



Southend Church Winter Night Shelter Partnership Impact Report 2016/17

The impact of partnership working for people who
are homeless in Southend

As Chief Executive of HARP, Southend's homeless charity, I am delighted at the success we have seen through the Church Winter Night Shelter partnership over the winter of 2016 into 2017.



The partnership is now in its sixth year, and the hospitality of the churches and their volunteers towards local homeless people always amazes me.

This project provides an additional 20 beds per night for some of our community's most vulnerable people during the harsh winter months. These are a much needed and timely boost to HARP's 170 beds, which are available all year round.

As you will see throughout this report, we have seen some truly inspirational outcomes for the majority of the people who used the service. And for those who have not yet managed to find a place to call their own, steps towards living independently have been made.

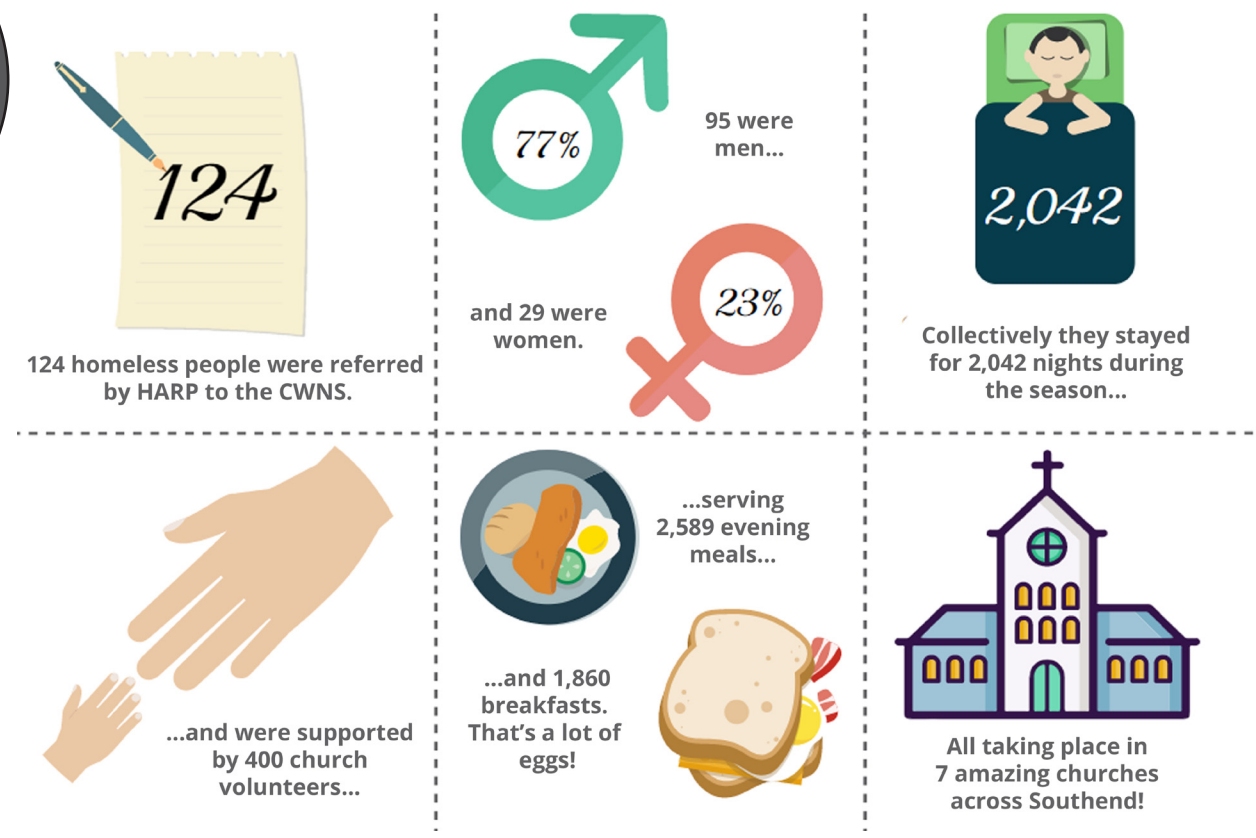
This success is only possible thanks to the fantastic partnership between local churches, Southend Borough Council, and HARP. All three are vital to making the project work.

The churches provide warmth, compassion and safety to service users over the cold winter months. The council provide the much needed funding and political support to bring the project to fruition. And HARP provide the case workers, referral process and, crucially, the ongoing support to ensure that service users are given the best chance of a positive housing outcome.

We hope you enjoy reading our report.

Gill Garwood
HARP Chief Executive

CWNS at a Glance



Complexities

Homelessness is a very complex issue, and the CWNS service users reflected this complexity. Here are just some of the issues that service users faced.



Case Study - Jay's Story

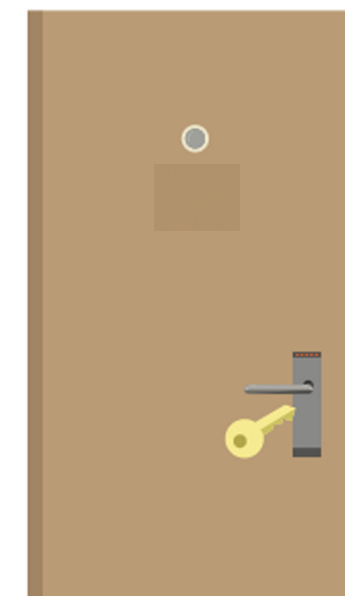


"I was homeless. You would probably class it as street homeless. I was fortunate enough to gain a place in a church night shelter straight away. If I had been rough sleeping, I don't think I'd be here now to tell the story. Accessing the Church Winter Night Shelters was the biggest weight lifted off my mind."

Jay stayed at the churches for three nights before getting a call from one of our team members to say that a more permanent space was available in HARP accommodation. Jay told us how he burst into tears of joy when he heard the news - "It was New Year's Eve when that lovely lady gave me the phone call", pointing at his HARP key worker, Lauren.

Lauren was able to offer Jay a place at HARP's Bradbury Night Shelter. Jay stayed at the shelter for two weeks, before moving on to some of our more independent accommodation, and he is now actively pursuing work.

Overcoming homelessness for good



Action Plan

Following feedback from the Churches that it is disappointing to see the same faces returning to the CWNS year on year, it was agreed to introduce a mandatory Action Plan for all HARP referred service users. The action plan is often very basic, such as simple steps like engaging with a local GP or a treatment service, but gives structure and purpose to the service user's development and progression. The aim of the action plan is to compliment the emergency support provided by the churches, to make sure that more people move in to secure accommodation at the end of the CWNS period.

Emergency support



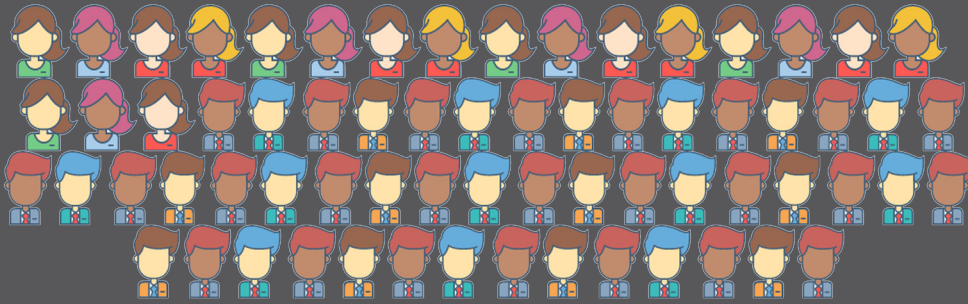
Action plan



Impact

The single biggest impact of the project is that, as of March 28th 2017, **54% of CWNS service users had a positive housing outcome.** This means that they did not return to the streets. This is an incredible achievement with this client group, many of whom have been on the streets for a number of years.

This report provides a snapshot, as at March 28th 2017, of the status of all homeless people referred to the CWNS project by HARP. The CWNS ran from 1st December 2016 to 27th March 2017. Homelessness is a very complex issue, and as such the status of service users may have changed since the end of the project.



67 out of 124 people had a positive housing outcome. 19 women and 48 men.

Positive Steps

For the 57 people who sadly weren't able to find accommodation by the end of the season, plenty of positive steps were taken as a result of being part of the CWNS project and following their action plan.



18 were signposted to treatment services



10 were signposted to group therapy



8 were supported to access employment or training opportunities



6 were referred to register with a local GP

At HARP, our services will continue to run all year round. Many of these service users will carry on engaging with HARP, and we will do everything we can to help them turn their lives around and overcome homelessness for good.

Our door is always open.