

**CATCH local dissemination event – report
London**

South East London Housing Partnership
Homelessness Group

**Substance Misuse and Mental Health
- the housing issues**

Community House, South Street, Bromley BR1 1RH

Programme

9.30am	Registration and refreshments
9.45am	Welcome / Introductions
9.50am	CATCH – Tanzeem Ahmed (Olmec)
10.00am	Presentations : LB Lewisham (Housing Needs Survey) Penrose HA (Floating Support)
10.35am	Discussion Groups
11.05am	Feedback
11.15am	Coffee Break
11.30am	Presentations : St Giles Trust Thames Reach Bondway
12.10pm	Discussion Groups
12.40pm	Feedback
12.50pm	Summary / round up
13.00pm	Lunch

South East London Housing Partnership

**In partnership with Olmec
Homelessness Group**

Substance Misuse and Mental Health Workshop

Presentations

The workshop was opened by Tanzeem Ahmed who spoke about the CATCH project and the key findings from the conference that took place in Bologna around mental health and substance misuse. Tanzeem made available the reports from the conferences held as part of the CATCH project and pointed people to the CATCH website for further information.

There were four presentations at the workshop:

Philip Breslin and Fiona Kirkman LB Lewisham

LB Lewisham commissioned Ripple Consultancy to carry out a Housing Need Assessment for drug / alcohol users in the borough.

A full copy of the report can be found here :

[http://www.selondonhousing.org/Documents/Final%20Housing%20Report%2022%20August%202006%20\(3\).pdf](http://www.selondonhousing.org/Documents/Final%20Housing%20Report%2022%20August%202006%20(3).pdf)

Nadia Jackson Penrose Housing Association

Nadia Jackson gave a presentation on the work of Penrose Housing Association. Information from the presentation can be found here :

<http://www.selondonhousing.org/Documents/penrose.doc>

Andy Lilliscup Thamesreach

Thamesreach have launched a new service in Southwark, funded by Supporting People, to find and support vulnerable people.

There will be 25 staff who will visit people in their own homes to offer a wide range of support and signposting to other agencies. It is open to private rented sector and social housing tenants and the service is aiming to specifically target those who are not currently linked into support services. The difference in approach is that the service will go out to try and find those clients rather than expecting them to come to services.

The service will be advertised in a wide range of places and local residents can approach the service if they feel a neighbour would benefit from support.

Sarah Toterdell gave a presentation on the work of St Giles Trust with clients with multiple and complex needs. A copy of the presentation can be found here : <http://www.selondonhousing.org/Documents/BIS%20Presentation.ppt>

Discussions

1. **Needs information**

- ∞ Some organisations are collecting more information than others and also in different ways which makes it difficult to compare
- ∞ Information can be sensitive and difficult to collect - training for staff in collecting sensitive information and dealing with disclosure would be useful
- ∞ There is a need to explore and develop further understanding around links between alcohol misuse and homelessness and also explore repeat homelessness and reasons for tenancy failure

2. **Assisting particular client groups**

- ∞ There are no specific services for those with a dual diagnosis and an issue around clarity of where responsibility lies
- ∞ It is hard to be able to meet the needs of older people with alcohol problems – existing sheltered accommodation is not able to deal with these needs
- ∞ It was noted that more and more younger people are using services and that future planning of services needs to take this into account

3. **Access to services**

- ∞ There are perceived difficulties for substance misusers approaching Homeless Persons Units – there is a stigma associated with this and a fear of attitudes towards users. There needs to be a change of culture and an understanding of issues – training might be valuable here
- ∞ There is a lack of suitable assessment centres – independent centralised assessment would be useful
- ∞ Floating support can only be accessed through Housing Officers
- ∞ There are issues around ringfencing and local connection issues in Supporting People (SP) funding. It needs to be recognised that clients have mobile lives
- ∞ Displacement from certain localities through Anti- social behaviour orders (ASBOs) is a concern as people can have issues accessing services elsewhere
- ∞ There is uneven provision of services across the boroughs
- ∞ Lack of an address means that people can't access health services

4. **Meeting needs in the most appropriate way**

- ∞ There was a view that floating support is often considered better than supported housing and fears that a referral on to supported housing is can be seen as a failure. Referral to supported housing can be positive where it best meets a person's needs
- ∞ People's needs rarely stay static and go through cycles - therefore provision will not always be consistently appropriate.
- ∞ It is considered difficult to get placements reviewed as needs change

5. **Staffing levels**

- ∞ It is difficult to retain staff with expertise and skills

6. **Awareness of other organisations**

- ∞ There can sometimes be a lack of understanding of the remit of organisations which can lead to inappropriate referrals
- ∞ There are lots of organisations working in particular areas and a lack of awareness about exactly what each other are doing – it would be useful to raise awareness - An information pack or website of service providers could be useful. Workshadowing and visits to schemes could also be explored

7. **Communication**

- ∞ Clients are not always accessing information or signposting about other services. Information needs to be available through wide and varied sources e.g. libraries, websites at service providers
- ∞ There is poor communication across and between sectors

8. **Partnership**

- ∞ Champions in individual organisations would be useful to work around specific themes to foster collaborative working
- ∞ SLAs to formalise partnership working might be helpful
- ∞ There are deficits in some services e.g. health
- ∞ One borough provides housing surgeries in mental health teams

Actions

There were three main areas of action that came up that could possibly work on a sub regional basis

- ∞ Training – for Local Authority (LA) staff and for voluntary sector staff on aspects relevant to their work. Perhaps some of this training could be reciprocal e.g. LA providing some training to the voluntary sector

and vice versa

- ∞ Information sharing amongst providers – exploring directories or websites of services or linking up those which already exist, looking at workshadowing or visits to schemes
- ∞ Information for clients – ensuring that information / advice is accessible through a wide range of sources