

# doorway

Moving on from Homelessness in North Wiltshire



## Annual Report

**April 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 to  
March 31<sup>st</sup> 2007**



# Doorway

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# Doorway

## Homelessness in North Wiltshire

In common with other rural areas, single homelessness in North Wiltshire is largely an invisible problem. For many, living in Wiltshire is the stuff of dreams – a rural idyll – but issues such as single homelessness, rough sleeping, and street violence against homeless adults are under-reported and un-researched.

***For many years J lived in a derelict, rat infested, caravan in a field on the outskirts of a picturesque North Wiltshire village. He tried to keep himself to himself, but local children and adults would ride round the field taunting him and stealing his possessions.***

J first came to Doorway in 2006 to offer his services as a volunteer at the Doorway drop-in. When we learnt about his own housing situation, we helped him to complete housing application forms and involved Public Protection Officers who immediately condemned the caravan as unfit for occupation. J had not regarded himself as 'homeless' and had he not wanted to help people less fortunate than himself, might still be living in that field today.

There is no hostel or night shelter in North Wiltshire and particularly in the winter, people sleep in the Chippenham underground car park and in outbuildings. 41% of those willing to give information at their first visit were sleeping rough and up to 8 were sleeping outdoors in or near Chippenham on any single night. There are no statistics for the rest of North Wiltshire.

### Our Vision

We believe that homeless and marginalised individuals are capable of change and will only achieve their full potential when offered a safe, supportive, empowering and non-judgmental environment – it is our vision to provide such an environment and meaningful activities which will help reverse the spiral of homelessness.

# Doorway

## Review of the Year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007

### The Drop-in

*"I have been attacked with bottles by young lads"*

*"My possessions have been stolen from my tent"*

*"I am labelled – people report me to the Police even  
when I have done nothing wrong"*

Our core service, the Drop-in, opens for two sessions a week on Monday mornings and Thursday afternoons providing free of all charge:

- A warm safe place to socialise and enjoy a freshly cooked meal
- Laundry and shower facilities, with a change of clothes if needed
- Sleeping bags and food parcels
- Befriending by trained staff and support to access specialist housing, health and social services
- Activities e.g. table tennis, music improvisation, newspapers, computer games

We also accompany guests to GP, benefits and other official appointments when staffing allows.

### Activities

*"You gotta come to the Salvation man....!"*

*Guest overheard phoning a friend to come and join him at a music workshop*

When funding allows we offer structured activities such as music and arts workshops and IT training. These aim to build self esteem and teach new skills as a first step towards moving into work and sustaining a tenancy.

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***"It feels good to be learning a skill. I was nervous at first, but the atmosphere is so friendly, and I feel as if I'm really getting somewhere – though it is hard work"***

*IT Student*

In 2006/7 we ran 27 additional activity sessions offering IT training, music and arts and crafts workshops attended by 15 guests. As a result:

- One formerly homeless guest moved on to study music at Chippenham College, after regular tuition at the centre
- 3 learners achieved CLAIT modules in basic IT skills

***"When you're homeless and sat in the park, you can use art to disguise who you actually are – I never wanted people to find out so the sketch book worked quite well"***

Doorway became a distributor for The Big Issue early in 2007 and has 3 official vendors, which helps reduce begging in Chippenham.

## Our Guests

***"I am abused and called a dirty old tramp"***

The major upheaval of moving the drop-in from our Salvation Army premises for 3 months while they were refurbished affected for a time the use of the drop-in. Having moved back into the hall with its vastly improved facilities, attendance has returned to former levels.

***"I have been attacked with golf balls and eggs"***

Of those new guests willing to give personal information:

- 41% were sleeping outdoors
- Their average age was 33
- Nearly 20% were women.
- More than half were homeless as a result of relationship breakdown.

# Doorway

## **Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 we:**

- Opened for 95 drop-in sessions and served 2,046 meals to 195 individual guests.
- Were visited by 118 new guests for the first time.
- Launched our new website in September which was receiving 1400+ hits per month by March 2007.
- Launched a major PR campaign to inform and involve the local community, including the 'Pictures and Words' exhibition of guests' art and creative writing work which toured local libraries and other venues.
- Worked with 'Friends of Doorway' volunteers – to develop a programme of fundraising and awareness raising events, including their new recycling initiative
- Engaged with St Peter's School and Wiltshire College to inform and involve students.
- Joined Chippenham Chamber of Commerce and organised a lunch for its members
- Researched new models for supporting guests more effectively and reviewed our Business plan
- Raised funding from the Chippenham Borough Lands Charity to recruit a new Support Services Manager with a social work background who will develop individualised support for our guests through the 'Moving On' project.

***"B said simply – 'I've done something today I never thought I'd be able to do'- he gave me a hug as he left – means more to me than having a piece performed at the Proms"***

*Al Summers – Music Workshop Facilitator*

# Doorway

## Resources

### Funding

Staff time, premises and facilities to the value of at least 60% of our core running costs this year have been contributed by The Salvation Army Chippenham Corps and our hosts during the refurbishment, Central Methodist Church, Monkton Hill, Chippenham

We have received nearly £9,000 from local Churches, groups and individuals in the form of voluntary donations and nearly £700 from the Friends of Doorway during their first full year of operation.

We are very grateful to:

- Chippenham Churches Together, individual local Churches and individuals for gifts of money, food, clothing and volunteer time
- Local businesses for gifts of food and items for recycling

In addition we have received generous funding from:

- Westlea Housing Association
- North Wilts District Council Area 3 Committee (Arts Project)
- North Wilts District Council and The Community Safety Partnership
- The Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation supported by the EU (Progress 2 funding for activities sessions)
- The Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation (staff time)
- The Jack Lane Charitable Trust (for food etc)
- The Football Association (from the Charity Shield proceeds via Chippenham Town Football Club)

*A detailed financial report for the year ended 31.3.07 is available in Appendix 1*

# Doorway

## People

We now have:

- 4 part-time staff: Project Manager, Administrator and PR and Marketing Officer, employed by CVS North Wiltshire and a sessional Support Worker, employed by The Salvation Army.
- Over 30 highly trained and dedicated volunteers who have created the welcoming, positive atmosphere at the drop-in. They contributed nearly 4,000 hours to the drop-in last year, equivalent to more than 2 full-time posts in addition to hours they spent training.

We are very grateful to the following who also gave volunteer time and professional expertise:

- Stephen Pickering of Pickering Communications who designed and produced our Newsletter, Doorway
- Geo Roberts of the Wilsher Group for support in the form of executive coaching
- James Scanlan, Marketing and Public Relations Manager from Morris Owen, Accountants, via the ProHelp organisation, who helped us to develop our PR and Marketing Strategy.
- Christine Smith who typed and produced the monthly staff newsletter

# Doorway

## Future Plans

### Short Term

#### **We will secure funding for the next 2 years by:**

- Continuing to develop our intensive PR and marketing plan concentrating particularly on the business sector and schools to raise public awareness and support
- Developing the role of the Friends of Doorway to fundraise and engage with our community, particularly via the recycling project
- Researching and applying to statutory and charitable funders
- Working towards sustainability; seeking new funding opportunities and developing new partnerships to achieve this

#### **This will enable us to:**

- Introduce new models of support and structured activities to help our guests to move on in their lives, including better ways to monitor their journey
- Reach out to all who need our support in the rest of North Wiltshire
- Increase community understanding of the issues around homelessness in North Wiltshire and their commitment to the project
- Work with our guests, the Police and other partners to report and find solutions for violent and disturbing incidents against homeless and marginalised people
- Work towards a safer environment for everyone in our community

### Longer Term

#### **We will:**

- Work with partners towards integrating the drop-in into a comprehensive service for homeless and marginalised people in North Wiltshire including a direct access hostel

# Doorway

## In Conclusion

**This has been a year of remarkable change and rapid planned development, resulting in vastly improved facilities and practical support for our guests.**

In particular:

We now have a shower and access to a new IT centre, thanks to a major refurbishment carried out by The Salvation Army, Chippenham Corps.

Structured IT training and arts and music workshops funded from statutory, voluntary and charitable sources, have increased guests' self confidence and helped them develop new skills

However, response to formal applications to charitable and statutory funders was disappointing this year and we decided to work towards a more broadly based funding strategy.

One of our main aims was to raise the profile of Doorway locally and to increase community involvement at all levels.

To achieve this we set up the Friends of Doorway group and, using a private donation, we recruited for the first time a PR and Marketing Officer who developed our website and our new marketing strategy.

The results far exceeded our expectations and included:

- Positive engagement with local media
- Increased networking within the business sector via Chippenham Chamber of Commerce
- Productive new relationships with the business sector via Business in the Community
- Positive engagement with younger people - working with Wiltshire College and local schools
- New possibilities for partnership working in the voluntary and statutory sectors
- Inclusion of Doorway as a key resource in local strategies for homeless and socially excluded adults

# Doorway

Finally, we have become increasingly concerned during the year at the frequency of violent attacks on our guests, mainly by gangs of young people, which go un-reported.

In the coming year we will:

Continue to work with our guests and the Police to ensure that victimisation of homeless and marginalised adults in Chippenham is recorded and addressed.

Develop our PR and work with schools and colleges to 'put a human face' to a problem, often born of prejudice and ignorance in some sectors of our community.

**Our raised profile during the year has attracted new sources of funding and other support which is all very encouraging. However we continue to live from hand to mouth financially and we must continually strive for new opportunities to change and develop if we are to achieve the sustainable funding which will enable us to continue making a positive difference on behalf of the community we serve.**

*Margaret Cleverley  
Doorway Manager  
April 2007*

## Appendix 1

# Doorway – Income and Expenditure Report 1.4.06 to 31.3.07

### Expenditure

	Core	Activities Programme	Salvation Army Contribution	Total
<b>Staff</b>	25,524	2,396	8,907	<b>36,827</b>
<b>Other Staff Costs</b>	869		0	<b>869</b>
<b>Volunteer Costs</b>	4,352	41	0	<b>4,393</b>
<b>Centre Costs</b>				
Rent		500	3,840	<b>4,340</b>
Maintenance/Repairs etc	34		1,200	<b>1,234</b>
<b>Office Costs</b>	3,134	59	6,460	<b>9,653</b>
<b>Equipment</b>	3,552			<b>3,552</b>
<b>Services for Guests</b>	2,019	3,436	4,800	<b>10,256</b>
<b>Monitoring &amp; Review</b>	438		0	438
<b>Management Costs</b>	4,122	266	1,335	<b>5,723</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>44,043</b>	<b>6,699</b>	<b>26,542</b>	<b>77,284</b>

### Income

	Core	Activities Programme	Salvation Army Contribution	Total
<b>Salvation Army (Contribution in kind)</b>			26,542	<b>26,542</b>
<b>Westlea</b>	15,000			
<b>WSCF-Project assistant</b>	2,642			<b>2,642</b>
<b>North Wiltshire DC</b>	3,500			<b>3,500</b>
<b>WSCF/EU Progress 2</b>		6,208		<b>6,208</b>
<b>Income cf from 31.3.06</b>	28,984			<b>28,984</b>
<b>Mayor's charity cf from 31.3.06</b>	3,314			<b>3,314</b>
<b>Donations-General</b>	8,861			<b>8,861</b>
<b>Donations-Friends of Doorway</b>	628			<b>628</b>
<b>Sales of Big Issue</b>	11			<b>11</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>62,939</b>	<b>6,208</b>	<b>26,542</b>	<b>95,689</b>

**Income carried forward to 1.4.07= £18,406**

*Full audited accounts are to be found in the CVS North Wiltshire Annual Report and Accounts*

### Monitoring the Project

The drop-in opened for 95 sessions – slightly fewer than the previous year, mainly due to unavoidable closures while the hall was being refurbished. We served 2,046 meals to guests.

#### Hours donated by volunteers

Volunteers contributed nearly 4,000 hours to the drop-in last year, in addition to hours they spent training. This equates to over 42 hours per session and is equivalent to more than 2 full-time posts.

#### Guest Information

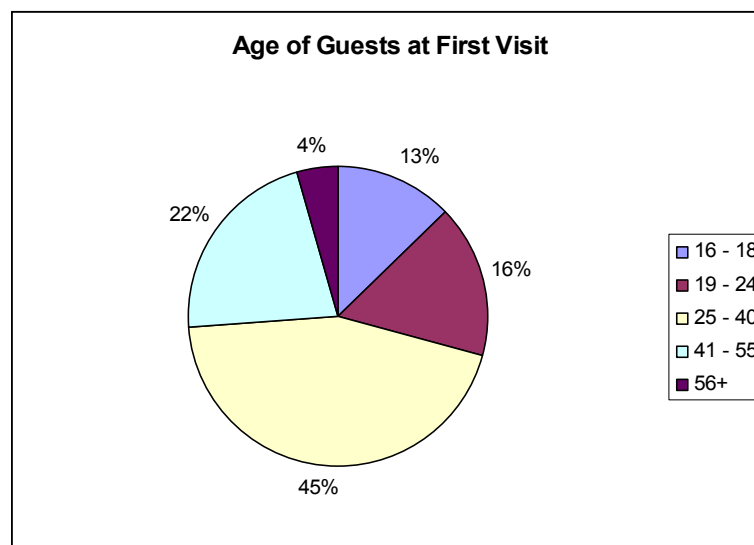
195 individuals used the drop-in, of whom 118 attended for the first time.

Quantitative information was gathered on a regular basis from guests. However because of the sensitive nature of the data, some guests were unwilling to be interviewed. The following statistics are derived from the 66 new guests (56%) who were willing to give personal information.

*In the coming year we will review our data collection procedures to see whether we can improve response rates.*

#### **1. Average Age**

The average age of new guests was 34, broken down as follows:



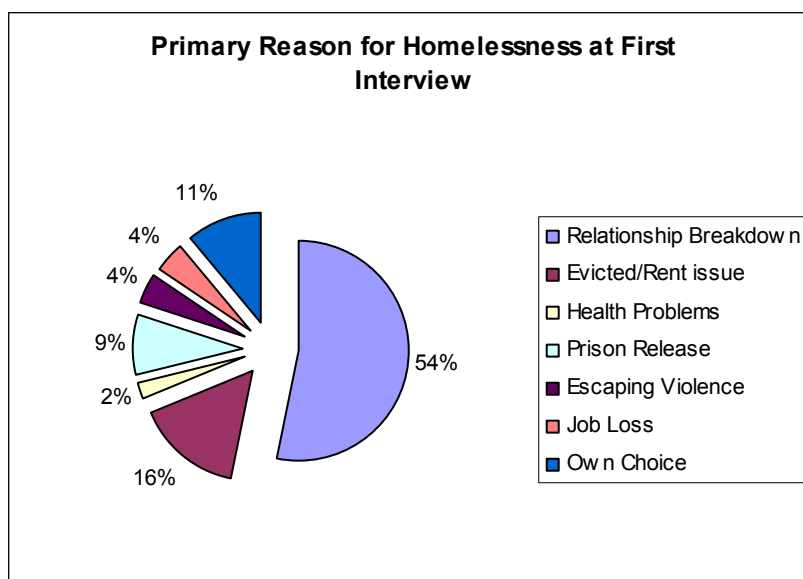
# Doorway

## 2. Ethnicity

North Wiltshire is not an area of great ethnic diversity. Most new guests interviewed during this period classed themselves as White/British, English, Scots or Irish. There was also one new white American and one new black Caribbean guest during the year. Several black and mixed race guests from previous years continued to attend the drop-in.

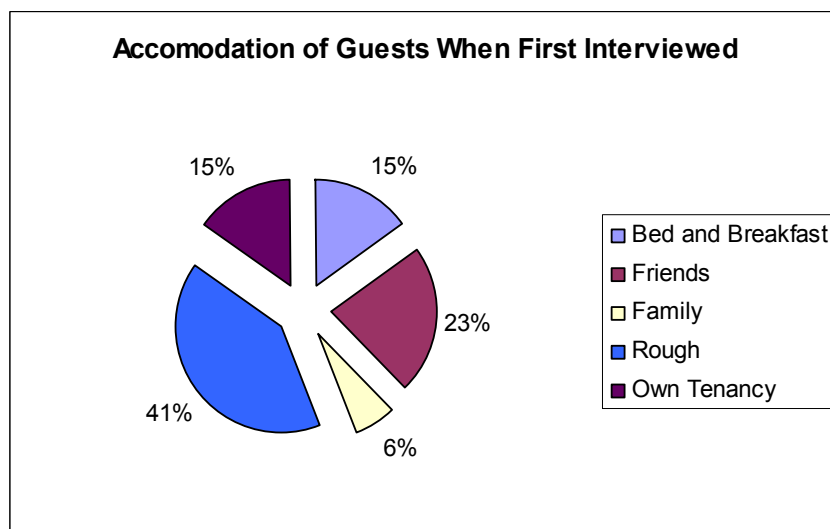
## 3. Reasons for Homelessness

Guests gave the following main reasons for their homelessness:



## 4. Housing

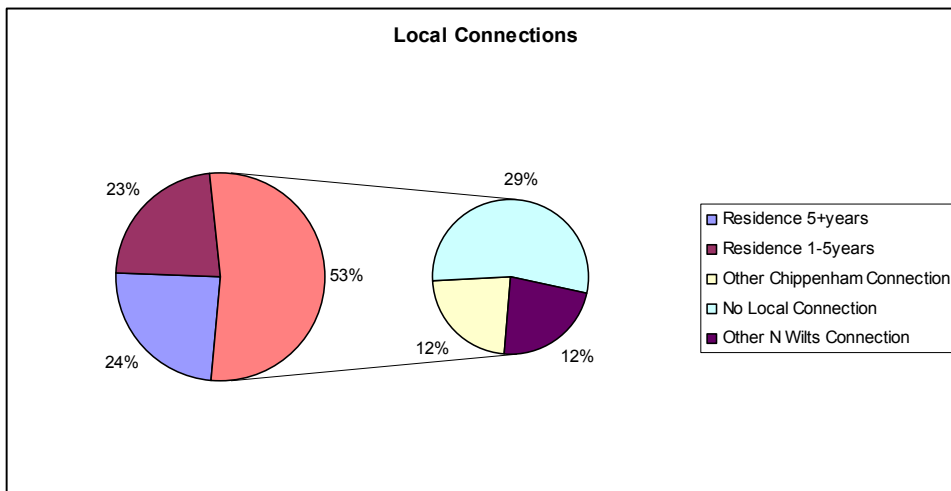
Guests gave the following information regarding their accommodation:



# Doorway

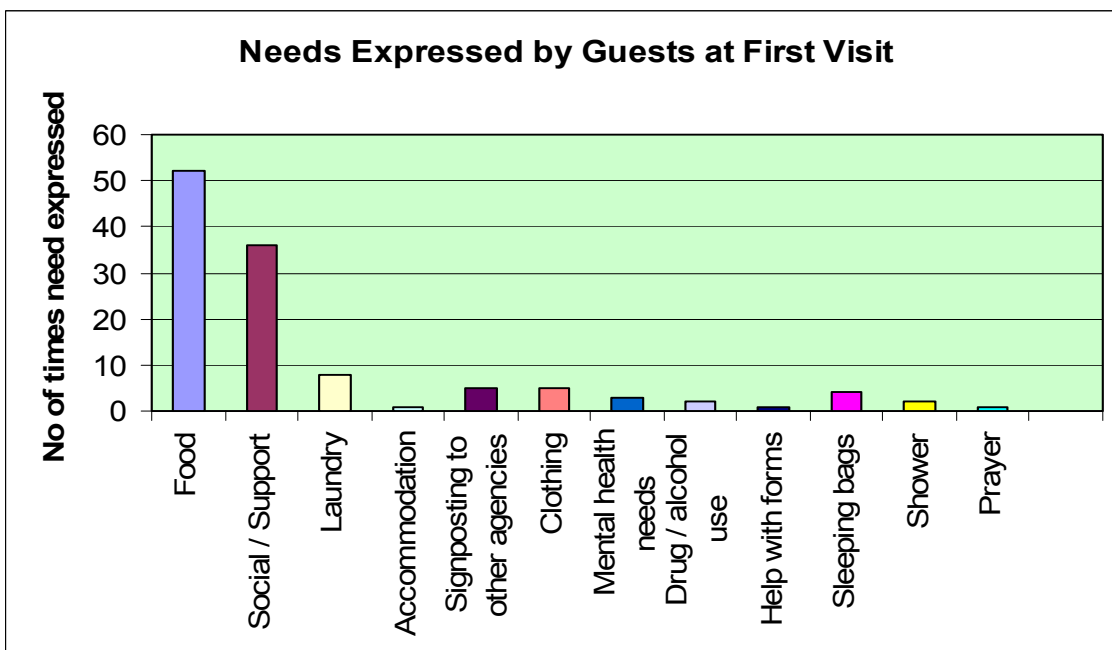
## 5. Local Connections:

The majority of guests had a local connection with Chippenham or with another part of North Wiltshire. Of those with less than one year's residence in the town, nearly half had another connection, such as family living here or previous residence or had a connection with another town in North Wiltshire. 10% of guests were born in Chippenham. Generally the majority of guests who attended regularly had local connections. About half of those who said they had no connection with North Wiltshire at all, were transient visitors and visited on one occasion only.



## 6. Needs

Guests expressed the following needs at first interview. It must be remembered that guests rarely ask for services that they believe are not provided.



# Doorway



The Community Foundation  
for Wiltshire & Swindon



**ZURICH**

*North  
Wiltshire  
District  
Council*



**EUROPEAN UNION**  
European Social Fund

Doorway is funded by The Community Foundation for Wiltshire & Swindon, with support from the European Union, North Wiltshire District Council, Westlea Housing Association & Zurich Cares, Chippenham Churches Together, The Jack Lane Charitable Trust and Donations from individuals, Churches and other Organisations.