

A close-up photograph of a person's hand stirring a white mug filled with a yellowish-brown liquid, likely coffee or soup. The person is wearing a light-colored, textured sweater. The background is blurred, showing other people and a warm, indoor setting.

SOUTHEND CHURCHES WINTER NIGHT SHELTERS PARTNERSHIP

IMPACT REPORT 2017/18



As Chief Executive of HARP, Southend's homeless charity, I am delighted with the continued success of the Southend Churches Winter Night Shelters (CWNS) partnership.

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 174 rooms, which are in high demand throughout the year.

The partnership between Southend Borough Council, local churches, and HARP has now completed its seventh year. At HARP we are so grateful for the support of the community – as you will see throughout this report, many people have had a positive housing outcome

following a stay in the churches, particularly where they have worked with our staff at HARP and committed to an action plan.

As always, for those who have not yet managed to find a place to call their own, steps towards addressing various issues have been made.

As we look forward to the eighth year of the partnership, we hope to continue the positive impact, and also address the challenges that have been faced.

We hope you enjoy reading our report.

Jackie Bliss
HARP Chief Executive

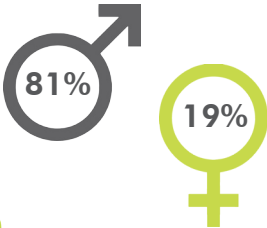
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jackie".

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CWNS AT A GLANCE

- 97 homeless people were referred by HARP to the CWNS, which is a 28% decrease compared to 124 in 2016/17.
- 79 (81%) were men, and 18 (19%) women. The proportion of women has decreased compared to 2016/17, when 23% were women.
- Collectively, they stayed for 2,132 nights, which is a 4% increase compared to 2016/17, despite the 28% drop in overall service users.
- This is driven by an increase in the average length of stay from 16 nights in 2016/17, to 22 nights in 2017/18. 400 amazing church based volunteers supported these guests giving around 10,500 hours of their time.
- The volunteers prepared and served around 2,767 evening meals (up from 2,589), and in the region of 2,266 breakfasts (up from 1,860).
- This all took place in seven amazing local churches.



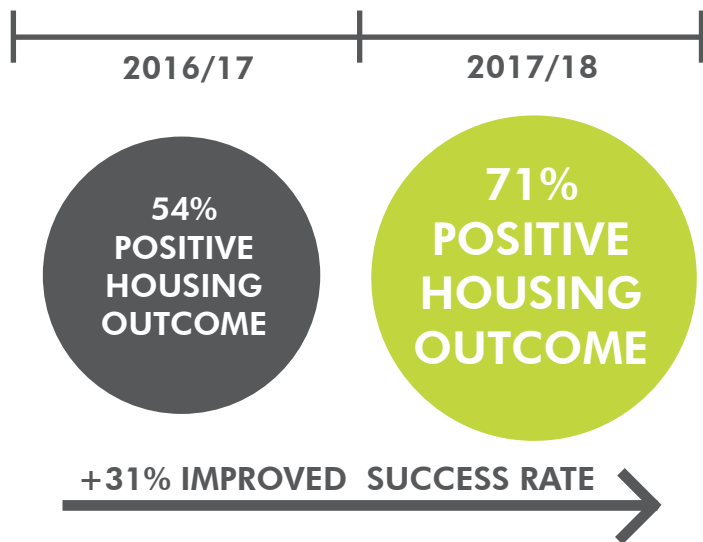
**2,132 NIGHTS
STAYED IN TOTAL.
AVERAGE STAY 22
NIGHTS**

IMPACT - POSITIVE HOUSING OUTCOMES

The **success rate improved by an amazing 31%** from 2016/17 to 2017/18.

This means that at the end of the project, **69 out of the 97 people referred by HARP had a positive housing outcome (71%)**.

This is a significant improvement on 2016/17's already impressive results, when 54% had a positive housing outcome at the same point.



IMPACT - POSITIVE STEPS

Of the 28 HARP referrals who sadly were not able to find accommodation by the end of the project, plenty of positive steps were taken as a result of being guests at the shelters, and subsequent engagement with HARP.

- 6 people were signposted to treatment services.
- 5 were signposted to group therapy.
- 9 were referred to register with a local GP.

ROOM TO IMPROVE

In addition to the HARP referrals, there were 41 people who self referred to the CWNS. These people did not engage with HARP, and therefore did not undertake an action plan to work on longer term issues. Of this group, outcomes were considerably less positive.

Of the 41 self referrals, 15 people, or 37%, had a positive housing outcome. This is significantly worse than the 71% seen amongst HARP referrals, and really highlights the importance of ensuring that all guests engage with HARP to work on an action plan with a key worker.

A key aim in 2018/19 will be to build on the success by increasing the number of people who engage with HARP.

CASE STUDY - DARREN'S STORY

"All these charities working together have pulled me back from the brink."

When Darren came out of prison at the end of January 2018, he had nowhere to go. He ended up sleeping rough behind a shop on Southend High Street.

"If it wasn't for the churches and the charities that support people like me, I'd probably be six foot under."

After sleeping rough for three nights, Darren was so relieved to be referred to the Churches Winter Night Shelters.

"Going from sleeping rough to staying in the churches - there is no comparison. I never had full support from my family - so the churches were my family."

Darren has a history of mental health issues, addiction, and self-harm. After a childhood riddled with abuse, he has self-medicated for many years. But now, with support, he's making great strides forward.

"Between all the support, I've managed to keep my abstinence going, attending groups, and making sure I stay accommodated. The volunteers are so supportive - they help you with everything and they give you tips and pointers in the right direction."

Darren is now living in HARP supported accommodation, and is a well-liked, popular member of the household.

"I want to keep the stability I've got, the sobriety I've got, and keep myself out of trouble! I'm trying to be in the moment - you can't change the past but you can have a say in your future. This is what I'm concentrating on now."





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