

Housing Justice

Church and Community Night Shelter Network Impact Report 2015-2016



Housing
Justice



December 2016

Housing Justice wishes to thank all those shelters within the network who provided data to this year's report, the work of our CCNS project team who provide support to shelters across the country throughout the year and most importantly, the huge numbers of people who gave their time to help in a Night Shelter in 2015/16, no amount of data can capture the difference you make.

Church and Community Night Shelter Network IMPACT Report

Housing Justice

Introduction – Alison Gelder

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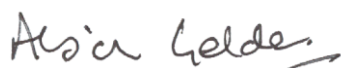
Introduction

We live in grim times. Austerity continues to eat away at people's lives, homelessness is once more increasing, housing is a scarce and expensive dream. And yet there is hope and hospitality to be found amidst the chaos and desperation on our city streets.

This report shows how churches and communities are responding with action and compassion to the need they see around them. In more than 70 areas around the country churches and other faith communities are opening their doors to offer shelter to people who would otherwise be sleeping on the streets or spending the night moving around and trying to keep safe. That represents more than 1,000 beds (and dinners and breakfasts) each night when all the night shelters are open.

The data gathered here comes from 33 different projects across England and Wales (22 of which are in London). Together they offered hospitality and hope to 1,920 people in the 2015/16 winter season. The vast majority of these night shelters are staffed by volunteers who together gave nearly half a million hours of their time (490,063) to welcome and support their homeless fellow citizens. If the night shelter volunteers had been paid an average wage for their time that would amount to more than £6 million (£6,174,8905). The night shelters do more than just provide a welcome and basic accommodation. More than 500 (506) of the guests moved on from the night shelter into their own home and 137 of them found formal employment.

Church and Community Night Shelters receive little or no funding from Local Authorities and nothing from central government. The people staying in the night shelters are not included in the annual rough sleeper count or estimate that each Local Authority has to provide in November. Nor are they included in the statistics about people who are homeless and living in temporary accommodation. But the night shelter guests are not 'hidden homeless' because they are known to and supported by an army of volunteers galvanised by our churches. Night shelter guests are part of our community and they deserve better than a camp bed in church hall – but until that better arrives, Housing Justice and the network of Church and Community Night Shelters will continue to offer hospitality and hope to all who need it.



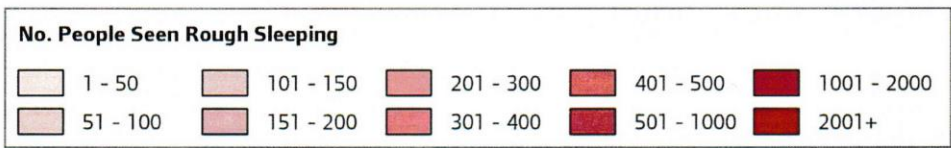
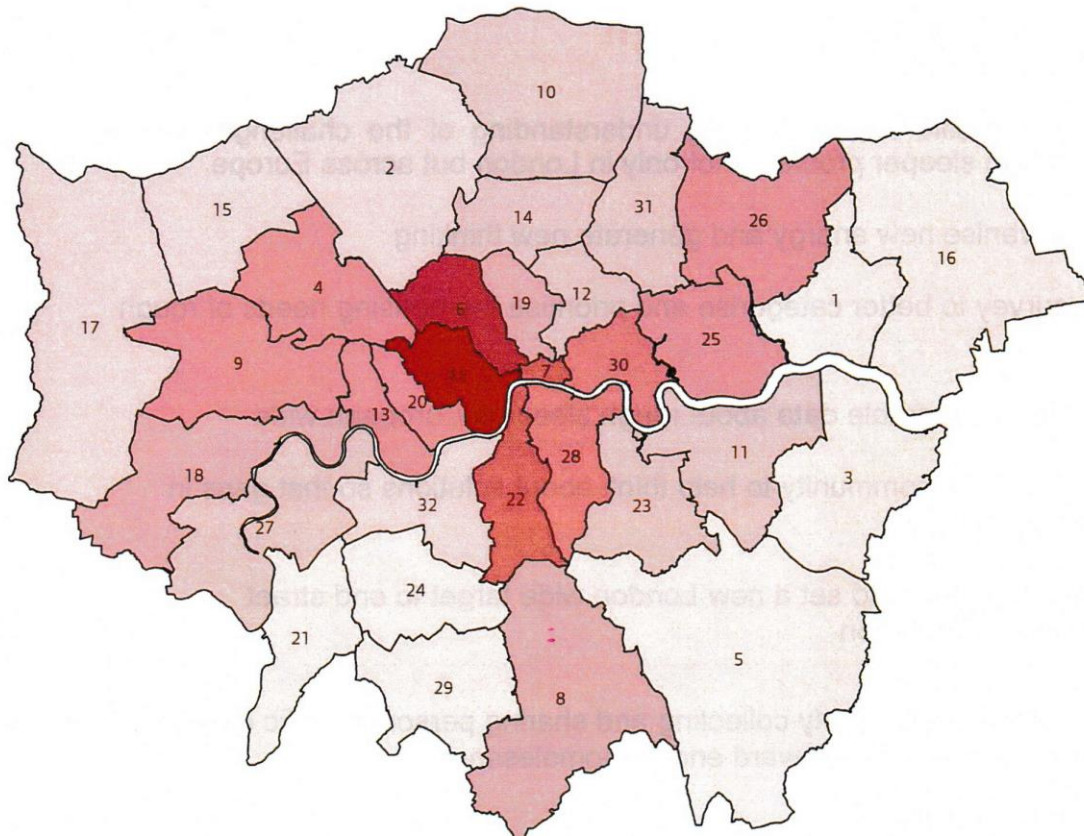
Alison Gelder

Chief Executive, Housing Justice

1. The Church & Community Night Shelter(CCNS) Network and the Homelessness Sector Context

It is obvious to anyone walking through our towns and cities these days that there are more people than ever sleeping rough on our streets. You don't have to go far to see someone begging or trying to keep warm or rifling through bins or bedded down in doorways and back alleys. The problem is particularly acute in our capital with the greatest number of conspicuous rough sleepers to be found in the central London Borough of Westminster.

The map below shows a colour coded representation of the total number of people seen rough sleeping during the year in each borough.



Key	Borough	No.
1	Barking & Dagenham	32
2	Barnet	88
3	Bexley	26
4	Brent	212
5	Bromley	47
6	Camden	641
7	City of London	440
8	Croydon	166
9	Ealing	287
10	Enfield	136
11	Greenwich	110

Key	Borough	No.
12	Hackney	148
13	Hammersmith & Fulham	241
14	Haringey	135
15	Harrow	65
16	Havering	20
17	Hillingdon	56
18	Hounslow	191
19	Islington	158
20	Kensington & Chelsea	230
21	Kingston upon Thames	31
22	Lambeth	445

Key	Borough	No.
23	Lewisham	133
24	Merton	49
25	Newham	260
26	Redbridge	222
27	Richmond	133
28	Southwark	372
29	Sutton	35
30	Tower Hamlets	395
31	Waltham Forest	139
32	Wandsworth	96
33	Westminster	2857
34	Heathrow	241

Facts:

- Nationally rough sleeping is increasing; [In 2015 Government statistics showed that 3,569 people slept rough on any one night across England](#) – more than double the number counted in 2010
- [Local agencies report 7,581 people slept rough in London alone throughout 2014/15](#) - A 16 per cent rise on the previous year, and more than double the figure of 3,673 in 2009/10

There is no doubt that recent economic and political policy, and soaring demand for limited affordable housing, along with welfare cuts and cuts to support services have contributed to this increase. Though personal circumstances vary, being without a home is a scary and vulnerable place to be in which any of us without support of family or friends, health, money, in experiencing loss or a devastating life event, could find ourselves. As Christians we are called into action: to go and help our neighbour, to be the "good Samaritan", but with the scale of the problem it is hard to know where to start or what we can do. However there are ways you can get involved in this work- through volunteering, giving, campaigning and praying.

Church & Community Night Shelter (CCNS) projects have developed up and down the country adopting what has proven to be an incredibly successful model. The model is a circuit of churches and places of worship, various denominations and increasingly different faiths. Venues work together by each taking a designated night of the week to provide a continuity of shelter on their premises to anything from 12 to 35 homeless guests over the winter months. Each shelter provides an evening meal, a bed for the night, breakfast each morning and unconditional hospitality to people in crisis. It is probably best described as a loose confederation of projects as they are all governed differently and have adapted the model to suit their local circumstances.

The UK's homelessness sector is vast. You need only look to the Homeless Directory of Services (<http://www.homelesslondon.org/search/searchService.asp?ds=1>). In conjunction with the London Housing Foundation's 'Atlas of Services for Homeless People in London' (<http://www.lhf.org.uk/atlas>), these two resources capture the majority of services, agencies and organisations that comprise the sector across the city but does not include what the Third Sector Research Centre refers to as 'below the radar activity'. 'Below the radar' has become a short-hand term for small community groups, organisations or activities that are either not registered with the Charity Commission or other regulatory body and lack a regular, substantial annual income. Many churches and other faith and community groups are delivering support services to homeless people in their communities that, together, make a significant contribution to the sector.

We are in an ongoing environment of austerity where cuts to statutory services continue and eligibility criteria for homelessness services are becoming increasingly complicated and more stringently applied. An increasing number of people are finding themselves homeless and are slipping through the gaps of statutory service provision. Non-priority need, intentionally homeless, no local connection, not exercising treaty rights and no recourse to public funds are just some of the numerous terms used to deny homeless people support and why they arrive at the door of CCNS projects to help them navigate and negotiate the complexities of their crises.

Even for the most competent, confident, articulate, balanced and well-educated person our housing, homelessness, benefits and welfare systems can be challenging. This was the subject of a Crisis UK report titled 'Turned Away – the treatment of single homeless people by local authority homelessness services in England' published in October 2014. It makes shocking reading and played a significant role in their subsequent campaign 'No One Turned Away' -

<https://community.crisis.org.uk/no-one-turned-away/home>. This campaign is calling for every homeless person who approaches their council to get the help they need. Following successful deployment in Wales, legislation was drafted in England and a Private Members Bill put forward which has recently passed its second reading in Parliament. The Homelessness Reduction Bill is a chance to make the most significant reform to homelessness law for 40 years, including through placing new duties on councils to prevent and relieve a person's homelessness even if they do not fit under the existing "priority need" category. In Wales, between July and September 2013, 900 households were found not to be in 'priority need' and so were likely to remain homeless. Since their new legislation came in, during the same three months in 2015, only 210 households were found not to be in priority need. Whilst there is still more work to do, this shows a clear pathway for progress which could also be adopted in England.

In the meantime, all too many people are not getting that support and this is where CCNS projects fulfill that crucial need. Diminishing statutory support services for people who find themselves homeless is an obvious aspect of this work but perhaps more worrying is that a significant number of people struggle to engage appropriately and effectively with those services.

If we are to make any significant progress in curtailing the rise in homelessness it will need to be a concerted effort on everyone's part. Up until recently the prevailing attitude of many local authorities has been that of preferring to dissuade faith groups in involvement with the provision of support for those experiencing homelessness. With the introduction of Faith Covenants across the country between councils and faith groups, this is changing. An example of movement in this area is in Westminster, where the council have invited faith groups and the wider community to work with them. They have backed the creation of the Westminster Rough Sleepers Providers Network and endorsed the Westminster Homeless Action Together partnership.

Churches, Faith and community groups are rising to the challenge through the CCNS network. It has been hugely encouraging for us to travel around the country and see just how well shelter projects are linked in with the myriad homeless sector agencies engaged in this work including statutory services and, in particular, with their local authorities. This winter we are supporting the setup of eight new CCNS projects across England and working with twelve existing CCNS projects to achieve Quality Mark Shelter accreditation. Our aim is to continue to facilitate and encourage joined-up, cross-sector working that benefits those experiencing homelessness and the communities that want to support them safely, appropriately and effectively.

At the moment shelters already exist or will open for the first time this winter in more than 70 Local Authority areas. For example: all London Boroughs except for the City, Bexley, Richmond and Sutton; Aylesbury; Wycombe; Milton Keynes; St Albans; Luton; Basildon; Southend; Horsham; Brighton; Basingstoke; Tunbridge Wells; Folkestone; Hastings; Ashford; Medway; Dartford; Dover; Canterbury; Stoke; Crewe; Manchester; Blackpool; Rugby; Coventry; Leicester; Birmingham; Tamworth; Nottingham; Peterborough; Chesterfield; Bradford; Calderdale; Huddersfield; York; Gateshead; Ipswich; Cambridge; Great Yarmouth; Winchester; Torbay; Bristol.

Average bed capacity per project is 12-15 – in a range from 6 to 35. That represents well over 1,000 beds per night when all the projects are open and operating at the same time which would typically be the period immediately after Christmas through to the end of Feb/mid-March. Most shelters operate a referral rather than a walk up system and the majority have a maximum length of stay of 28 nights.

Only a minority of CCNS projects are currently in receipt of Government funding whether in the form of grants or of Housing Benefit payments. While most projects have a small number of paid

staff much of the work is carried out by an army of volunteers drawn from all sections of the community. In a typical CCNS there is no charge for the premises in which the shelter operates and food is donated by volunteers and local businesses.

2. The Housing Justice Quality Mark

The Housing Justice Shelter Quality Mark (HJQM) is a quality accreditation scheme for Church and Community Night Shelters which benchmarks safe and excellent standards of shelter practice. Up to 2014, Housing Justice shelter support had been given primarily at the set-up stage of shelter projects, and while good practice standards had been encouraged through our shelter forums and mailings, quality standards had not been stipulated or checked. We identified a need to set and improve standards in some shelters in areas of health and safety, the training of volunteers, admissions and referral procedures, communication and feedback, as well as facilities and equipment in order to make sure shelter projects provide safe and positive experiences for homeless guests and volunteers, and provide the best and most effective response to the needs of the shelter guests.

After receiving some Homeless Transition funding, we developed these standards involving a pilot, a process of consultation with Homeless link, voluntary sector agencies and local authorities as well as project coordinators giving peer input alongside experienced consultancy. Ecclesiastical Insurance also supported the development, making a commitment to halve the additional premium that is levied on a church involved in a winter night shelter that has received a Quality Mark award.

The aims of the Housing Justice Quality Mark are to

- Award, recognise and celebrate good and excellent shelter practice.
- Support the development of shelters where the extent and nature of homelessness can be understood by the wider community and everybody involved.
- Encourage a collaborative process by propagating peer review - between coordinators and through involving guests and volunteers in shaping services.
- Use a qualitative approach, citing testimonials from pilot shelters, referring to people moving on but also to support shelters to gather quantitative evidence to demonstrate their successes.
- Keep standards open to review, recognising we are on a journey of learning ourselves.
- Encourage diversity in projects that meet local needs.
- Promote effective joined-up working between agencies across the board in addressing the multiple, complex needs presented by homeless people.
- Be consistent and fair and communicate well.

The accreditation visits were all carried out by peer partners - who have coordinated church and community shelter projects themselves. The partners visited the projects to talk to volunteers and guests and look through paperwork and policies. Where recommendations to improve policies or practices were made, partners provided support to projects with these recommendations by

providing templates of policies or paperwork, making suggestions around good practice and revisiting the project if necessary.

Shelter projects which achieved QM standard awards found the process helpful and constructive, giving some of the following feedback;

"It was a good opportunity to reflect on ways to improve our service"
Project Coordinator.

"The QM partner was knowledgeable and helpful"
Volunteer.

"Our guests enjoyed meeting her (QM Partner), our volunteers valued the opportunity to speak to a specialist and our staff, once their nerves disappeared really enjoyed it!"
Project CEO.

"I was proud to showcase and enjoyed opening our shelter and was pleased for him [QM partner] to meet both our volunteers and guests. Feedback from both our guests and volunteers was that they enjoyed having our assessor in our shelter. It also gave our guests a sense of satisfaction knowing that our shelter was being inspected; it automatically gave [our project] even greater credibility amongst our guests and assurance knowing that we too as a body are accountable. The volunteers also felt this way and had a greater sense of being part of a professional organisation and were keen to learn more about Housing Justice and the work and role of Housing Justice within London and the United Kingdom."
Project Coordinator

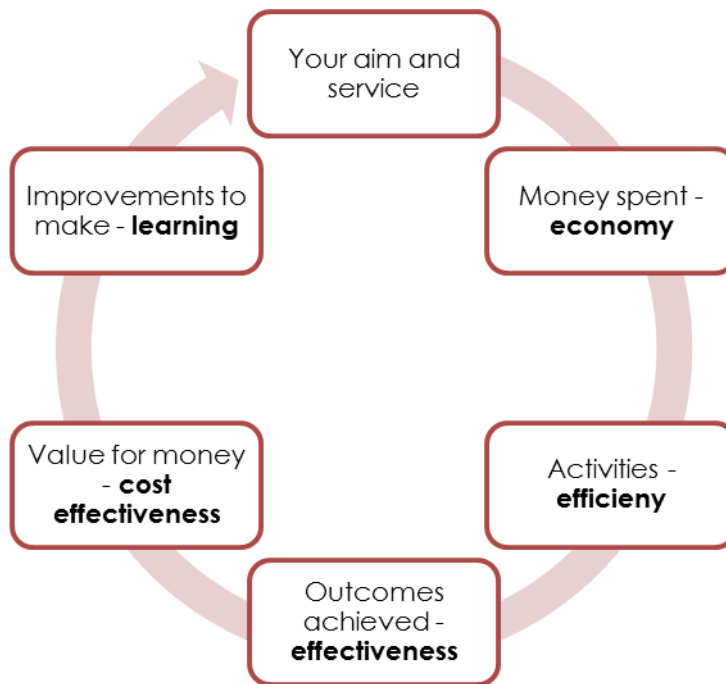
In terms of the HJQM we have awarded 'Excellent Practice' HJQM accreditation to 12 projects in Islington, Ealing, Aldershot, Greenwich, Havering, Barnet, Tunbridge Wells, Folkestone, Hackney, Newham and Peterborough. 3 shelter projects are currently working towards accreditation and we have 6 other projects pending in Birmingham, Medway Towns, Stoke, Manchester, Southwark & Lambeth and Hastings to go through the accreditation process this winter. A key aspect of the HJQM is the stipulation that the shelter is operating in cooperation with its Local Authority and with other, commissioned, homelessness services. Another criterion is the absence of proselytising behaviour or any discrimination against homeless guests on religious or any other grounds.

Since we began rolling out the Quality Mark in 2014, we have worked with eighteen different existing Shelter projects, thirteen of which have achieved Quality Mark Excellent Standard practice awards. We work with each project on any area that needs to be improved, providing projects bespoke support and advice. We also continue to learn, as we have been impressed with high standards of practice often projects find creative ways of meeting the needs of people who are experiencing homelessness with limited resources. We have twelve projects interested in achieving Quality Mark accreditation in the shelter year 2016-17.

Over the last two winter seasons (2014-15 and 2015-16) we have supported the start-up of seven brand new shelter projects, and in the winter season of 2016-17 now working with eight different groups to set up new projects, including Dover, Basingstoke, Leicester, Basildon, Bristol, Tamworth, Bexley and Gt Yarmouth.

3. Get the Data: Measuring your impact - definitively

Figure 1: Virtuous circle of data collection



A virtuous circle can be defined as a recurring cycle of events, the result of each one being to increase the beneficial effect of the next. Figure 1 describes the virtuous circle of data collection in which continuous analysis, observation, feedback and learning lead to overall improvement in the quality of organisational information across the board. The objective of this virtuous circle is to encourage and facilitate continuous learning from data feedback and use this information to tell a story about your service and ultimately improve services so that vulnerable service groups can better achieve their outcomes.

The virtuous circle incorporates five fundamental stages:

1. **Economy:** the costs of delivering a night shelter
2. **Efficiency:** looks at how night shelters use their resources to produce the maximum output
3. **Effectiveness:** looks at whether the outputs of the night shelters (e.g. number of case management contacts) lead to the desired outcomes
4. **Cost effectiveness:** what it costs to produce an outcome
5. **Learning:** use your data to learn what worked and what improvements can be made to your service

4. The CCNS Network – Its Contribution to the Homeless Sector

We know how important it is to capture and evidence the contribution the CCNS network is making to the homelessness sector in England & Wales. In partnership with Get The Data we have created a data monitoring spreadsheet tool and encourage shelter projects to use it and submit their data at the end of their shelter seasons for cumulative processing.

This year we have had the benefit of recruiting to our shelters team, two volunteer Data Champions in Alison Wood and John Simmons. Alison and John are experienced shelter coordinators and know the spreadsheet tool inside out. They are making an invaluable contribution in supporting shelter projects to get the best out of the tool to benefit their work.

This 2015/16 shelter season we have had dataset submissions from a total of 33 shelter projects, 17 in London and 16 outside London. Whilst we acknowledge that we are yet to gain the critical mass of data (in both quantity and quality terms) required to measure impact definitively, we are making good progress and are determined to achieve our goal. The data we have managed to accumulate from across the network is detailed on pages 15 – 17.

5. Shelter Culture: what distinguishes the CCNS network in the field – clinical vs relational support

Spending time with shelter guests and hearing their stories first-hand can make us feel like we are deluding ourselves sometimes. We hear tragic stories and life events from shelter guests that have, understandably, brought them to homelessness and life on the streets. But, like any of us, there is so much more to their lives than just the tragic events.

Support is offered often in siloes; to receive help often requires accessing multiple agencies such as a GP surgery, the housing aid office, Citizen's Advice Bureau, jobcentre plus, law offices, drug & alcohol services, mental health services, council offices for required documentation (marriage/birth certificates etc.), passport office, day centres etc. We are asked much the same questions over and over again to give the service the information they require in order to get what is needed. It is a process that re-iterates and reinforces all the traumas and the tragedies and the failings and the negativity that have brought someone to a crisis situation. The systems we need in order to assess and to be fair to everyone are, for many people (and certainly for the vast majority of the shelter guests in the CCNS network) contributing to their trauma and are counter-productive.

The growth in homelessness is clearly linked to the ending of assured tenancies in the Private Sector, with figures from the Department of Communities and Local Government showing that in 2015 this was the single biggest cause of homelessness accounting for approximately 1/3rd of cases of all homelessness during the year. Our report looked beyond these headline statistics to a complex series of experiences of those going through a period of homelessness, approximately a quarter of guests interviewed had experienced a form of relationship breakdown, for example. We have learned that what is required is an appropriate drawing together of both clinical and relational support, tailored for each individual and their unique set of circumstances. CCNS projects act as a conduit for this 'drawing together' that brings about more meaningful and sustainable and economical outcomes. In this work, the distinction between the terms 'guest' and 'client' is crucial.

During the day shelter guests engage with support services as a client, a customer, a service-user and often with the shelters help as a referrer, a broker, an advocate, a companion. This is all about getting their problems addressed, which is crucial. We respect the agencies and services that work with shelter guests as providing professional help, which in areas such as looking after physical and mental health, and teaching skills and education, are invaluable.

CCNS shelters projects focus on their guests' skills, strengths and passions as opposed to their problems. The primary focus is on the relational support a person needs. This builds trust and self-worth and the kind of mutual encounter that prompts self-reflection for both guests and volunteers

alike. Guests often become more willing to engage support services, leading to more substantive and ultimately successful outcomes for everyone involved. CCNS projects are helping people repair and heal the broken relationships of the past that have brought them to their homelessness and back towards 'home'. In the process we are all renewing ourselves.

There is a name for this approach in shelter practice, with a focus on relational support building trust and confidence and self-worth commensurate with the predominantly clinical support the sector provides. We were first introduced to the concept of 'strength-based practice' by Andy McPhee of the organization 'Enabling Assessment Service London' - <http://www.easl.org.uk/>.

We then had the good fortune of attending a conference hosted by Homeless Link titled 'Strength In Numbers'. At that conference the head of homelessness services commissioning for Oxford council presented an impressive account of how they partnered with Mayday Trust - <http://www.maydaytrust.org.uk/> - and adopted a strength-based practice approach. This led to them closing one of their homeless hostels with significant social and economic benefits all round. These hostel residents had become institutionalised, some having been living there for more than twenty years. Mayday Trust worked with the local authority to re-locate them in the community, with support services and social groups and activities, to build and develop their own support networks and be more self-reliant. It is particularly encouraging this year, to see that the homelessness sector is embracing this approach and that strength-based practise is gaining traction and support.

We intend to contribute to the momentum of support around 'strength-based practise' in the sector. In particular, we will encourage shelter projects to develop their work outside the winter months so that their guests do not feel abandoned when the shelter closes. This includes inviting shelter guests to stay in touch, to join us on the CCNS network annual retreat holiday to Scargill House in the Yorkshire Dales - <https://scargillmovement.org/> - and the numerous other activities and services that are out there for homeless people to help them re-integrate into society.

Homeless Link's - <http://www.homeless.org.uk/> - new Strategy & Partnership Managers around the country have a remit to build and develop a network of these activities and services. This from the Partnership Manager for London, Sabrina Pathan...

I've been mulling over the idea of a Community of Practice (CoP) serving frontline workers, working in night shelter settings, primarily from faith-based groups and I still think it's a brilliant idea, and would like to take it forward. I've been thinking hard about how to make it a good 'sector' + night shelter effort. I very much don't want a patronising forum where 'the professionals' tell everyone else what to do and how to do it, so I'm having a rethink about whether a CoP should be limited to Night Shelters, who have achieved the HJQM, to share their experiences and challenges and think about ways to create actionable solutions.

This is a really exciting development that we intend to play a key role in. The beauty of the CCNS network is that it is a group of established churches and some synagogues and mosques all with busy schedules of ongoing community activities that we invite our shelter guests to join in on and contribute to and be a part of so that the focus is integration not segregation!

Guests told us:

"I was never a great believer in Church or never went to Church. Seeing how all the volunteers here and all the people here help you out, it has slightly changed it. I don't go to Church but it does give you a more positive attitude"

I am finding it interesting that despite the difference of the churches here – being it a this or a that church – actually they're coming together as a Body, as it should be, in the Body of Christ and actually working together and establishing some sort of unity and strength in unity together to help the outside. I'm finding it really interesting that they are working together instead of going against each other.

This whole experience of being homeless has woken me up. Because when you're on the streets you are walking around and observing everyone else, not caring about yourself, you are observing everyone else and seeing how much they are taking a lot of stuff for granted and there are people out there who haven't got anything at all. You start appreciating things.

If it wasn't for the shelter I might have to enter into criminal activity for necessity, I mean who wouldn't in this situation, most people round here would"

Volunteers have told us:

"Without fail they are all amazing people in their own way. But there are some incredible characters and you learn a huge amount in here and it takes you out of your narrow social milieu of friends... what I do know is that me or any of my friends, particularly the men statistically, could be here next shelter night and that's a very strong connection. I had a very popular friend at school – good at everything and very clever – he ended up homeless and I last heard he had been a drug addict for the last 15 years. That sort of challenges one's preconceptions about people and it makes you less judgemental. As Christians, well the sort of Christianity that I was brought up with was all about judgement, it shouldn't have been but it was, but this volunteering work teaches you to be much less judgemental and much more open to people and to see the good in people, and there is so much good in people and there is so much love that they want to give and receive by coming here"

"Almost everybody that I have come into contact with doing this work have had their attitudes to the homeless seriously changed. One of the problems that you come across time and time again with this sort of thing from the outside community, from the neighbours, is that they have real, real fears about the homeless – almost Conrad-ian part of darkness"

"You never know what will happen when you come in here. There is no hierarchy or set rule. It's all about creating community. That's the ultimate thing. I didn't realise this before that homeless people have very little interaction with people during the week. By and large it is quite an isolating experience. I guess it's about belonging somewhere and being part of a community"

"Tonight, for example, I wasn't quite sure who was a volunteer and who was a guest. And there's no particular dividing line. That's what is so lovely sitting around that table. People are just being there together. It's an unthreatening and warm environment. Particularly people coming for the evening shift, seeing their faces as they come in is something really quite special. It's such a warm environment. It really is"

6. The Role of Housing Justice

Housing Justice through facilitating forums, consultancy, training and conferences aims to represent, enable and encourage the CCNS Network to be the best it can be.

CCNS Forums:

There are regular meetings of the network of Night Shelters based around London and the Home Counties. These are opportunities for CCNS coordinators and others to engage with relevant subjects, and also to act in support of each other and learn from each other via the network and the relationships that develop. The establishment of the Housing Justice Quality Mark (HJQM) as well as the developments of the data collection system have been key items. Other issues explored have included: insurance provision, collaborative working with others (e.g: through partnership with Crisis and their Christmas provision for example), and the place for and work of reconnection. Over the past year a forum has been established for the Welsh Night Shelters in Cardiff. We are also playing a role in developing a shelters network in Kent and Christian homelessness forums in Birmingham and Coventry.

Wider Networking:

This year we have conducted our Roadshow events in Hull and Coventry. We invite a wide breadth of stakeholders and interested parties ranging from potential Night Shelter start-ups to senior Local Authority officers. We showcase all the work of Housing Justice of course but, more importantly, this has facilitated the kind of cross-sector networking that has prompted and is promising some significant joining-up of work.

Shelter Coordinator Conferences and Guest Holidays:

Our Scargill (<http://www.scargillmovement.org/>) conferences with a shelter guest focus in April/May and project coordinator focus in October are important networking events that play a key role in giving stakeholders the opportunity to shape and influence our work together.

This year we convened our coordinator conference in the beautiful and historic Charney Manor, a Quaker conference and retreat centre in Oxfordshire. We are very grateful to Lynn Mumford from the Mayday Trust who led a session for us on strength-based practise and Sabrina Pathan from Homeless Link who led a session on trauma-informed care. Here is some feedback from conference delegates:

"A huge 'thank you' for allowing me to be a part of that wonderful retreat last week. I feel enormously privileged and lucky to have been part of that group and took so much away from it all...really thought-provoking input. Thanks for organizing such a good event."
Conference delegate

Consultancy:

Advice and support is given in a variety of ways. It maybe to help primary vision carriers of the Night Shelter dream to work through what is right for their location; it might be to engage as the third party national expert in a conversation between the local voluntary group and a Local Authority or Police Commissioner; it might be to encourage Coordinators just setting out on a project, or to advise them in dealing with a particular problem; it might be to help to encourage people in joint working (whether that's between churches, or the voluntary groups and statutory ones); it might be to respond to concerned MP's of every political hue who want to see something change in their constituency. However, we are especially active in helping new Night Shelters to start, or to take the next stages of their development forward.

This year we are supporting new projects in Leicester, Basildon, Basingstoke, Dover, Bristol, Bexley and Tamworth.

Training:

Has been delivered through our standard 'Overview of Homelessness' training, but also through more specialist and bespoke training to CCNS staff and volunteers, church drop-in centres and services such as the Quaker Open Xmas project and the Notre Dame De France sandwich service in Leicester Square, Central London. Our Overview of Homelessness training addresses four essential components: 1) the homelessness sector and statutory provision, 2) mental health awareness, 3) drugs & alcohol awareness and 4) managing challenging behaviour.

The bespoke training, we have been conducting more often revolves around the last of those four components. The shelter environment is one of hospitality where people are invited as guests by their volunteer hosts. As much as possible we encourage shelters to replicate this welcome and hospitality in to their church communities just as we extend to guests in our own homes. This is distinctly different from the typical hostel environment in the sector where homeless people are clients and residents in segregated buildings staffed by paid professionals. Helping projects to have confidence in and maintain the integrity of robust hospitality or 'tough love' in their shelters requires a distinctly different approach that we are uniquely positioned to provide.

7. Findings

England and Wales

33 shelter projects contributed data to the Shelter Impact report for England and Wales in the 2015/16 season. There were 22 shelters from London, 4 from the South East, 3 from Wales, 3 from the North of England, 1 from the East Midlands and 1 from the East of England.

At least **500 churches, Synagogues and Mosques** opened their premises for use as shelters during the season. Welcoming a total of **1920 guests**, a slight reduction in the number of the previous year of 2171, with anecdotal evidence that this is partially because some guests are staying for longer.

Volunteers gave an incredible **490,063 hours of volunteer time** to Church and Community Night Shelters, an increase on the previous year of more than 112% on the previous year. This represented an average amount of volunteer hours per shelter of 14850 hours.

The estimated value of the time of these communities of volunteers is more than **£6,174,805**, based on ONS average earnings figures.

The gender breakdown of guests in the shelters remained overwhelmingly male, with a 84% vs 16% split.

Shelters providing data to the report stayed **open for an average of 114 days**.

This begins to present a picture of Night Shelters increasing their workload at a time when need also seems to be increasing, most shelters at very close to or indeed exceeding capacity. It is little wonder then that the report period also witnessed growth in new shelter start-ups and the awarding of the Housing Justice Quality Mark the best practice award for shelters. A total of 18 Night Shelter projects have applied for Quality Mark accreditation since 2014. Meanwhile **13 shelters** have been awarded **QM Excellent practice accreditation** since 2014.

London

London remains a focal point for both homelessness and night shelter activity. **27 shelter projects** operated across **29 Boroughs** during the winter of 2015/16. Shelter coverage increased to 29 of the 33 boroughs. The boroughs without coverage were **Bexley, City of London, Richmond upon Thames, and Sutton**. Bexley was due to open its shelter in 2016/17. At least 200 churches, synagogues and Mosques opened their premises for use as shelters during the season.

CCNS Shelters welcomed **1290 guests** in the 15/16 winter season, broadly in line with the 1303 in 2014.

Londoners gave an estimated **331,071 hours of volunteer time** to Church and Community Night Shelters, an average of 16,554 hours per shelter. The value of the time of these communities of volunteers is more than £4m, based on ONS average earnings figures.

The gender breakdown in London saw slightly more women than elsewhere in the country and a rise of 2% from previous years. It remains the case however that the overwhelming majority of guests using night shelters are men at 83% with just 17% female.

Opening for an average 128 days, shelters in London stayed open slightly longer than the national average of 114, providing an additional two weeks of support.

Data from Housing Justice Shelter Annual Impact Report 2016

Fig. 1: The Shelters

Question	Result (ENG & WAL)	No. of shelters	Average per shelter	Result if all provided data	Result (LONDON)	No. of shelters	Average per shelter	Result if all provided data
Total number of shift volunteers	45405.5	23	1974	65147	26131	14	1866.5	37330
Total number of other volunteers	2480	10	248	8184	1435	7	205	4100
Shift volunteer hours	282158	19	14850	490063	198643	12	16554	3310667
Value of shift hours	3555190.8		187115	6174805	2502902		208575	4171503
Number of nights open	3751	33	114	3751	2554	20	128	2554
Number of bed nights	63411	33	1922	63411	47838	20	2392	47838
Number of beds filled.	60876	32	1902	62778	50439	20	2522	50439
Occupancy rate				99%				105%
Number of new guests case managed.	961	24			643	15		
Number of referrals that could not be given a bed.	637	14			433	10		
Number of guests that stayed for 28 days or more.	309	18			268	14		
Number of guests that were housed	506	28			334	17		
Number of guests that were housed within 28 days of first night at shelter.	103	14			45	9		
Number of guests that found formal employment	137	15			112	10		
Number of guests that found formal employment within 28 days of first night.	12	6			6	3		

Data from Housing Justice Shelter Annual Impact Report 2016

The guests

Demographics		
Total number of guests	1,920	
Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	1616	84%
Female	304	16%
Total	1920	100%
Nationality	Number	Percentage
UK	793	47%
Non-UK - EEA	576	34%
Non-UK - Other	326	19%
Total	1695	100%
Benefits	Number	Percentage
Yes	678	56%
No	363	30%
NRPF	167	14%
Total	1208	100%
Alcohol Misuse	Number	Percentage
Yes	331	31%
No	701	66%
?	38	4%
Total	1070	100%
Drug Misuse	Number	Percentage
Yes	225	22%
No	751	73%
?	50	5%
Total	1026	100%
Mental Health	Number	Percentage
Yes	392	38%
No	587	57%
?	51	5%

Total	1030	100%
Relationship Breakdown	Number	Percentage
Yes	236	24%
No	646	66%
?	92	9%
Total	974	100%
Prison	Number	Percentage
Yes - prison sentence	9	2%
Yes - non custodial sentence	23	4%
No	522	89%
Didn't/Won't say	35	6%
Total	589	100%
Receiving Case-management	Number	Percentage
Internal	225	26%
External	372	43%
None	116	14%
Both internal and external	115	13%
Refuses to engage	28	3%
Total	856	100%
Age	Number	Percentage
18 to 24	161	11%
25 to 34	377	26%
35 to 44	412	29%
45 to 54	311	22%
55 to 99	182	13%
Total	1443	100%
Length of Stay (Days)	Number	Percentage
1	42	6%
2 to 7	120	17%
8 to 14	100	15%
15 to 21	89	13%
22 to 28	118	17%
28 to 150	219	32%
Total	688	100%

8. Summary

CCNS projects help facilitate the necessary linking together of predominantly statutory top-down agencies with the grassroots, ground-up working that is needed to resolve and reconcile homelessness for all of us. They support people in crisis whilst also informing, educating and training anyone that is genuinely concerned and wants to help in how to go about it more appropriately and productively. Homelessness crosses all boundaries – ethnic, geographic, age, gender, religious, faith/no faith it is something everyone can work together on with a solid foundation of common ground.

We have learned that taking an “inside-out” approach to accompany and work in conjunction with the predominantly “outside-in” services that currently comprise the homelessness sector, makes for more meaningful and cost-effective progress. “Outside-in” services address the downstream symptomatic results of adverse and traumatic life experiences. We encourage shelters to focus primarily on the kind of relational support that helps people to reflect and heal and build confidence and trust and self-worth – it’s about who people are other than their problems.

This report captures and conveys only some of the significant impact and contribution the CCNS network is making in the homelessness sector here in England & Wales. It is a rapidly growing and thriving network.

CCNS projects provide very practical, easy-access opportunities for everyone to safely engage with and take appropriate responsibility for homelessness in their neighbourhoods. Supporting homeless people in their communities is where they stand a better chance of overcoming it and in doing so we are building stronger communities for us all.