

General themes:

- Chronic shortage of social housing both nationally but particularly in Winchester.
 - One million classified as homeless – a 17% increase in the last 12 months.
 - Rough sleepers have a life expectancy of 42.
 - 46% of homeless children are still having behavioural problems one year on.
 - At any one time there are 25 people living rough in Winchester – about twice the official figure.
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Winchester Women's Refuge

The Refuge provides a safe haven to seven women and their children fleeing domestic abuse. Self-referral sometimes happens but mostly referrals are from social services, the police and the domestic violence helpline.

The Refuge is run by Stoneham which runs 41 refuges in total of which 3 are for men the rest are only for women. 1 in 4 women are the victims of domestic violence compared to 1 in 10 men. They conduct outreach support to men even though they cannot accommodate them. Male children over 14 not usually admitted but Stoneham's limit 18.

They link closely to Trinity. They are the only refuge in the area which will accept animals (incidentally, cruelty to animals is a predictor of other violence).

They are always full and constantly receiving referrals every day. There is a six month time limit – since the longer they stay the more institutionalised they become. However, the lack of accommodation makes moving on very difficult.

The re-settlement service covers the same police area – which means that Winchester covers more than the City - down as far as Havant. There is no time limit on the use of the outreach service. It is very difficult to re-settle users in the area.

Children meet with particular problems since it is strange living in a communal environment where they are not allowed to have friends over; can't talk about 'home' as its location must be kept secret and therefore they do become isolated.

Donations help pay for breaks and parties and provide for follow-on needs. They rely heavily on donations of toiletries, bedding, toys for the children and arts and crafts materials.

They have recently refurbished the house and have been permitted to make use of a log cabin in the grounds to use as a meeting room for counselling sessions etc. Funds are needed to be made into a relaxing and safe haven.

Trinity Centre (www.trinitywinchester.org.uk)

Service users can be addicted; bring dogs and their children to the centre. 60-70 users come each day. 120 women used the service in 2011. It costs £200,000 per annum to run which is a massive fund-raising issue.

They provide:

- A successful job club which helps with CV writing and interviews.
- Outreach to rough sleepers – in conjunction with Night Shelter (see below).
- Women's service – 3 days per week; counselling and key help for domestic violence sufferers (accessed by Refuge users) – all sort of people are referred via police, GPs, mental health support workers and self-referrals. Freedom programme to break cycle of domestic violence; Empowerment programme to follow on and restore confidence. On average 35 violent attacks occur before the victim seeks help. Violence increases 38% during football tournaments; 2 women die per annum.
- Adult education – cooking, IT, CV building, literacy & numeracy.
- Psychotherapy – 95% of users need counselling.

To provide an extra day of counselling per week at the Women's service would cost between £5 - 9,000.

Winchester Churches Night Shelter (www.wcns.org.uk)

Moved to new home in 1997 where it has 17 beds. Its funding is always vulnerable. Rely on donations. The office is open 9am - 2pm. It opens each evening at 6pm and guest sleepers must vacate the premises by 8.30am. They have one full-time manager; one part-time and 4 full-time supervisors. Volunteers are needed to support full-time staff – 2 per night.

They do have some female guests – 34 women in 2010/11 which is 24% of total guests – up 127% on previous year. There are often difficulties in moving out of care. They endeavour to help guests find follow-on accommodation – 60-70% do find a permanent home.

Guests pay £2 per night if on benefits and £10 per night if in work. It is a safe environment which means it is dry – that is, potential guests are breathalysed and only admitted if not inebriated. There is a strong need for a wet shelter in Winchester. There is a 97% occupancy – full most nights.

It is legendary for food – its main inflow is at Christmas and Harvest festival. A two course meal is provided in the evening; guests make their own breakfasts. They are grateful for volunteers to make food offsite which is frozen and also help with food preparation and serving. Guidance is given to volunteer cooks regarding food hygiene and refresher courses are provided by the Army.

Some services are provided:

- Financial advice
- IT skills training
- Doing tasks as a team
- Food preparation rota

Emmaus Hampshire (www.emmaus.org.uk/hampshire)

Watch “The Homeless Crisis” video on You Tube which shows that homelessness can happen to mainstream people. The changes to benefits in 2013 will make matters considerably worse.

Emmaus Hampshire opened in a new build property in 2009. 24 companions live and work there. To live there a companion must come off benefits (apart from housing benefit) and work a 40 hour week. The pay covers their expenses and a little bit more

There is no grant aid but companions can claim housing benefit. Money is made by the collection of furniture and selling it from their Bar End and Eastleigh outlets. Good quality stock goes to auction; poorer quality is restored and sold.

There are 23 communities in the UK. The movement started in France after WWII where there are about 300 communities – it is an international organisation now.

The central purpose of the community is empowering people – giving them a reason to get out of bed in the morning. They do not work with people who have complex needs.

It is possible for companions to move between communities. It is also possible to remain for up to 3 months if they obtain an outside job. There is a lack of move on accommodation to help them leave.

Most communities can break even within 5 years. Companions support charities too by providing furniture. Seen as a model by Government as costs them nothing!

They rely on:

- Goodwill
 - Donations
 - Clothes
 - Books
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