



LDAN Homelessness and Drug and Alcohol Forum

Guildhall, 12.30 to 3.30pm, 24th March 2010

Name	Organisation
Mark Grossett	Broadway
Helen Mathie	Homeless Link
Jane Bancroft	Homeless Link
Sim Mandair	Solace Women's Aid
Esther Sample	LDAN
Marcus Roberts (Chair)	DrugScope/LDAN
Jane Palmer	P3
Jackie Lees	Shelter
Tom Parr	DrugScope/LDAN
Yvonne Scott-Henry	Thames Reach
Beverley Stultz	Thames Reach
Don Shenker	Alcohol Concern
Daniel Smith	DrugScope/LDAN
Bekim Berljolli	Thames Reach Robertson Street
Matthew Davies	St Mungos
Sharon Kirk	Foundation66
Liz Denford	Thames Reach
Monica Beadle	Alone in London
Dione Dennie	Foundation66
Beverley Chambers	Foundation66

Welcome

Hugh Morris, Chair of the London Drug Policy Forum (LDPF) welcomed attendees to the Guildhall. He suggested that the LDPF are now expanding their remit to look at alcohol as well as drugs, so they were keen to host this session on alcohol use. The LDPF hope to continue supporting the LDAN Homelessness Drug and Alcohol Forum in the future.

Background/introductions

Marcus Roberts, Director of Policy at DrugScope, commenced a round of introductions and provided a brief overview of LDAN's involvement in the London Councils Second Tier Support Project and the objectives of the LDAN Homelessness Drug and Alcohol Forum.

Training presentation on alcohol use and treatment

Don Shenker, Chief Executive of Alcohol Concern gave an overview of alcohol problems and treatment. Included was the impact of alcohol misuse, daily guidelines for drinking, alcohol

and the family and different treatment models. See accompanying PowerPoint for more information.

Discussion:

- It was raised that when looking at young people's alcohol usage there is not a suitable/comprehensive screening tool to ascertain whether the usage is problematic. (The main YP specific tool currently is DUSK which was devised for substance misuse in general not specifically alcohol use).
- Forum members discussed that there are only a few residential services in London that will take on older alcohol users who are not looking to abstain from alcohol use completely. The exceptions were noted as being projects run by Thames Reach, St. Mungos and Equinox.
- It was highlighted that there is a lack of referrals from Accident and Emergency Departments to alcohol services in London.
- Don stated that for those who are looking for different types of alcohol services, including young people' services, they can be found through the database on the Alcohol Concern website: www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Example of practice: Thames Reach, Robertson Street Project

Bekim Bërlajolli from Thames Reach gave an overview of their older homelessness and alcohol use project, Robertson Street. See accompanying PowerPoint for more information.

Discussion:

- Residents are allowed to consume alcohol on the premises, and in some circumstances project workers will even buy alcohol for the residents as a way to help with budgeting.
- Anyone over 50 in the Lambeth area can be referred.
- Members discussed the idea that for some the hostel was a home for life. Bekim highlighted the difficulty of finding any suitable move on accommodation for continuing drinkers.
- If SP funding for the project was diminished, Bekim suggested that residents would not become homeless because the project should be able to run through the housing benefit received.

Policy Update

Helen Mathie, Policy Project Manager at Homeless Link provided an overview of current policy issues in the homeless and substance misuse sector.

SNAP 2010- Helen informed the members of the Survey and Needs and Provision (SNAP). SNAP maps the sector providing services to those who are homeless in England. The findings of the survey outlined that there has been a dramatic improvement in service availability across all types of services. However, there are still problems with access to those services, an inadequacy of external services and client motivation. The full report is available at <http://www.homeless.org.uk/snap-2010>

Homelessness and Health- Homeless Link is piloting a health needs audit tool across primary care trusts in nine regions which will enable homelessness agencies to record and evidence the health needs of their clients. By gathering improved data about those needs, the project aims to improve the capacity of agencies to inform commissioning of health services that are both responsive and flexible to the needs of homeless clients. For more information visit <http://www.homeless.org.uk/health-needs-audit>

Coalition on Older Homelessness- The Coalition on Older Homelessness Project (COHP) works to raise awareness of the specific needs of older homeless people and for improved services for this client group. Anyone working with older homeless people or with an interest in the issues affecting them is invited to join. For more information visit <http://www.homeless.org.uk/older-homelessness>

Information sharing/group work on working with clients with alcohol problems

What are the biggest challenges that your organisation faces when working with clients with alcohol problems?

- Initial engagement with clients so they are motivated to attend appointments, and attend while not under influence of alcohol.
- Motivational work with clients before residential rehab.
- Engaging with young people so they recognise or admit to alcohol problems.
- Working with clients to raise awareness that drinking with visitors puts their tenancy at risk.
- Engaging with mental health services in relation to clients with alcohol problems.
- Encouraging clients to re-engage with detox or treatment programmes after previous bad experiences.
- Ensuring that support plans are devised in case of relapse in abstinence projects (not just eviction)
- Engaging with schools.
- Funding for young clients.
- Accessing wet hostels (not enough available).
- Demonstrating that SP funding targets of two years are often too ambitious.
- Different definition of 'local connection' for different services/Boroughs.
- Local connection is not always beneficial as history could be traumatic.
- Postcode lottery of services -Mismatch of supply and demand.
- Competition for funding between boroughs/organisations (discussion of potential to merge borough funding/Pan-London funding).

Do you currently provide, or have links with any alcohol support services in London?

- One floating support worker suggested that their work focused on motivation to address alcohol problems, but they do provide information on available services if the client is ready. Most referrals to treatment are made through GPs.
- One young person's service provider suggested that they had extreme difficulty accessing residential rehabilitation for one of their service users. Clients that had received rehabilitation orders through the criminal justice system could access treatment more easily, but were often not happy with the treatment options on offer.
- Another service suggested that they referred clients to treatment through their local DAAT team.

**Are more specialist services needed for homeless people with alcohol problems?
What type of services?**

- Longer-stay projects
- Projects that support people living in temporary accommodation
- Move on accommodation
- Working with young people in unsecured accommodation
- In some areas of London there was a suggestion that there are too many specialist services and too few generic services that are able to deal with a range of issues
- Older homeless services
- Family mediation services and work with social isolation
- Gender specific services
- Support for prescription drug addiction alongside alcohol use