BRIEFINGS

St Mungo's wider work with complex needs groups

Brent Dual Diagnosis project is just one of over 30 complex needs projects run by St Mungo's. We currently provide specialised complex needs projects for former rough sleepers, mothers and babies, and drug and alcohol users, and our registered care homes provide support and accommodation for vulnerable, often older, residents with a variety of needs. The high ratio of staff to residents means we can dedicate considerable time and attention to each client - continuing to focus wherever possible on recovery and moving towards independence. Our frontline hostels continue to house clients with complex needs, however these projects enable us to provide a much greater level of help for people who require very supportive accommodation.

Our expertise in helping people with complex and multidimensional needs makes us an excellent partner for developing solutions to support the needs of vulnerable groups at high risk of becoming homeless.

If you are interested in finding out more about our work in the area of complex needs housing and support please contact Mike McCall on 020 8762 5668.

We are London's largest charity for homeless people. We provide over 100 accommodation and support services day in and day out.

We run **emergency** services - including street outreach and emergency shelter. We support homeless people in their **recovery** - opening the door to safe housing, health care and work. We help more homeless people into lasting new homes, training and employment than any other charity. We also **prevent** homelessness through our complex needs housing and support teams for people at real risk.

By opening our doors, and our support services, we enable thousands of homeless and vulnerable people to change their lives for good every year.

For information on subscribing to 'Briefings', please call 020 8762 5569

Dissemination of our good practice is funded by charitable voluntary income.
We are grateful to our donors whose support enables us to share this information briefing.

St Mungo's, Griffin House,
161 Hammersmith Road, London W6 8BS
Tel: 020 8762 5500
Fax: 020 8762 5501
www.mungos.org
Charity exempt from registration
I&P Society No. 20598R Housing Association No. LH0279

COMPLEX NEEDS? SUCCESSFUL SOLUTIONS

Brent Dual Diagnosis Project: From struggling to thriving

Individuals with a combination of mental health and substance use needs constitute a particularly vulnerable group, at high risk of rough sleeping. Their needs often fall through the service provision gaps, as separate mental health and substance use services struggle to find solutions on their own. As a result, they often move in and out of hospital and find it difficult to maintain a treatment programme.

Brent Dual Diagnosis project was set up to provide housing and support for those with a combination of enduring mental health and entrenched substance use needs. After a number of years of failing to meet required targets, it was taken over by St Mungo's in Sept 2006. Immediate changes were introduced, including an on-site substance use worker, and the introduction of talking therapies through an in-house psychotherapist. These changes, alongside a shift towards an holistic approach to wellbeing and recovery, have produced positive results such as:

- Increased client move on - five clients have moved into appropriate low support or private accommodation with two more due to move shortly. There were no successful move ons in the previous year.
- Successful partnership with Brent Primary Care Trust - the local PCT recognises the importance of in-house client talking therapies groups and provides funding for the psychotherapist role.
- Reduced Hospital admissions - since taking over the project, St Mungo's has reduced psychiatric hospital admissions to zero.
- Holistic support - unlike many support options, the project takes a holistic approach to client's well-being by considering medical, physical and psychological needs together.
- A client-centred approach - Client recovery and aspirations are central to the work of the project and it uses their personal goals to form their action plan and determine the support they receive, whether they hope to move into independent accommodation, self-manage their medication or reduce their drug use.
- Prevention of rough sleeping - the project provides a real future for these vulnerable adults otherwise at high risk of homelessness.

BRIEFINGS

What is the Brent Dual Diagnosis project?

The Brent Dual Diagnosis project consists of two sites providing twenty-four hour support to eleven tenants. The project is able to work with clients whose needs are complex, many of which have never previously been addressed. At the forefront of mental health innovation, the project creates a therapeutic community of care that considers client's needs beyond that of medication and housing. In line with St Mungo's recovery approach, the project places client's aspirations at the heart of what they do.

Typical referrals are delayed discharges from acute wards, inappropriate bed and breakfast accommodation and breakdown of tenancies in lower supported and independent accommodation. The majority of clients have a long history of substance dependency, and enduring mental health problems with many having experienced hospitalisation for long periods.

A therapeutic solution for complex client needs

The Brent Dual Diagnosis project has taken a holistic approach to client support by integrating specialist workers into their in-house support team.

- **A Psychotherapist** provides clients with the opportunity to engage in valuable 'talking therapies' and monthly clinical supervision sessions; the psychotherapist also provides a forum for frontline staff to present, discuss and share ideas and thoughts on how to holistically address the complex issues affecting clients within the service. Her prior experience within the homeless sector provides her with a strong contextual understanding of this client group.
- **A Substance Use Worker** carries out a full assessment with a client on arrival and works with them to develop a tailored substance use support plan, specific to the individual and driven by their aspirations and needs. Clients are also supported in accessing external substance use support services.

Clients also benefit from weekly tenant meetings, daily structured group-work sessions and evening activities. The project can also tap into the extensive resources and experience within St Mungo's, such as best practices in client involvement and recovery orientated action planning and a range of work and learning services

Working in partnership

Staff at the project work closely with social services to ensure clients receive joined up support from St Mungo's and their social worker. Brent Primary Care Trust is also a key partner, in addition, relationships have been built with local drug services, to support clients whilst at the project and also as they move on into more independent accommodation.

New positive outcomes

The Brent Dual Diagnosis project is already showing strong positive outcomes. Key achievements of the project include:

- **Reduced hospital admissions:** Historically this client group has been continually in and out of hospital. Since St Mungo's took over the project there have been no hospital admissions. This is attributed to a combination of specialist substance use and psychotherapist input, structured daily activity, and 24 hour staff availability.
- **Increased client move on:** Clients who face both enduring mental health and substance use issues will inevitably face more difficulties in finding suitable move on accommodation. The project has an 18-month short-term housing obligation and works with clients throughout their stay to help them plan their move into suitable long-term accommodation. Five clients have already been supported to move into low support or private accommodation, and another two will be moving shortly. This is a particular achievement, especially given the lack of appropriate move on accommodation in the local area and historical record of the project.
- **Significant reduction in care costs:** The project has been able to dramatically reduce the cost of supporting this vulnerable group by being more cost effective than alternative mental health accommodation, reducing the pattern of continual hospital admissions and health service costs. Success at helping clients move on into lower supported accommodation also reduces the long-term costs associated with their support.

Gareth's Story

"I graduated with honours in Accounting and Finance from the University of Leeds in 2001 and have had many successes in sport, including playing rugby at county level, and captaining both football and athletics teams.

Despite these successes I started to smoke heavy amounts of cannabis. The lasting and damaging effects were on-going and I became lonely and isolated. I ended up in a very bad relationship which caused so much stress I found myself in a London psychiatric ward. I was able to find alternative accommodation in London, and completed a course in creative writing but I relapsed from substance abuse and returned to hospital.

This second spell in hospital gave me a better idea of what I wanted to do with my life and St Mungo's has provided me with a second chance to do that.

St Mungo's has given me a structured and solid base to aid my recovery; providing a safe, supportive environment from which to base my aspirations as a novel/screen writer. I am very happy with my home."

Gareth Thomas, Resident

St Mungo's has given me a structured and solid base to aid my recovery.

BRIEFINGS