If you come here and get involved in the activities and listen to the staff they are trying to help you to go forward all the time – they are not trying to pull you back to what you were...if you want to go back to what you were well that is up to you. I have got a lovely place and these people have helped me, these places are good for people...I reckon that if it wasn’t for this place then I would be even madder than I am now, I think I’d crack up with nothing to do – or be drinking a lot more” (focus group of service users).

Many providers echoed the views of this respondent about substance use, as they worked with older drinkers who were managing their alcohol use and sustaining their tenancies. Both service users and providers believed that being involved in some form of activity played an important part in helping people control their alcohol use and that, for some, taking part in activities helped prepare them for detoxification programmes. Many projects would allow people who had been drinking to take part in activities as long as they were capable of taking an active part and/or making a contribution.

“We do use the activity programme here to provide an alternative to drinking. We can get people into detox and into accommodation but the trouble is then that they are bored, that is the biggest stumbling block. People can come to the activities if they have had a drink – or a bit to drink but what people tend to do is to put off their first drink of the day until after the activities so it is quite successful in helping people control their drinking and then they are ready to go into detox – you can’t expect people to stop drinking if they are bored” (service provider).

2.3.3 *The changing role of daycentres*

The role of many daycentres and drop-ins has changed in recent years. Most of the projects included in this study had developed from a service providing only for the most basic needs to one providing some form of activity. A small number of traditional daycentres and drop-ins had developed in such a way that the provision of meaningful activity had become their main purpose. Providers working in the more traditional daycentres recognised that there was a need to provide a more holistic service but were often constrained by lack of resources, space and facilities. As noted earlier, there was some debate about the usefulness of forms of daytime provision that did not attempt to challenge behaviour or, for some, that encouraged dependency and a homeless way of life. Many providers took the view that the provision of basic services could function as an incentive that could allow more marginalized people to develop a base from which meaningful activity and other productive engagement with services could slowly be developed. However, some contributors seemed unable to see basic services in this role, portraying them instead as 'encouraging' homelessness, rather than seeing them as a 'hook' by which engagement with services that provided routes out of homeless or potential homelessness might be established.

A number of respondents felt that there was no longer a need for such services and a small number felt that they were actually damaging individuals. Those providers who continued to provide the most basic services faced a dilemma when contemplating change, they recognised a need to provide a more holistic service but they also felt quite strongly that there would always be a small section of the population that required the basic services that many projects had been providing since the early part of the last century. Few traditional daycentre providers were sure how they might develop and change in the future and this depended to a large extent on the local homelessness strategy. One service provider had thought about what the service might provide if the local authority proceeded with its plan to close down its hostels:

“I think we might have more of a role – although we will have to change, going out and doing home visits. We might not continue to feed 100 or more people a night but I think there will still be a need for the social space – the relational work – and I think people will still need support “(service provider).

2.4 Summary

Many daycentres had begun to introduce some informal activities and events on site and many helped service users to find other forms of meaningful activity. This was, for most, still a relatively small part of their wider role. Much of this provision was informal and unstructured but it could be seen to have a role in helping people move on in their lives and in preparing people to progress to more formal training and education. The providers of daytime services believed that they had a continuing role in supporting socially excluded individuals and this was evidenced by the continued use of daytime homelessness provision by people who had been re-housed. The next chapter considers the role of more formal

training, education and employment programmes and the employment opportunities available to homeless and formerly homeless people.

3 Opportunities for Education, Training and Employment for Homeless and Formerly Homeless People

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the nature and role of programmes developed to help homeless and daytime homeless people into education, training and employment. Opportunities for meaningful activity included events and activities, basic skills training and more advanced training, for example in information technology, formal education and work experience.

These courses and programmes tended to be more structured and therefore required some commitment from participants. Their main aim was to begin to prepare people for further education and training with the eventual goal of securing employment.

3.1.1 Training, education and pre-employment programmes

Training, education and pre-employment programmes are provided by various agencies, including colleges of further education, through adult-learning programmes and government schemes such as the New Deal. All of these are, of course, open to homeless and daytime homeless people and a number of respondents had attended college courses or been involved in government programmes such as the New Deal. The main focus here, however, is the provision of pre-employment training and education especially for homeless and daytime homeless people.

These pre-employment programmes were mainly provided by voluntary sector agencies working primarily in the homelessness sector, although some were provided by other non-statutory agencies working with homeless people. Programmes were delivered by a mix of qualified and unqualified staff, sessional workers and volunteers with specialist knowledge or skills.

A number of the less formal projects were designed to make relatively few demands on the homeless and daytime homeless people who they were intended for. This was intentional, as, reflecting the experience reported by some service providers in the previous chapter, there was felt to be a need to engage individuals at a basic level, before expecting them to take on more demanding courses or programmes.

Pre-employment training was provided in a range of settings including drop-in and daycentres, at existing employment and training advice centres and at dedicated projects. The activities and training provided varied widely and included activities such as Tai Chi,

music, theatre workshops, art, script writing, anger management, self defence and photography, basic domestic skills, information technology training, food hygiene and first aid. Many of these informal activities were provided at both daycentres and activity and resource centres as part of their attempts to engage and motivate people to take up more structured and formal programmes.

Although a wide range of activities were available in some centres, the more formal pre-employment programmes provided within the homelessness sector tended to be limited to information technology courses. There were also English language courses for speakers of a foreign language, alongside basic skills education and preparation for employment, including CV writing, interview technique, job search and personal development training. However, it should be remembered that these often quite basic courses were, again, usually designed to equip service users with the abilities, skills and confidence required to undertake more advanced courses, or formal training and education, as well as employment.

In many ways the provision of training and education to homeless and daytime homeless people is no different to the provision of training and education to any other diverse group of individuals. People started the process with different employment experiences, skills, qualifications, needs and interests. Some people were interested in progressing to formal education and eventually paid employment, many were unsure what they wanted to do in the future and others wanted to gain some basic skills in order to take employment as soon as possible.

In many cases, especially those of older people or those with ill health, respondents wanted to learn new skills in order to pursue an interest or hobby or simply to fill their time. The fieldwork strongly suggested, however, that some homeless people, whatever their past employment experience, their skills or qualifications, lacked confidence, self-esteem or had complex problems that made it difficult even to begin this process. Some respondents said that they had required a good deal of help and support to develop their self-confidence, before they could think about becoming involved in any form of activity (see Chapter One). Other respondents needed little more than advice on employment opportunities and some form of meaningful activity to prevent them becoming bored.

Ideally, respondents suggested, provision should reflect these diverse needs. In one area where there was a wide range of provision, it was, theoretically, possible to progress from very basic informal activities programmes provided in daycentres, hostels and drop-in centres to semi-structured basic skills training, information technology courses, education or training and, eventually, work placements and employment. For the most part, however, the case study areas were characterised by gaps in provision and the step up from sometimes very informal, undemanding programmes to formal education, training or similar programmes could be too great for people to manage.

“When people come here they have a pretty good idea of where they want to go and what they want to do...it is supposed to be a progression from other training we provide but in reality it is too much of a jump” (service provider).

3.1.2 Engagement in education and training and sustaining motivation

Some daytime homeless people who took part in the research had benefited from taking part in informal activities in daycentres and were well motivated when they began other forms of meaningful activity or training. Others had not engaged in any form of meaningful activity either because they were unaware of what was available⁵ or, more commonly, because no such activities were provided in the services they had used. Many people, especially those who had been homeless for some time, whatever their past work experience, had become bored and alienated, they had little structure or routine to their day and had often become apathetic and disinterested.

“The main aim is to drag people out of the ‘Richard and Judy’ syndrome – that is sitting in the hostel all day watching the television - to encourage people out of that. Living in a hostel can be lonely, same as moving into a place of your own. The project is all about getting people out of that and doing some form of meaningful activity...it is about reintroducing people to society” (service provider, formerly a service user).

Two of the most important functions of the more basic training programmes and meaningful activities were to sustain people’s motivation and to help them develop a routine. Of course, those service users who entered training or education programmes were sufficiently motivated to choose to do so, but this did not mean that they found the transition to formal training an easy one after either after having had nothing to do, or having only been involved in occasional activity at a drop-in centre.

“Politically our aim would be to move people into education and training and to improve their employability but that is a long way down the line for many of our clients. I suppose what we are about is motivating clients to want something different in their life so that they want to be out of the homeless life and back in the community” (training provider).

Most of the training programmes were provided for a few hours for three to five days a week. This helped people become gradually accustomed to attending a project regularly. The pre-vocational training programmes encouraged people to attend every session but some were willing to be flexible if service users felt unable to attend every day.

“It is difficult to for people to get into a routine – having to come in four days a week. But people are so pleased with themselves and what they have learned in quite a short space of time” (training provider).

The problem of motivating people with complex problems was discussed briefly in the previous chapter. Many respondents said that they had led chaotic lives in the past and had alcohol, drug or mental health issues, but they were beginning to make progress and to deal

⁵ Manchester Rebuilding Lives Task Group has produced a directory of services, see Appendix 2.

with some of these problems. Having some form of meaningful activity helped respondents deal with some of these issues and to plan for the future (see Chapter Four).

“Routine is important but so is avoiding boredom for drug and alcohol users...I think it is a trigger to moving their lives forward and getting the motivation to look at other areas of their lives that might be a problem” (training provider).

However, many people were still leading unsettled lives, living in hostels or in unfamiliar areas and many had unresolved issues to deal with that made it difficult for them to sustain their motivation.

“We do see people regress – they get caught up in the whole homelessness/hostel thing, fighting, drugs and drinking – they are often very vulnerable. We see people progressing, they might have accommodation but then they have all these emotional problems and things go downhill” (training provider).

Training providers were well aware of these difficulties. Almost all respondents felt that people working with homeless or daytime homeless people had to provide additional support and advice to their clients. This was one of the reasons why workers in the homelessness sector felt that mainstream providers were not equipped to work with some homeless people. One organisation working with voluntary sector agencies to help people into employment was originally established to bridge the gap between the homelessness sector and mainstream education and training providers.

“...it was clear that while the homelessness sector worked well with their clients it was no good at providing training and education. Training and education services were good at what they did but they were not any good at delivering training and education to homeless people” (service provider).

3.1.3 *Recognising difference and responding to individual need*

As noted earlier, not all homeless or daytime homeless people have the same educational wants and needs, nor do they all have multiple or complex needs. Homeless people are individuals with different characteristics, qualifications, work experience, interests and aspirations. Many service providers and service users stressed the importance of recognising these differences. However, the fieldwork suggested that some workers were assuming that all homeless and daytime homeless people had similar educational and training needs, including an *assumed* need for basic skills training, budgeting and cooking lessons.

“We had to do cooking and budgeting – well we didn’t have to but I think it helps you get a place to live. I suppose it was quite helpful but I used to be a cook” (focus group of service users).

“When I was at the daycentre they tried to get me to do a course, they told me I could learn to do Word and things but I thought hang on a sec, I have tried to tell you on several occasions that I have those skills anyway, this was the job I used to do, so I know the score, this is not my cup of tea at all, I needed something more...someone told me about this place but she wasn’t supposed to – I think they are supposed to tell you only about their own projects” (former service user now voluntary project manager).

Most training providers, however, did appear to recognise that homeless and daytime homeless people had very different needs. Although it was not easy to work with groups of people with very different experiences, levels of confidence and ability, training providers tried to adapt the content of programmes to suit their clients’ needs.

“We try to teach people in a sensitive way – budgeting and cooking sounds so patronising. We do things like creative writing to improve basic skills but also as a creative outlet for people who already have good skills but maybe have lost confidence. You have to respond to individual need and courses can be both educational and serve as meaningful occupation” (training provider).

3.1.4 Barriers to education, training and employment

Many of the daytime homeless and homeless people interviewed were able and willing to work, but felt that they had many barriers to overcome in order to secure employment. Those barriers mentioned most frequently were a lack of self-confidence on the part of homeless and daytime homeless people, inflexible hostel regimes, discrimination by employers and the impact of any earnings from full time employment on benefit levels. One man was enjoying the evening college course he was taking and was also using a resource centre for homeless people where he had learned to use a computer, but he would have like the opportunity to earn money:

“I would like to carry on with the sound recording...hopefully I will pass the course and then try to get some experience – even if it is voluntary work...I would happily go back to building and construction work...I’ve done concreting, painting and decorating, tarmac etc...the options are there but at the moment I can’t do it – and I do miss the money” (service user).

It has long been recognised that the high levels of rent charged by hostels and supported accommodation provided a strong disincentive to take paid employment, as people living in hostels simply could not afford to take formal employment (Jones, 1999).

“I was working when I was on the streets but I couldn’t carry on when I got a place in a hostel because the rent was so expensive. I was only working part-time anyway. I was a barman – I used to have a shower at work so I managed. I did work when I lived in the hostel but that was on the side” (service user).

Many of the interviews for this research were conducted prior to April 2003 when Supporting People came into effect. Although it was not surprising that service users were unaware of the impending change and the opportunities this would create, it was concerning that few of the service providers mentioned Supporting People and the implications of the new funding mechanism for their services and for homeless people living in hostels or other supported accommodation who wished to seek employment.

“We are now in the world of Supporting People and that doesn’t have a means tested element with regard to the cost of support...this has reduced the benefits trap and in some respects has put people in hostels on an even keel with other people on benefits. We still have a social security system that doesn’t help move people into work as you can only earn so much before you have your benefits withdrawn and there are no options for people to have a ‘taster’ of employment with the security of knowing that if they don’t get on then they can pull out – that all still exists – but Supporting People is a big change for the temporary accommodation sector” (service provider).

The benefits system would still cause problems for people on low incomes who had been rehoused:

“I pay £15 a fortnight towards my rent but if I get a job I’ll have to pay £73.70 a week so I would have to get pretty well paid job to get any benefit from it” (service user).

Another potential barrier to employment was the inflexible nature of some hostels’ regimes and the sometimes chaotic nature of hostel life, especially within some of the larger institutions. One of the problems mentioned by respondents was that hostel staff were not accustomed to helping people into employment, they were more used to working in an environment where most people were unemployed and would remain so whilst living in supported accommodation.

“I’ve said to people working in the homelessness sector – ‘you have all these good projects going – gardening and so on – and now you can pay people to do this’ – and they have just never thought about it...It has been easy for people to hide behind the issues of Housing Benefit and say ‘we don’t work with people to move them into work because it is too difficult for them’. Well, what are they doing now? How are hostels, daycentres and the whole range of agencies supporting homeless people, how are they helping homeless people back into work? It is now a matter of getting people to think this way

but to shift a whole way of working - which has traditionally not been about work to be about work – is a fundamental shift and this is going on while there are huge fundamental shifts going on in the sector in terms of strategic and funding frameworks. This is a paradigm shift, not a superficial change but about changing the way people think and it is really hard for anyone, especially the homelessness sector” (service provider).

“I watched the TV programme about Business Action on Homelessness and that made me really angry. There has to be a fundamental shift in culture if we are really serious about helping people into work. If someone is in work you can’t have this structure in hostels that says that you have to be in by 6pm” (service provider).

However, hostels differed a great deal in terms of the support they offered to their residents. A number of respondents had experience of living in hostels where the workers were keen to encourage residents to find work or training. There were also hostels that worked to provide meaningful activities for their residents.

“There is a lot of money around for young people and some of the smaller hostels are really into providing meaningful occupation, but there are the other big hostels that probably haven’t changed since the 1960s” (service user).

“I had a team leader at the hostel pushing me to do a load of courses, I did a twelve week *Training for Life* course and did a load of other courses through [housing organisation] – it is a way of filling the gaps and making sure you don’t get bored, pulling your hair out, but they got me where I am today, they gave me more confidence in the work I do. It helped me express the way I’m feeling and in a way that people can understand and more than that, it has made me feel better in myself and it has given me a new look on life and what’s going on so yes, it has helped me a lot” (service user and hostel placement worker).

3.1.5 Programmes providing work experience

Many agencies and organisations recognised that progression from training programmes to formal employment or education was too great a step for many of their clients. It was also clear in the view of some providers that training or education programmes did not always prepare everyone sufficiently for full time employment.

“There are a whole load of issues to address, benefit traps, people’s own barriers and attitudes...there is no support available to get people over that stage – you just can’t get money to move people into employment and the mainstream services don’t have a clue how to work with this client group” (service provider).

These agencies and organisations had recognised a need for more support and training to help people into employment and had developed various programmes. These innovations included providing short pre-work placement courses or adapting existing programmes to provide a more flexible route into employment that could support people who experienced problems or setbacks.

“We did research and constantly evaluated what we were doing and tinkered with it – there was a need for training, so we set up a two day training programme” (service provider).

“Our aim is to provide flexible training to help people into work [but we found that] a very linear route didn’t really work. Trainers have to recognise that people have multiple needs and can fall back, services have to know where they can refer people if they have special problems” (service provider).

Many projects had developed programmes designed to give their clients some work experience in a supportive environment.

“We have therapeutic work placements, because we have found that it is too big a step to go straight into fulltime employment and although we try to get people onto things like Business in the Community it is too big a step, the sort of people we work with have major problems and it is too much really. This way they can work for two hours a week or for a day and they get paid for that” (service provider).

“We talk to employers and they want to help but they don’t want to employ our client group, so we have got people into work by training people as concierges ourselves and we have a contract with the council – so if things go wrong we sort it out. We have also had cleaning contracts and leaflet delivery contracts” (service provider).

One large housing organisation had developed a hostel placement scheme where current and former residents and service users are offered paid work experience in hostel support work within the organisation (see Appendix 2). After successfully completing a probationary period, individuals could apply for permanent work within the organisation and many had chosen to do so. Most of the hostel placement workers interviewed wished to continue working in the homelessness sector and a number of them had decided to enter formal education in order to gain professional qualifications in social work and social care.

Many providers and service users regarded voluntary work as a useful and rewarding means of preparing for work. Most projects, including daycentres, resource centres and activity centres, encouraged service users to work on a voluntary basis at the project as this provided a safe, familiar and supported environment. Respondents believed that voluntary work in the homelessness sector benefited the service as well as volunteers as it helped

people to begin to prepare for paid employment and helped other service users who felt more at ease with people who had been through a similar experience.

“Because of what people have been through self-discipline has been lost but it comes back, people want to turn up and work because they like what they are doing and want to help other people like themselves. Because people have been in the same boat – whatever their backgrounds they communicate beautifully. There is, I think, more trust between people than there would be between users and professionals” (former service user working as volunteer).

One agency had tried to involve its service users in voluntary work outside the homelessness sector, but unfortunately their service users encountered problems and the project decided set up their own scheme.

“We did have some people from the project doing conservation work and we sent them off with packed lunches – but the conservation people turned their noses up when our clients offered them these sandwiches – we had to set our own project up – some people will get to do the mainstream stuff but others are just more comfortable doing things with us” (service provider).

3.1.6 *Getting people into employment*

Few of the projects involved in this study were directly involved in helping people find employment and the small number of agencies and organisations that worked to help people into employment had experienced some difficulties in gaining the interest or cooperation of employers. Many respondents said that employers said they wanted to help but that they were wary of employing people who were or who had been homeless. Despite these difficulties, some organisations had made progress in involving employers.

“[involving employers] is hard work and we haven’t enjoyed much success in making good links with employers directly but some of the agencies we work with have in getting work placements and so on – but not necessarily getting them jobs. I think Business in the Community is doing good work there” (service provider).

One organisation outside the homelessness sector, working with refugees, had concentrated its efforts on developing a relationship with one employer and had been successful in finding employment for many individuals.

“You can do a lot of general employment advice and not get anyone into a job so we decided to concentrate on one employer – the local health authority that we knew really needed workers - and ask them what they need – but we had to work intensively over time to smooth out the process of getting people into work but now this is quite a smooth route” (service provider).

The lack of any direct involvement or working relationship between employers and the homelessness sector was a gap identified by Business in the Community. The organisation works to engage companies in corporate social responsibility and part of its strategy was to take business leaders to see social problems, such as run down inner city schools, for themselves. This strategy was designed to promote fuller understanding of social problems that business people might be aware of, but not have experienced first hand. The 'Seeing is Believing' initiative also included visits to homelessness projects, which raised the issue of employment.

This had resulted in a number of businesses offering work placements to homeless people. Initially, work placements had been provided on an individual and ad hoc basis, however, Business in the Community had soon recognised that a more coordinated approach was required and this led to the establishment of Business Action on Homelessness⁶ (BAH), which works, basically, as an employment broker. BAH was able to build on its existing relationship with the business community and had worked in liaison with government.

“We saw a real gap in the market – there are people doing a great job with rough sleepers and in hostels and in job training - but no one really working at that next step which is actually getting people into employment. We developed BAH in liaison with Training for Life and our supporters, the Homelessness Directorate and with lots of help from other companies too” (BAH).

One of the key barriers was a lack of understanding among business people about the nature of homelessness and daytime homelessness. Often the only information employers had seen were the distorted images produced by the mass media (see Chapter One). Several organisations were working towards improving understanding of homelessness and daytime homelessness. A representative from Business Action on Homelessness explained that the organisation has to explain how people became homeless so that business people understand and engage with the organisation.

As noted earlier, many daytime homeless and homeless people already had skills, qualifications and work experience. Service providers felt that people who had progressed from living on the streets or being homeless, to a position where they were ready to take paid employment, had achieved a great deal and had demonstrated a resilience and determination that should be welcomed by any employer. However, service providers felt that not all employers or training agencies appreciated this. A respondent working with refugees stressed the importance of working with training providers and employers in order to improve understanding both of people's life experiences and their potential.

“One refugee agency was running a NVQ2 course on bed making or something and one man doing the course was a doctor who could not get a job so he was being trained to make beds. It is ridiculous...I understand why

⁶ See Appendix 2 for more details.

people do it but it does not help their careers at all and it is such a waste...people have been through such a lot and have such experiences yet all their CVs show is this NVQ Level 1 or 2 so their CVs make them look directionless”.

3.1.7 What happens to people who enter training, education and employment?

There is little evidence currently available on what happens to daytime homeless and homeless people once they have entered formal or mainstream education, training or employment and only a small number of agencies have attempted to follow service users’ progress. However, this gap in knowledge was one that was recognised by providers and some organisations and agencies were planning research in this area. The following information is drawn from interviews with the few service providers who had maintained contact with former service users.

“The follow up is expensive – we set up a pilot mentoring scheme and that was a great success but unfortunately the funding stopped. I do wish that funders would put more money into follow up and after care instead of just getting people into jobs” (service provider).

“What we found was that people who managed to get into employment were just being left, the same thing happened to people who went to college. They need mentors to check how they are getting on as I am sure the drop out rate is quite high if no-one is trying to support them” (service provider).

“People get jobs but then they can’t cope, they get the poor jobs with awful shifts and they only have a few weeks to get used to working nights for example – they can’t cope and they end up losing the job” (tenancy sustainment worker).

It was clear to these organisations that there was a need for ongoing support for people and for some form of provision for those that encountered difficulties or setbacks.

“We are looking at having ongoing support, one to one, buddies or mentoring...people do have problems, their shift might be changed and they don’t have the confidence to communicate with their manager so there would be a mentor to broker for them. There might also be issues out of work that affect people in their work that they need help with” (employment service provider).

“If people have been through a placement and are not ready for work then we look at the options, perhaps another work placement or college or training...there are a lot of hurdles though, Job Seekers’ Allowance, benefits, the New Deal – we have encountered a lot of problems but we are lobbying at the highest level to get some change – or to make it more flexible...you have

to keep the momentum going and the rigid benefit structure interrupts this” (BAH worker).

3.2 Summary

This chapter has considered the various opportunities for education, training and employment for homeless and daytime homeless people. The barriers to becoming economically active can be considerable. They include the self image and self esteem of daytime homeless and homeless people and the difficulties that those with more chaotic lifestyles find in accessing and regularly using services.

There was also some evidence of programmes being run or developed with unrealistic images of who daytime homeless and homeless people were, with unsuccessful ‘one size fits all’ approaches sometimes being found in the sector. Programmes could also have unrealistic expectations, with an assumption that daytime homeless or homeless people could make a leap straight from low levels of informal activity straight into a more structured setting and that once employment had been secured, there would be no more need for support. Some providers took the view that low level engagement, without putting too many pressures on service users, was the way in which to build up to more demanding and more structured training or education or to work placements, these providers also took the view that there could be an ongoing need for support once employment had been secured. The images that employers had of daytime homeless and homeless people were also seen as being a potential barrier to employment and some organisations were working towards giving business people a better understanding of homelessness and daytime homelessness.

4 Meaningful activity

The chapter begins by reporting respondents' views of on the importance of having something to do during the day and their opinions on what might be considered 'meaningful activity'. The issues that arise in relation to the varying and disputed definitions of 'meaningful activity' are reviewed. The role of service providers in encouraging individuals to become involved in meaningful activities is also considered.

4.1 The importance of meaningful activity

Most, though not all, respondents agreed that the avoidance of boredom and isolation was important. The use of traditional daycentres as a social space was often seen as important in helping people begin to develop or regain social skills, as well as providing some structure and routine to the day. However, most respondents also felt that daytime homeless and homeless people should have something more 'constructive' to occupy their time and believed there were many benefits associated with having some form of 'meaningful' activity.

“There is a misconception that people who have lived on the street solely need food and medical services – but they need meaningful occupation as well – it is very important that people can see the ways in which they can change” (training provider).

Service users and service providers alike felt that having something constructive to do had a beneficial impact on self-esteem and confidence and that this in turn, impacted on people's quality of life and their general well-being.

“It is a spin off really, as your self esteem gets better then everything in your life improves” (service user).

“We went to Wales for a week – we took over a youth hostel and it was absolutely brilliant – we did abseiling, canoeing and climbing – I thought it was the sort of thing that kids did but it was a really good laugh, it was very enjoyable and it was good to get out of London for a week and I felt great for ages afterwards” (service user).

4.1.1 Difficulties in engaging some people in 'meaningful activity'

Not all service users wanted to engage in formal or informal organised activities or classes and appeared to have little interest in doing so in the future. Some service users said that they were content to spend their days watching television, reading or simply sitting in daycentres or local parks and city centres. Most of these respondents were older people, people who had lived in hostels for many years and/or people with a drug addiction, who were particularly difficult to engage.

“The thing we are not so successful in doing is attracting active drug users – they have to make money so they will come to the drop-in but find it more difficult to attend activities – but we do have people who have made progress in reducing their drug use” (training provider).

One young woman was a drug user living in a hostel in an area where there was relatively good provision for young people with substance dependencies. She regularly used a drop-in centre that provided key work support and also had the support of a social worker, a women’s worker and a worker from a young people’s drug project. She said she had been offered advice about activities and programmes that would help occupy her time and prepare for move on, but that she lacked the interest and motivation to become involved in any activities.

“I’m not bothered. I come in here, just somewhere to sit and hang about...and I walk about with my boyfriend...I go to my sister’s to see my daughter at weekends...there are workers here to help me if I want...”(service user).

Another man lived in an area where provision was relatively limited, but where there were activities and courses available. He had recently moved from a direct access hostel into shared accommodation but had no plans to change his routine

“I go to [drop-in] in the morning and then to the chemist to get my methadone and then back to [drop-in] until it closes about 10:45 and then walk around for an hour or so until this place [daycentre] opens at 12:00. Here, I drink tea, have a smoke, maybe go out if it is a nice day...there isn’t anything else to do. You’re always bored and fed up, that’s why we get a football and have a kick around – anything to take your mind off gear...”(service user).

This lack of motivation was not uncommon among homeless and daytime homeless drug users who tended to say that they would only be able to get on with their lives only once they had been through rehabilitation and were settled in a home of their own. Few had any plans about what they would do in the future or how they might spend their time. A small number of respondents who were still using drugs said that they would like to become involved in training and education and, eventually employment, but only once they had dealt with their addiction.

“I would like to go back to college one day and do business management and get back to work one day but at the moment I am too busy working [as a prostitute] to find the money for my habit...I’ll find something to do when I’ve sorted myself out and when I start my script...”(service user).

Another group of service users who tended not to be interested in doing anything more than watching TV or socialising in daycentres was older people, mainly men with an alcohol addiction, who were living in hostels or who had been re-housed. Many of these service users felt that they were unlikely ever to find employment because of their addiction or other health problems.

They regarded the daycentres as a social gathering place where they would sit and read the newspapers, talk, play pool and play board games or cards. Although this might not be considered ‘meaningful activity’, service providers and service users felt that the daycentre filled a gap in their lives, the need for somewhere to go, for companionship and, importantly, a reason to get up in the morning.

“If I wasn’t coming in and connecting with other people I would just be moping around all day. I probably wouldn’t shave or have a shower or anything – but because I know I’m coming here – well you don’t want to be smelly do you – so you have a shower and keep tidy...”(service user).

4.1.2 Encouraging involvement and motivating service users

Almost all service providers and most service users believed that a lack of something to do was unhealthy and detrimental to people’s chances of moving on. It was also felt that the longer people were unoccupied and bored, the greater the likelihood that they would become drawn into what some respondents referred to as ‘hostel life’.

“Having nothing to do makes you stuck in the system and you find yourself being sucked in – you can’t go out because you don’t have decent clothes and no money to do anything so you get sucked into the hostel life, associating with people who you have never met and yet becoming best mates with them – you do what they do just in order to get on – like drinking” (service user and hostel placement worker).

Some service providers believed that they had a ‘duty’ to encourage service users to become involved in some form of meaningful activity and that it was wrong to allow people to spend their days doing nothing.

“There is this thing about containment – you get centres where people just sit and they say ‘well, we are providing somewhere safe for people’ but they just sit there and are bored. We used to have drop-ins where people could just come in and sit but they were bored...who wants to sit around all day drinking tea?” (service provider).

Some service users who were also working on a voluntary or employed basis in the homelessness sector felt that they provided a positive role model that might motivate other service users to make changes in their life.

“I think that other hostel residents look at us and think ‘that could be us in a couple of years’...some are already getting more involved in things...we don’t tell people that we are still hostel residents but I think they can tell” (service user and hostel placement worker).

However, some respondents also questioned whether anybody should be persuaded to take part in activities if they had no interest in doing so.

“There are lots of people living on [social housing estates] that don’t do anything – you can’t really make homeless people do things that the rest of the population don’t” (service provider).

Some providers also believed that the lack of motivation among some service users was understandable. They felt that some people had very low aspirations because they had poor self-esteem and a lack of confidence, either because of their experiences of homelessness and daytime homelessness, or because they had never had the opportunity to become involved in activities or education, training or work in the past.

A number of providers stressed that, in their view, some daytime homeless and homeless people were no different to some other ‘socially excluded’ individuals in society. This was a group of people who were, in their view, extremely marginalized, lacked social skills and educational qualifications, had low aspirations and little interest or motivation to change. This, service providers felt, was not always understood by funders, employers or by the general population.

“It is partly the fault of the homelessness sector – for the last ten years we have been telling the general public that homeless people are just like us and that homelessness can happen to anyone. Now it is true that homelessness can happen to anyone and some homeless people are just like us. But there are many homeless people out there who have come from a background of social exclusion with completely non-aspirational parents who did not give a shit whether they went to school or not...some people have to learn incredibly basic social skills, they don’t turn up for appointments – why should they? Eventually the social worker will come to them...there are people like that – and not just homeless people – they are so socially excluded. Of course it isn’t all homeless people – just the minority but they are the hardest to work with – some are totally socially excluded and homelessness is only one of their many problems” (service provider).

The need for some form of meaningful activity appeared to be even more important for individuals with substance misuse problems who often lacked any motivation. Service

providers and service users believed that having something to do provided a distraction, helped people manage their addictions and gave individuals an opportunity to start to think about how they might move on.

“This place is vital. When you are out on the street it is hard enough even to get a brew but this place also gives you something to do, it helps to keep busy...it is something to do for five days a week instead of drinking” (focus group of service users).

“It is important to have something to do – it keeps you out of the pub if nothing else...it is very important, seriously. Having somewhere to go makes you get up in the morning. That is why I do these courses, I have to get up and get ready, physically and mentally” (service user).

In cases where people appeared to lack motivation or any interest in becoming involved in activities it was sometimes difficult to tell whether they were content or dissatisfied, as an expressed ‘lack of interest’ in activities might be a way of concealing low self esteem that was acting as a barrier to the social interaction that activities could involve. Many providers believed that it was part of their role to help and advise individuals, to make them aware of what they could become involved in and to encourage them to think about what they might like to do and how they would be supported in achieving this.

“It is important that people have something to do...if people aren’t doing anything then it is a need that has to be addressed. Someone you might think does not have any needs might want to occupy their time somehow – going out to meet their friends, reading a book, watching TV. There is nothing wrong with someone watching TV if that is what they want to do but – having said that – you have to work with the aspirations of the individual and part of that could be working with them to understand what their aspirations are and then being able to open up options and create choice in their lives so that they can choose to do other things and have support in doing those things...”(service provider).

Not all daytime homeless and homeless people required help to motivate themselves but many did complain of being bored. Some made efforts to occupy their days, they used public libraries (although they were not always welcome), read, visited museums and attractions in larger cities, worked – either informally or formally – or passed time ‘watching the world go by’. These tended to be people whose main, if not only, problem was a lack of independent accommodation and a lack of meaningful activity. They had the confidence to access public facilities and the skills, knowledge, interest and motivation to take advantage of them. Nevertheless, they did become bored and frustrated with having to constantly find something to occupy their time but were not always aware of the opportunities for meaningful activity provided within the homelessness sector or by mainstream providers.

4.1.3 Defining meaningful activity

'Meaningful activity' is generally defined as preparing unemployed and socially excluded individuals for education, training and work by engaging them in activities that, while not actually involving formal education, training or work placement, nevertheless develop the skills needed to take part in these activities. 'Meaningful activity' can include volunteer work, arts-based projects and a range of other activities that teach participants about managing social interaction, participating with others as team and other skills that will be useful in a wide range of settings e.g. training, employment or leisure pursuits.

As was shown in the preceding chapters, most service providers and service users regarded meaningful activity as having an important role in helping service users move on in their lives. Yet while there has a high degree of consensus among daytime homeless and homeless people and service providers, that having something to do during the day was important, the research found that there was relatively little agreement about what actually constituted 'meaningful activity'.

Some providers thought it important that daytime homeless and homeless people had a choice of activities and that this choice was not restricted to the activities currently provided by a project. Meaningful activity was sometimes seen, by those with this sort of view, as *any* form of activity that an individual was interested in pursuing.

"I think that boredom can be a terrible problem and can lead to isolation even if there are loads of people around you...but what is meaningful occupation? It can mean anything. I think it is about giving people opportunities and giving them support so that they feel they can take up those opportunities – they can be anything but there is no point in forcing someone into a gardening project if they have no interest in gardening – it is just not going to work. That is all about some provider saying 'I've got a great idea – let's make them do that' instead of asking people what they want to do and then working to help them achieve that..."(service provider).

4.1.4 The relationship between 'meaningful activity' and employment

Employment was often regarded as the long-term goal for many, if not all, service users. Surprisingly few service providers mentioned the role of paid employment in helping people move out of poverty and social exclusion and even fewer service providers regarded employment as a means of securing accommodation, although many service users were frustrated that they were unable to work and therefore unable to find accommodation themselves.

"When I worked in homelessness people always talked about getting a job in order to get a home – all the stuff I'd been thinking about housing policy, you know getting deals with housing associations, changing housing policy and all

that – well people couldn't see that they could just see themselves getting a job, getting paid and then being able to pay rent" (former service provider).

"I think one thing that rings true with all this welfare to work mantra is that in the economy and the society we live in, if you want to move out of poverty then you need to have a higher income and that is achieved – rightly or wrongly – through work" (service provider).

"The next step on for people – not everyone – after getting a home is getting a job, it is part of being socially accepted, of being independent, you get your pay and you can do your shopping, treat yourself to a few pints or a night at the cinema, save for holidays – it is the crowning glory for a lot of people..."(tenancy sustainment worker).

Most people talked about the benefits of employment in terms of the impact on self-esteem and confidence and the realisation that people could actually enjoy work and hold onto a job.

"It was just like 'I can do it'. I'd been in employment before but I always knew I wouldn't be staying because I didn't like it...anyway, I did two weeks, three weeks...then two pay cheques went by and I thought, 'I can do it, I can actually get up and go to work'. Now when I have a day off I miss it" (service user and hostel placement worker).

Yet the relationship between the 'meaningful activities' provided by some projects and employment was not always very clear. While these activities could serve as preparation for education, training or employment and were provided on the basis that they were helping to equip daytime homeless and homeless people with the kinds of skills they would need to move on, the process by which this 'moving on' was achieved was not always clear.

As Chapter Three showed, relatively little was known about the types of employment available to homeless and formerly homeless people and some service providers suggested that most work would be insecure, low-paid employment. Most training providers gave examples of individuals who had progressed to well paid professional work but these examples appeared to be exceptions rather than the rule. .

"The amount of employment open to our clients – I wonder about that sometimes, what sort of work is available? We don't want to set people up to fail" (training provider).

4.2 Summary

There was little agreement on what 'meaningful activity' might be but the findings suggest that having something to do, including informal activities, education, training and employment, has a beneficial impact on people's self esteem, self confidence and general sense of well being. It was also suggested that engagement in meaningful activity could help

people with multiple needs begin to take control of their lives and plan for the future, although the actual process is less well understood and the difficulties of engaging some homeless and daytime homeless people has, again, been found to be problematic.

5 The funding of daytime services

The chapter considers some of the problems associated with the funding of voluntary sector daytime services, in particular the difficulties caused by insecure and short-term funding, the changing policy priorities of funders and the targets and outcome measures imposed by funders. The chapter concludes with the views of respondents on how daytime provision should be funded.

5.1 The problem of funding

As was shown in Chapter One, the Supporting People programme will introduce strategic planning and stable funding for many services used by both homeless and daytime homeless people. At the same time however, Supporting People retains the focus of the many funding streams that it replaced on providing services delivered to vulnerable people in their own homes. Someone's 'home' can be either the ordinary housing or the supported housing that they are resident in. Supporting People will also not fund training or education programmes or services.

The drop-in and daycentres visited for this research will not be eligible for Supporting People funding, although they might opt to provide outreach services to people in their own homes, which might, depending on the kinds of service they provide, be eligible.

As has been seen, daytime projects provided a diverse range of services, from health care and free food to outdoor pursuits, art classes and pre-employment training and the sources of funding for services reflected this diversity. Projects were funded from charitable donations, corporate sponsorship, the Community Fund, internal funding and from income generated by the projects themselves, for example, from contract work.

Most projects, though not all, received some funding from various central, local and European government funds, for example from the Homelessness Directorate, Single Regeneration Budgets and from the European Social Fund. Projects also received funding from a variety of other charitable organisations and statutory agencies including the Arts Council, Jobcentre Plus, local health authorities and registered social landlords. Most projects received funding from a number of sources but providers felt that this was unavoidable given the range of services they provided. The problem of the unpredictability and insecurity of funding streams, and the constant search for new funding opportunities, however, was an ongoing barrier to planning and providing services over the medium and long term.

“Funding has been cut across the board in the last few months and the future does not look as great as it did last year – it is affecting so many of the organisations we work with and I think it is going to be an issue over the next year or so” (service provider).

Although most providers were concerned about cuts in funding, many felt that the main problem was the constantly changing priorities of government and other funders. One respondent suggested that funding was available for new initiatives but not to fund running costs such as utilities, the costs of providing more basic services or to fund existing programmes or services.

“Meaningful occupation is in vogue but we still have to find money for our core services – it is easy to find money for new things like money to set up a new allotment but it is more difficult to find money to continue work on it and it is very difficult to find money to pay the electricity bills” (service provider).

Although a small number of providers complained about being overburdened by bureaucracy and the demands of funders for reports, monitoring and evaluation, they all believed that the setting of targets and the collection of data was important. Target setting and monitoring and evaluation were important not only in order to satisfy funding requirements but also in order to ensure that the service had clear aims and objectives and was meeting the needs and expectations of service users. However, many service providers complained that funders did not understand that that the progression from homelessness to social integration and, where possible, economic integration, could take some time for people to achieve, and sometimes would not be possible, but that there was a tendency to set unrealistic goals.

“The government has a very normalised idea of resettlement and that has been thrust upon us – in reality if someone turns up within an hour of the appointed time that is progress for them – even just eating on a regular basis is progress...it can take years. There needs to be a range of activities from the very low key for people who are very marginalized and suspicious right through to getting people into college and work” (local authority representatives).

Whilst service providers believed that people should be helped to develop and achieve their full potential through the provision of meaningful activity they were concerned that the new emphasis on education, training and employment meant that the needs of the most marginalized and vulnerable people would be neglected.

“Training and education are coming to the centre of things much more...amidst all of this is a huge emphasis on being able to measure and meet targets which is difficult when we are trying to meet people’s individual needs – I can see the reason for it, we have to be more systematic but a lot of the targets are quite meaningless and my fear is that there are people who are very needy and appear not to have made great progress objectively but,

in fact, from their starting point they have made huge progress...also we do not want to set people up to fail and there are now more and more hoops for them to jump through. It is good for people to have clear goals but the same goals don't work for everyone..."(service provider).

Most service providers felt that the focus on hard targets or outcomes, for example the number of participants entering education or training, tended to obscure the more qualitative or softer outcomes and the time it takes some people to make any progress.

"For someone to come and sit in a daycentre with a crowd of people could be a huge achievement for them when a week ago they were sitting in the corner and not engaging with anyone" (service provider).

A small number of projects had some success in developing soft targets and methods of measuring soft outcomes, but changing funding priorities had sometimes meant that they had to refocus on hard outcomes or risk losing funding.

"We did have a seven year programme designed for our hardest to reach clients and we had to develop a way of measuring soft outcomes – it was not totally focused on employment and training, it was about engaging people, learning basic skills and anger management...then we could ensure that the appropriate support was in place – for mental health problems, drugs and alcohol...At the end we might not have got people into a job but they had gained an increase in self-confidence and motivation. We had really high hopes for that but then the priorities changed and our funders were not looking at the soft indicators but at the other hard indicators such as 'how many people have found jobs?' So in order to keep the funding we had to refocus on jobs and that was a big step backwards" (service provider).

A number of providers suggested that funding organisations and agencies should become more involved in the projects and programmes they funded and more aware of what these projects and programmes were working to achieve with service users.

"I don't think funders understand [soft targets]. I think we have to be clear and agencies have to be clear with their funders about what this means – perhaps a Seeing is Believing approach – bring the funder in and let them see exactly what is going on at your project, let them speak to homeless people and hear for themselves what it means to them to be having the support – sometimes this might mean they say 'actually this is really bad' but it needs to be said. Or they might say 'this is really good and in a few months I might be ready to go onto a training course but at the moment I need to build up my confidence'. One way to overcome this is proper assessment - that doesn't work very well in supported housing so it is not going to be done very well in daycentres – then you can have proper care planning in place so you actually work with the individual to work out what they are going to do, what are their milestones in

reaching those goals...then you can use that information and take it to funders and show them that you are doing quality work..."(service provider).

Some respondents felt that there was a danger that the demands of funders for hard outcomes would result in projects refusing to work with the harder to reach clients, or those who found it more difficult to progress to formal training or employment.

"It is so easy to work with the people who are most motivated – and this is the thing about targets and a lot of government policies such as New Deal where you have all these targets - what you end up doing is fast tracking all those people who are most able and the people who are most vulnerable and excluded stay where they are" (service provider).

"Because of the way we are funded we had targets to achieve so when someone comes onto a programme or into a service you want to hang on to them so that you can count them as an 'output' and that meant that providers began to 'cream' the clients to get the ones who could successfully go through the programme and that was something we wanted to avoid..."(training provider).

Another danger was felt to be that providers would change the service they provided, for example, stopping drop-in services and informal activities and developing accredited training courses, in order to meet the criteria of funders. Again, while all providers supported the development of meaningful activity many were concerned that the needs of their service users would be neglected.

As was seen in Chapter Two, many service providers believed that there would always be a need for the most basic, informal and accessible provision and a need to work to engage the most vulnerable people. Some feared that as projects changed and the provision of 'meaningful activity' became the main focus of their services then current service users who were not yet ready to engage in formal activities would become excluded and disillusioned.

"People will leave provision, they will become disillusioned and disengage from any provision in the future and probably end up in hospital or a psychiatric wing of a hospital in the future and end up costing everyone a lot of money and being much more damaging to themselves..."(service provider).

Some organisations also felt so pressured by funding demands that they chose not to apply for funds when they felt that the criteria attached to the funding would affect the way they worked with their clients. This was particularly the case for the most traditional drop-in centre that took part in the research, which depended largely on charitable donations. It should be pointed out, however, that respondents stressed that they had good inter-agency working relationships and did not wish to set themselves apart from the local homelessness strategy.

“We haven’t gone for government funding because that would impose conditions on us. As a Christian organisation going down the government road would limit what we do” (service provider).

“We are totally reliant on donations – we would not want to be funded with strings attached...We were part of the planning for the homelessness strategy though and work with all the other agencies and the council” (service provider).

Training providers also felt that they were being forced to change the way in which they worked in order to meet targets set by funders. The pressure was such that they would be working to meet funders’ requirements rather than the needs of their service users.

“You have to take hard decisions about not going for funding that is only about processing people...If you have got £200, 000 and have to get a hundred people through an NVQ Level 1 and three of them have to be working then the pressure is on to get someone into any work when they could do something much better. We would rather spend more time getting someone into the sort of work they are capable of doing than get involved with some of these government programmes. We have made a conscious decision not to get involved with the type of big programmes with lots of monitoring of outputs where you get paid if you get lots of people into jobs – it is just not worth it because you are not actually helping people...You have to look at the way you define your service and the reason why you are doing it” (service provider).

5.1.1 Who should fund daytime provision?

There was little agreement among service providers about who should be responsible for funding daytime provision. Those providing more traditional daycentre services tended to suggest that the local authority should at least provide core funding. However, given the range of services provided, they felt it was unlikely that any one department would take responsibility.

“It is difficult because a daycentre doesn’t really fit anywhere but I think it is social work. It would be great if we could get all our funding from one source then we could plan properly and review everything properly – this has always been difficult because of funding issues” (service provider).

“I suppose it would benefit us so we should pay for it – spend to save has its advantages – but I suspect if we ask the council they would say ‘where’s the money to come from?’” (local authority representative).

“I suppose it is probably the local authority’s responsibility but I’m not sure that one department could or should fund daytime provision” (local authority representative).

Some service providers had considered changing the way they delivered services in order to apply for funding under the Supporting People programme. They felt that they had an important role to play in supporting vulnerable people and in tenancy sustainment and could envisage providing this support to people in their own homes. For the most part, however, providers of traditional daycentre services felt that there would continue to be a need for the type of service they provided that was accessible to all homeless and daytime homeless people.

“You will never get rid of rough sleeping because there will always be people who don’t want to access services but we still have to support people and be there when they want help” (service provider).

Training providers and those more involved with the provision of meaningful activity also doubted whether any one organisation would be willing to fund daytime provision. One of the problems was that daytime provision did not in reality fit into neat categories, for example, pre-employment training or basic skills training. Most provided a mix of training and education and support to their service users. Some projects ran pre-employment programmes but wished to do this in a flexible way in order to meet individual needs and, as noted above, providers did not want to become overly employment focused or dependent on funding that imposed strict criteria or conditions.

“I think education type services should fund a lot of what we do but that is very restrictive – you’d need to get so many people attending — other funders want people to start in September and end in June – it is too inflexible... we fund basic skills in that way but we now fund computing ourselves because anyone can come and go as they please. Also education wants people to gain accredited certificates for things – in reality we have to move much more slowly and that doesn’t fit what the funders demand” (training provider).

5.2 Summary

Access to sustained, reliable funding for daytime services will continue to be problematic for some providers. Many providers found tensions between their role with the daytime homeless and homeless people with whom they worked and the demands of the organisations that provided them with funding. Some found the administrative requirements difficult to meet, while others were concerned that their services were being reorientated by funding organisations that did not fully appreciate their role or that expected ‘instant’ results. There was little consensus on which agency or agencies should be responsible for funding daytime services.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 The role of traditional daytime provision

- Traditional day centres and drop in centres continue to play an important role in providing a first point of access to basic services for marginalized and vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Individuals within this group can find it difficult to engage with more formal services, for example if they are alienated or have very low self-esteem and find the undemanding environments offered by these services attractive.
- In the absence of generalist daytime provision for single people many formerly homeless people and other vulnerable individuals relied on day centres for companionship, advice and support. Not all of these individuals wanted, or were able, to engage in formal or structured meaningful activity.
- Concerns that daycentres and other services promote and sustain a 'culture' of homelessness have to be balanced against the needs of the most marginalised people. It may be better that these individuals have access to basic services than to place unrealistic demands on all potentially and formerly homeless vulnerable people which will act as a deterrent to their engaging with any kind of service provision.
- Moreover, the provision of basic services can act as means by which vulnerable people who are at risk of homelessness can be *brought into contact with other services and to begin to move on from their current situation*. Individuals then can be brought into contact with services offering meaningful activity and other forms of support at their own pace.
- Day centres had begun to develop in line with the recognition that the alleviation and prevention of homelessness requires a more holistic approach that addresses a wide range of problems and needs experienced by daytime homeless people. Most had introduced some form of meaningful activity although this tended to be informal and was still a relatively small part of their role.
- Service users appeared to benefit from taking part in activities, however informal, in a number of ways. Activities appeared to help daytime homeless people to develop/regain social skills and self-esteem, avoid boredom and isolation, develop a routine, learn new skills and develop new interests. For many with substance misuse

issues meaningful activities of all kinds provided a diversion that helped them control their substance use.

- Whilst it is widely accepted that homelessness services should work with people to help them move on in their lives it has to be recognised that this can be a *slow process*. This study, like previous research (Pleace *et al*, 2000) has shown that it can take many months for trust to develop between workers and service users and some individuals may lack the motivation or confidence to move on. Service providers should work with individuals to assess needs, skills and experience and to plan realistic goals and outcomes. If too many demands are placed on service users or if they feel pressured into taking part in activities then there is a danger that they will become alienated and simply stop using any services.
- Overall, day centres provide a vital service to many vulnerable people and provide access to a range of services and support that can enable people to move on in their lives. Whilst some individuals may only wish to access basic support, day centres do provide a unique opportunity to work with vulnerable people and help them move on. It is recommended that Government and local authorities should continue to support services that provide basic services but at the same time encourage the continuing development of a more holistic approach to their work with service users, including the provision of meaningful activities and acting as a referral point for housing, Supporting People, community care, NHS services and education and training services as appropriate.

6.2 Opportunities for education, training and employment for homeless and formerly homeless people

- Specialist provision for daytime homeless people was unusual at the time of writing. Tower Hamlets had the most extensive and diverse range of programmes but even here there were gaps, notably in the provision of meaningful activities for people leading unsettled or chaotic lives and intermediate programmes to help people prepare for employment (such as the Business Action on Homelessness programmes). In the other case study areas there was little specialist provision beyond informal leisure activities, arts and crafts, basic skills and information technology courses. For the most part, provision was *ad hoc* and piecemeal and there was a lack of clear direction and consensus on service provision.
- Meaningful activity programmes for daytime homeless people have to be part of an integrated and strategic approach involving mainstream providers, employers and training agencies as well as the voluntary sector. Service coordination is vital in preventing homelessness from occurring or recurring as individuals may require a package of Supporting People, housing, education or training or other services to work towards successful tenancy sustainment and greater independence.

- Overall, there was little evidence that programmes provided by the voluntary homelessness sector could by themselves prepare people adequately for a return to formal education, training or employment although they did appear to have some success in motivating individuals. There appeared to be a danger of building unrealistic expectations among service users who often believed that a short information technology or basic skills course would lead to a decent job.
- Whilst economic activity is a desirable and potentially achievable goal for many, not all daytime homeless people will be able to enter employment. For others the progression from to work could be a long and difficult one. Funding was often dependent on service providers meeting targets and 'hard' outcomes such as numbers entering training or employment. This approach tended to favour services for the more employment ready individuals rather than those who required longer-term support.
- There remains much prejudice and misunderstanding about homelessness. It is therefore recommended that initiatives such as *Business Action in the Community's Seeing is Believing* programme should be adopted more widely to help overcome some of the prejudices against homeless and formerly homeless people evident in this study. Daytime homeless people entering mainstream education, training or employment might benefit from the support of a mentor or 'buddy'.
- There is little robust evidence currently available on what happens to daytime homeless people once they have entered formal education, training or employment (although anecdotal evidence suggests that some people encounter problems and barriers). A small number of organisations had considered tracking service users but had been unable to secure funding for this.
- It is recommended that services should adopt standardised longitudinal statistical monitoring of service outcomes. This is necessary to ensure that desirable goals for service users are being achieved. Contact should be sustained to ensure desired outcomes are being achieved over time and it is particularly important that progress is monitored for some time after someone ceases to use a service. The monitoring of these outcomes is more important than the collection of detailed demographic information on service users. Some components of this monitoring should be standardised to allow comparisons across programmes and projects.

6.3 The development and funding of daytime provision

- This formalisation and standardisation of service provision based on independently analysed service delivery models of proven effectiveness cannot occur without the development of specifically targeted funding for these kinds of services. It may be that such programmes are more within the remit of Department for Work and

Pensions and Jobcentre Plus than they are within the remit of traditional funders of homelessness services. Supporting People is not a suitable source of funding, because it has to be tied to accommodation and 'daytime' services either do not provide accommodation, or can only fund those elements of their service that do provide resettlement/tenancy sustainment or supported accommodation via Supporting People. Foyers, for example, cannot fund their employment and training services via Supporting People.

- If services are to be developed and sustained, they need a clear and predictable funding source. It is quite reasonable for that funding source to seek monitoring information on service outcomes and service providers should be prepared to accept some administrative burden in return for the funding they receive. However, as noted above, funding bodies and agencies providing services must work together to develop realistic targets and outcomes.
- Unless a specific budget becomes available, it will not be realistic to expect the kinds of standardisation and performance monitoring that are in place for accommodation based services funded through Supporting People.
- Equally, a secure and predictable funding source will allow the development of services in areas that currently lack daytime service provision. The *ad hoc* development of such services in localities where homelessness is an obvious problem means that large areas of the UK lack any kind of service provision or have very little. In some instances it is only realistic to provide a limited floating worker-based service rather than full daycentre or 'Crisis Skylight' type provision, but a greater range of service provision covering more areas would improve a situation of scarcity.
- This would need to be coupled with the kind of strategic planning developed for Supporting People. It may not be necessary for each local authority to develop a strategy, areas with low levels of homelessness and lower concentrations of housed people with support needs might only need regional strategies and it might also make sense for conurbations covered by several local authorities to develop a cross-city response (e.g. Greater Manchester, Tyneside, Teesside and Merseyside). A cross-London strategy, perhaps overseen by the GLA, might also be logical for London.
- It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions as to the effectiveness of meaningful activity including training, education and employment programmes for "daytime homeless" people. As earlier studies have suggested (Jones *et al*, 2001; Anderson and Tulloch, 2000) much existing evaluative research on homelessness interventions lacks rigour and the body of completed studies do not constitute a comprehensive overview of the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches to tackling homelessness and social and economic exclusion. There is clearly a need for more understanding

of how 'daytime' homeless people reintegrate into society and economic life and the barriers they face in trying to do so.

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Appendix 1

Research Aims and Objectives and Methodology

Research aims and objectives

The research had two broad aims:

- To explore the concept of daytime homelessness and
- To examine the nature of daytime provision for potentially homeless, homeless and formerly homeless people and people who are vulnerably housed.

Crisis also identified a number of more detailed objectives. These were to:

- Conceptualise daytime homelessness.
- Recognise that individuals will have different support needs, while identifying common issues, problems and barriers that may be faced by people depending on their experience of homelessness, their age, ethnicity or sexual orientation.
- Identify the issues and obstacles facing people who have left the streets and establish whether these issues and obstacles arise from their current housing situation or are pre-existing problems.
- Establish whether some people choose to return to homelessness/homelessness culture and the reasons for this.
- Examine different examples of good practice and interventions in daytime provision within the homelessness sector across the UK and, where appropriate, examine examples of good practice and interventions in other sectors in order to draw lessons from these that might be applied to the homelessness sector.
- Examine training, education and employment programmes provided for homeless, vulnerably housed and formerly homeless people, including the types of employment opportunities available and their effectiveness.
- Examine existing provision for those who are not ready to enter occupational training, education or employment.
- Examine the nature of provision currently provided by traditional day centres in order to establish whether this differs from that provided in the past and establish how provision has and should change in order to meet the needs of homeless, vulnerably housed and formerly homeless people.
- Evaluate the impact of programmes and schemes on the development of social capital and self esteem of participants.

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- Evaluate the impact of daytime homelessness on the general well being of homeless, vulnerably housed and formerly homeless people and establish the nature of developments in occupational therapy for service users.
 - Consider the implications of the changing nature of welfare provision for homeless, vulnerably housed and formerly homeless people.

Research methodology

The research had three stages. The first was an extensive literature review exploring the concept of 'daytime homelessness', the findings of which are presented in **Chapter 1**. The second stage was the selection of case study areas and the identification of projects, agencies and organisations for inclusion in the study. The third and final stage of the research comprised the fieldwork interviews with service providers and other key actors including local authority representatives and people using daytime provision for homeless people.

Selection of case studies

The case study locations were selected to reflect the differing situations in which homeless and vulnerably housed people experiencing daytime homelessness find themselves. Some of the key variables considered in selecting these areas were:

- Levels of service provision for 'daytime homeless' people
- Levels of homelessness (whether Homelessness Directorate priority areas)
- The culture specific needs of some daytime homeless people
- Ease of access to suitable, affordable housing
- Facilities and services providing meaningful activity during the day.

The areas selected were the Glasgow, Leeds, York, London Borough of Tower Hamlets and Cardiff.

The selection of projects and organisations for inclusion in the study

In the absence of a comprehensive and up to date national directory of homelessness provision it was necessary to conduct a search to identify possible projects for inclusion in the research. Local authorities, national and local organisations such as CABx and social service departments as well as homelessness agencies were contacted and asked for information on daytime provision in the case study area. Internet searches were also conducted. Projects were selected to represent the range of services available, including traditional day centres and drop-in centres. Many of the projects identified in the case study locations outside London were traditional day centres providing limited opportunities for meaningful activity. It was thought more useful for the purposes of the research to limit the number of interviews in these areas and to broaden the scope of the research to include a number of more innovative projects in other areas. Most, though not all, of these additional

projects were based in London, reflecting the concentration of provision in the London boroughs.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork was conducted between March and June 2003. Twenty-nine service providers including local authority representatives, and representatives from the wide range of projects and organisations included in the study (see list of organisations and projects below) were interviewed. Forty-seven interviews were conducted with individuals using daytime services. Of these interviewees, 25 lived in hostels, two were sleeping rough, one person lived in supported accommodation, 14 had been re-housed in independent accommodation, five lived in shared accommodation and one respondent described herself as vulnerably housed.

Appendix 2

Projects, Organisations and Initiatives included in the Research

Project	Type of Project and Client Group	Services/training provided
Booth Centre Manchester	Drop-in and activity centre for homeless and formerly homeless people	<p>Minimal basic provision, advice and referral. Main focus is meaningful occupation provided at the project and support to access meaningful occupation, including training, education and employment, provided.</p> <p>Activities and training provided by the project include: basic skills, computing, art, music, pottery, self-defence, first aid, food hygiene and health and safety, outdoor pursuits, swimming, fitness, conservation work.</p> <p>Also run a therapeutic work placement.</p> <p>Project also has a 'wet' garden designed and built by service users to provide them with a safe and attractive environment.</p> <p>www.boothcentre.org.uk</p>
St Anne's Leeds	Drop-in resource centre for homeless, insecurely housed and vulnerable people	<p>Basic provision, food, laundry and washing facilities, advice and referral.</p> <p>Open Learning Facility - accredited courses in English, Maths and ICT. Basic skills and independent living skills.</p> <p>www.st-anne's.org.uk</p>
St George's Crypt, Leeds	Care centre for anyone in need including homeless people, women and families, asylum seekers and refugees.	<p>Food, clothing, bedding, showers, advice, friendship, fellowship and leisure and educational activities.</p> <p>Skills training in partnership with Park Lane College funded under European Social Fund. English classes</p>
Lancaster Road Activity Project	People who have been homeless and have been rehoused in the Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster area, especially those who are at risk of losing their tenancy.	<p>Activities include: social activities, visits and outdoor trips, weekly workshops in drama, art, yoga, massage and music. Lifeskills training, including cooking. Members are encouraged to participate in the planning and running of activities and the centre.</p> <p>240 Lancaster Road, London, W11 4AH</p>
St Botolph's Tracks	Pre vocational training	Mix of practical sessions, such as writing and

Project	Type of Project and Client Group	Services/training provided
Tower Hamlets	scheme for people who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness (including people sleeping rough).	<p>cookery classes, mixed with therapeutic sessions such as art and drama therapy.</p> <p>Enables participants to examine the reasons they became homeless in the first place, whilst providing practical skills to help them overcome these problems and move on advicecentre@stbotolphsproject.org.uk.</p>
Eastend Groundswell Tower Hamlets	People who are or who have been homeless.	<p>Resource centre. Advice on training, mentoring and volunteering opportunities. Use of IT suite with training provided.</p> <p>Bethnal Green Resource Centre Hanbury Street, London E1 5HZ</p>
St Botolph's Pathways Tower Hamlets	Homeless and recently homeless people.	<p>Pre-vocational guidance and training course offering IT, basic literacy and numeracy teaching. Also, careers guidance, job search, interview techniques and personal development training.</p> <p>advicecentre@stbotolphsproject.org.uk</p>
Cardboard Citizens (work in hostels and schools and also holds workshops at Crisis Skylight). Tower Hamlets	People who are or who have been homeless.	<p>Range of activities and courses including: Theatre skills, writing for performance, Samba, music-making, singing, dance and movement, young actors company, circus, dj'ing, video, magic, radio drama, Shakespeare and puppetry www.cardboardcitizens.org.uk</p>
Crisis Skylight Tower Hamlets	Open to all, encourages integration between housed and non-housed people.	<p>Wide range of activities and classes including bike and PC repair, Yoga, art, creative writing, Alexander technique, book group and sculpting. Open during the day, evenings and weekends. http://www.crisis.org.uk/projects/</p>
Crisis Changing Lives Tower Hamlets	People who are homeless or who have recently been homeless.	<p>Financial awards to support people in achieving their vocational goals. The award might be used to attend a training course or help buy tools or equipment necessary for a course or to set up a business. http://www.crisis.org.uk/projects/</p>
Glasgow City Mission	Anyone in need.	<p>Free food, companionship, activities, medical care, counselling, advice and referral.</p>
Wayside Club Glasgow	People who are or who have been homeless.	<p>Cheap food, companionship, activities, washing and laundry facilities, counselling, advice and referral, medical service, key work service, women's worker and activities.</p>
The Big Issue in Scotland	People who are homeless.	<p>Activities, preparation for employment and work experience through the Big Issue in Scotland's Grand Central Union project.</p> <p>http://www.bigissuescotland.com</p>
Maryhill Women's Hostel	Hostel for women who are homeless.	<p>No activities provided but advice on accessing training and education.</p>

Project	Type of Project and Client Group	Services/training provided
Cornerstones, York (run by council's Future Prospects Employment and Training Advice service)	People who are or who have been homeless.	Art, games, photography and creative writing, IT. http://www.futureprospects.org.uk
CareCent, York	Anyone in need.	Food, clothes, companionship, advice, activities through Cornerstone.
Arclight, York	Homeless people	Nightshester, recently opened as 24 hour centre, activities being developed.
Peasholme Centre, York	Homeless people.	Hostel and day centre providing or providing access to art, football therapy
Salvation Army, York Solid Foundations	Tenancy sustainment for resettled people.	Advice on meaningful occupation, training, education and employment.
Huggard Centre, Cardiff	Day centre for people who are or who have been homeless.	Basic provision, clothes, food, showers, laundry facilities, medical care, advice and referral. User development worker to help clients back into education, training and work. IT, music workshops, life skills, resettlement workers, music workshops and outdoor pursuits.
Business Action on Homelessness	People who are homeless or who have a recent history of homelessness.	Business Action on Homelessness is a campaign designed to provide private sector training and employment opportunities to homeless people. See details below.
OSW (Off the Streets and into Work)	Agency partnership providing employment training advice to homeless people in London.	Training provided by member agencies includes IT, one to one support, supported employment and specialist jobs brokerage. http://www.osw.org.uk
Novas-Overtures Group	Hostel Workers Placement Scheme	See below for details.
Praxis	Membership organisation for displaced people (refugees and in-migrants).	Range of advice and support services, education and employment, basic skills programme (including ESOL, IT), training and community services. http://www.praxis.org.uk

Business Action on Homelessness

Business Action on Homelessness (BAOH) is a partnership between Business in the Community, leading businesses, homelessness agencies and the Government. The Campaign was launched in 1998 to change the perceptions which companies have of homelessness and to assist homeless people, through business support, in gaining employment and independent living. BAOH can work with anyone who has been homeless in the last two years is deemed likely to need support when re-entering the workplace.

BAOH run 3 main programmes to assist individuals affected by homelessness back into work and hopefully one step closer towards independent living.

- Ready to Go pre-employment training prepares clients for a work placement. The first day of this two day programme, developed in association with Training for Life, concentrates on work and life skills, motivation and building self-confidence and takes place in the voluntary sector. The second day is hosted by a business and clients are assisted with CV and interview skills by HR professionals at the host company.
- Ready for Work provides 2-13 week work placements for clients who need to (re)familiarise themselves with the workplace. Clients are provided with a buddy for support and travel/lunch expenses are provided by the 'employer'. Clients get a reference if they complete the placement. This placement is not paid and does not affect clients' JSA
- Ready for Jobs is an online job-bank providing recruitment opportunities specifically for those affected by homelessness. This is for clients who are ready to access the job-market, but perhaps need a sympathetic employer.

<http://www2.bitc.org.uk>

Novas-Overtures Hostel Worker Placement Scheme

The Hostel Worker Placement scheme was set up as a pilot in December 2001. Current and former residents and service users of Novas Overtures are offered paid work placement opportunities in hostel support work within the organisation. After successfully completing a probationary period, individuals can apply for permanent work within the group. Placement workers are based in hostels or supported housing schemes in a supportive work environment with supervision and support from various members of staff. Participants benefit from a step-by-step process of skills and experience building where they can pace themselves according to their own abilities. Individuals are valued and respected as equal members of a staff team and encouraged to build confidence, self-esteem and self-worth, and work towards achieving their full potential.

Novas-Overtures has recognised the need to provide training and employment opportunities for its service users and involves service users in many initiatives within the service that can help lead to employment, these include volunteering opportunities, resident representative work and training (includes IT, health and safety and equal opportunities). The hostel worker placement scheme is seen as a natural progression for individuals who have a history of

involvement within Novas-Overtures, though the scheme is open to all service users. A typical route into the scheme is often through having a background in volunteering or resident representative work in one of Novas-Overtures hostels. This broad level of awareness and experience in the organisation provides a foundation from which to apply for a place on the scheme with the potential for permanent hostel support work..

For more information contact: Samantha Latouche, Resident Training and Employment Co-ordinator, Novas-Overtures, 233-234 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NW. Tel: 08709063242.

Manchester Meaningful Occupation Directory

The directory was compiled by the Rebuilding Lives Task Group of the Single Homelessness Multi Agency forum. The group is examining how to increase and improve the provision of meaningful occupation for single homeless people in Manchester.

The directory does not include the activities organised by hostels for the exclusive use of their residents. Instead it details projects that are open to people at various stages of homelessness, from sleeping rough to people who have been re-housed.

The directory aims to:

- Provide an information source for workers to make it easier to help people find productive things to do with their time;
- Get more homeless people to take up existing provision and become involved in activities or learning
- Help identify gaps in services and encourage the development of new provision that is accessible to homeless people.