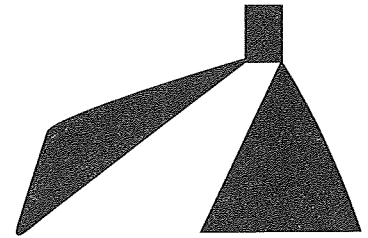
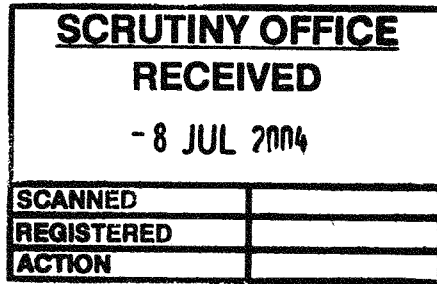


Deputy Jerry Dorey
 Shadow Scrutiny Panel
 Scrutiny Office
 States Building
 Royal Square
 St Helier
 JE1 1BA



The Shelter Trust

Patron
 His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor
 Sir John Cheshire KBE CB

Ref: Dep.Dorey/jh

06 07 04

Dear Deputy Dorey,

Following on from your letter of 27 05 04, please find detailed below notes on our experience of engaging with individuals experiencing substance misuse difficulties and our experience of working with the other support agencies in the field of social care.

The Shelter Trust is the largest provider of services for homeless people in Jersey. The Trust is a charity offering shelter, support and a way forward for homeless people. At present we offer accommodation from 4 sites around St Helier. In addition we also provide an outreach service, offering food, hot drinks and support for 'rough sleepers'. At the other end of the spectrum of homelessness we provide an aftercare and resettlement service for those of our clients recently housed.

In addition to the services we offer homeless people we also provide the Drunk & Incapable Unit at Kensington Place, a 4 room secure recovery unit for drunk and incapable individuals. The unit offers a place where intoxicated individuals can 'sleep it off' and thereafter discuss their drinking habits with trained staff rather than incur a criminal record and endure a court appearance. The service is provided in partnership with the Police Service and the Home Affairs Committee.

The underlying reasons as to why an individual becomes homeless are as various as the numbers of people using the Shelter Trust (over 400 last year). Nonetheless, several reasons are cited often by homeless people themselves; addiction issues (alcohol, illicit drugs, prescription drugs), mental health problems, returning to the community after a time in prison, emerging into the community as young adults from social care and relationship breakdown. Sometimes appropriate, affordable accommodation is not available.

A snapshot of our client group at any time in the past several years indicates that upwards of one third of our clients are using or have recently been using illegal drugs. Moreover, 70-80% of our client group will have experienced substance misuse difficulties at some time in their life. Many of our clients are poly drug users.

Often the predominating factor in becoming homeless is their substance misuse, with the attendant chaotic lifestyle and problematic, sometimes criminal behaviour, and a consequent inability to 'hold down a job' and an address.

Trustees

Chairman Jurat Nick Herbert

Miss Sue Le Mercier • Jurat Sally Le Brocq • Mr Colin Ireson • Mr Frank Laine • Mrs Barbara Terdre • Dr Margaret Bayes • Mr John Young • Mr Francis Le Gresley

Admin. & Emergency Shelter

35 Kensington Place St Helier JE2 3PA
 Tel: 730235 Fax: 631206



St James Street Project

29 St James Street St Helier JE2 4TT
 Tel: 726892 Fax: 632636



Resettlement Team

19 Midvale Road St Helier JE2 3YR
 Tel: 739579 Fax: 879391



Outreach Team

29 St James Street St Helier JE2 4TT
 Tel: 726892 Fax: 632636



The services we offer clients who are experiencing substance misuse difficulties are wide ranging.

In the first instance we offer advice, support and counselling via the key worker system we operate and the multi needs assessment package we use with individuals who become homeless. When someone becomes homeless the first few days and weeks are a critical time for that individual and those working with him/her. It is at this time that the individuals circumstances can be stabilised, a proper assessment of needs can be made and a view of the future broached. The needs assessment flags up areas of concern in relation to substance misuse and thereby affords support workers a first opportunity to offer the range of options available to clients experiencing difficulties in this area.

At present a homeless person upon seeking accommodation via the Shelter Trust will be sharing their sleeping accommodation with 1, 2 or 3 others, one or all of who could be 'strangers'. We are hoping to secure for our clients through the course of 2004 single room occupancy throughout the accommodation offered by the Shelter Trust.

For any individual, the boon of 'having your own space' when recovering from the trauma of substance misuse and homelessness etc. cannot be overstated. The idea of having a stake in the society in which you are living is an important motivator in sustaining a healthy/positive outlook on your circumstances. At the Shelter Trust we would like to be in the position of saying with credibility to our clients that continuing to misuse substances is the 'least best' option available to them. Our credibility in saying so could be questioned if the alternative we are offering is a shared bedroom with 1, 2 or 3 others who may or may not be interested in addressing their addiction issues, relationship breakdown, mental health problems etc.

More generally, it is our experience that where we are able to offer single occupancy accommodation (Midvale Road) we see a decrease in the frequency and duration of episodes of homelessness and substance misuse, and an increase in people we see for a short time who return speedily to mainstream living. They take with them much improved life chances and coping skills they learned or relearned that they can employ in dealing with their problems of living independently.

In recent months in partnership with the Alcohol & Drug Service and the Community Psychiatric Service we have provided 2 open access clinics of short duration (2 hours) that take place on alternate weeks at Kensington Place and Saint James Street. The clinics are staffed by the Alcohol & Drug Service and the Community Psychiatric Service.

It is at these clinics where our clients can receive structured, regular and certain therapeutic intervention, thereby offering them much improved chances of overcoming the blight of their addiction. In practical terms, for some, this means the individual concerned working closely with the Alcohol & Drug Service and the Shelter Trust support workers to successfully complete an initial detox., a first step towards recovery.

The clinics represent a major advance in accessing health services for homeless people. The nature of the clinics means that where previously many of our clients were unwilling or unable to access support for their problems, now they know that the clinics take place 'in house' every week and are accessible by self referral.

Alternatives to the clinics and support worker input are also available via organisations such as AA and NA, we encourage our clients to access the option which works for them, rather than attempting to impose an inflexible approach to the options available to individuals experiencing substance misuse difficulties.

The important message we wish to impart to our clients is that if they are experiencing substance misuse difficulties then the Shelter Trust is the place to start putting the pieces back together again, a place where they can stabilise, take stock and think of a future beyond the day with a range of support options which are readily accessible and recognisably professional. We aim to provide opportunities every day for any individual who uses the Shelter Trust to materially change the circumstances they face.

The Drunk & Incapable Unit affords Trust staff the opportunity to care for and engage with members of the public who may be experiencing alcohol misuse difficulties. Typically, an individual who is referred to the Unit by the Police Service will stay with us for 4 or 5 hours to 'sleep it off', being checked regularly by trained members of staff to ensure their safety. Thereafter, the individual may wish to wash and change clothes and ready themselves for their return home. It is at this time where a discussion can take place over a cup of tea, around whether the individual wishes to access further assistance. We carry literature and contact numbers for the Alcohol & Drug Service and AA. Last year 169 people used the Drunk & Incapable Unit.

Conclusion

Many of the users of Shelter Trust services are experiencing or have experienced substance misuse difficulties. We have made significant progress in widening and deepening the range of support options open to them in overcoming the blight of their addiction and/or difficulties.

The progress I mention is evidenced by our use of a key worker system, the multi needs assessment tool, the advent of the open access clinics, the substantial resources we as an organisation devote to training our employees in dealing with substance misuse issues and the continued success of the Drunk & Incapable Unit.

We have been able to build on the skills available in the community to support individuals with substance misuse difficulties via the training programmes at Highlands College. We hope that your Panel may be able to influence the decision to continue running the alcohol and drug counselling course at Highlands College.

We aim to build on the services we offer with the introduction of single room occupancy through the course of 2004, wherein an individual can recover from their homelessness and their substance misuse difficulties in security and greater comfort than has hitherto been possible.

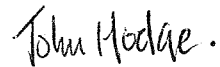
We work closely with our partner agencies in the interests of our clients, we are in daily contact with the Alcohol & Drug Service, the Community Psychiatric Service, the Probation Service, the Employment Service, the Probation Service and others concerned with the social care of our clients. We have close working relationships with agencies in the voluntary sector such as AA and NA.

The outline above, I hope, does not indicate any complacency from us in the way we deliver services for homeless people. Rather, I feel that we are 'getting there' in providing an easily accessible, recognisably professional service of providing accommodation and support for homeless people many of who suffer substance misuse difficulties.

Our chances of successfully supporting an individual back into mainstream society, who is homeless and is experiencing substance misuse difficulties, is made more likely by persuading our client group that they have a place and a role to play in our community other than being a victim or creating more victims by their lifestyle and behaviour.

Should you require any further information or to discuss any of the details outlined above, I am available at the address / telephone number detailed overleaf.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Hodge". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John Hodge (general manager)