

Doorway Guest Survey 2012

Needs, Impact and the Future

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Introduction:

This report analyses the data collected by the Doorway 2012 Annual Survey. We aim to document and explore the types of needs presented to the organisation by our guests, how we engage with these needs, the impact our service has on guests and how we can support them in the future.

Doorway takes a holistic approach to supporting our guests by attempting to meet more than just immediate needs. We recognise the importance of a guest-led method of support with staff and volunteers adopting the role of enablers of change. *Our Vision* states:

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-judgemental environment – it is our vision to provide such an environment and meaningful activities which will help reverse the spiral of homelessness.

We understand homelessness to be an issue of multi-deprivation covering complex issues including substance misuse, mental health and education. To this end we work to engage with all the areas of guests' lives in which they may be experiencing difficulty. This ranges from providing advocacy work in regards to engaging with other agencies, providing an environment where triage for drug and alcohol issues can take place to simply playing table tennis. Our approach can be described, using the words of Gerard Lemos, as valuing 'the importance of understanding the vulnerable person needing support as a whole, a multi-faceted individual with a complex identity and with social and emotional aspirations as well as practical ones'.

Methodology:

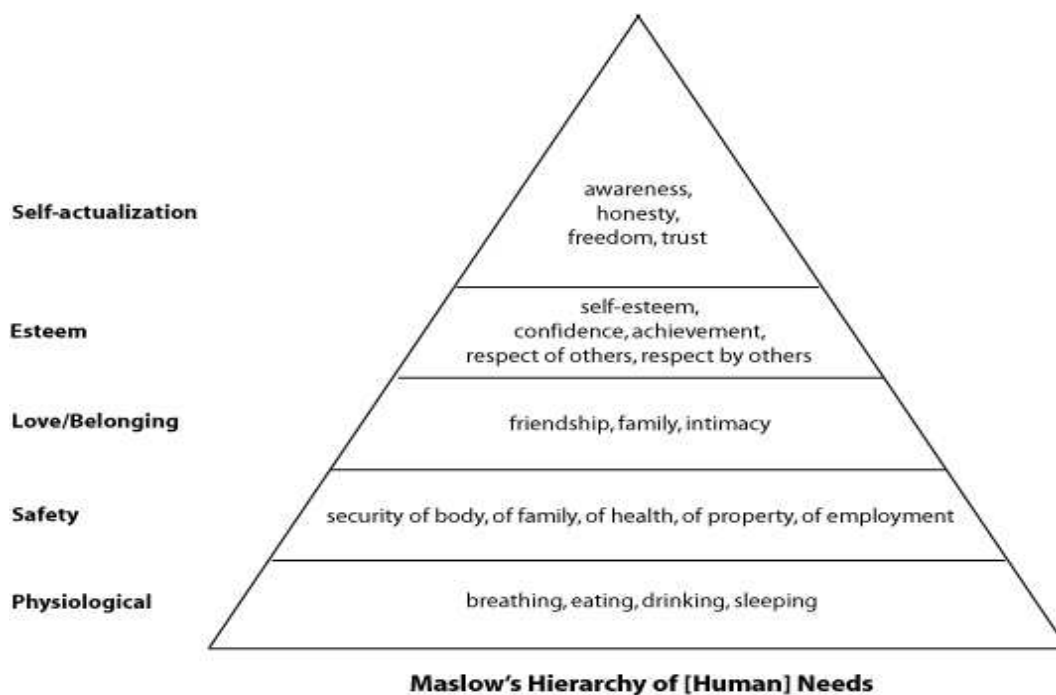
The 2012 Survey was carried out over a period of five weeks spanning June and July 2012 and obtained 50 respondents. The majority of the surveys were completed on a one-to-one basis with the guests and myself, with a few guests preferring to complete the surveys on their own. As a former staff member and volunteer I have an established relationship with the guests. This is beneficial when undertaking research with those with chaotic lifestyles and guests were very willing to be involved in the process, with only one refusal. Due to the nature of the guests attending the drop-in centre there are inconsistencies in responses to the survey and a range of percentages in response rates to questions. This unfortunately leads to a high margin of error within the data but I suggest it gives enough consistency to allow for a simple analysis of the information.

My methodological approach in this research is one of methodological pluralism. Rather than looking for patterns within the data I aimed to record a snapshot of the current relationship between guests, Doorway and the needs guests were presenting. The survey was designed in a way that asked both a range of direct quantifiable questions and questions regarding the impact of the organisation. The data therefore is large-N but can be analysed in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The method used to collate the data is quantitative but the nature of respondents and execution of the surveys allows for a further qualitative approach to the responses.

The design of the survey was very important in regards to gleaning the information that we wanted to collect from the specific context in which we were collecting it. As the research engaged with people with chaotic and complex lifestyles the survey had to be designed so that it was easy to use and held guests' attention but also gave ample opportunity for a high level of detail. The survey was organised into four sections; personal circumstances, use of services, impact of services and

hopes for the future. I will engage with the first two sections in a purely quantitative manner but will use a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches when analysing the impact of the organisation. I suggest that this will give a fuller picture to the relationship between Doorway and the guests. This qualitative approach will take the form of three brief case studies of individual respondents. The final section will engage with the guests' hopes for the future and will also briefly address the role of Doorway in regards to impending welfare reforms which will greatly affect our guests.

Throughout this report I will be referring to Maslow's hierarchy of need in regards to the services that Doorway provides. An image of this theory can be seen below.



I will be using this theory in order to demonstrate and analyse the types of support Doorway provides and the extent of impact the organisation has on meeting the multifarious needs of the guests. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is progressive, with each tier only becoming a realizable need when previous needs have been met. For example, employment is only achievable when basic needs such as nourishment have been met. At Doorway we attempt to offer support in all five tiers of the hierarchy in keeping with our comprehensive approach to support: we provide hot meals twice a week, a safe social environment and the chance to be creative through workshops and projects.

I will now present the analysis of this survey data following the design of the survey itself. The first section will outline a profile of our guests using the questions concerning personal circumstances. This section will give an idea of the needs presented by the guests. The second section will analyse the drop-in services used by the guests. I will delineate these services by Maslow's hierarchy and analyse how guests engage with the service. The third section will explore the impact Doorway has on guests' lives using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The final section will look at issues guests would like to change in their lives and how Doorway can enable them achieve this.

Section 1: Personal Circumstances

The first aim of the survey was to compile a profile of our guests. To do this we asked them how long they had been coming to the drop-in centre, whether they had had a tenancy when they first visited and whether they currently still had a tenancy. 52% of respondents had been coming to the drop-in for over three years. 16% had been a guest for between one and three years. 14% had been coming for between three and twelve months and 18% had been visiting for two months or less. 42% of respondents had had their own tenancy on their first visit to the centre whereas 58% had not. For those without a tenancy their accommodation varied, often from night to night. These following figures show that a combination of types of accommodation were being used by those without a permanent tenancy giving an indicator of a chaotic lifestyle. 52% had experience of staying outdoors and 52% had also stayed with family and friends. 17% had stayed in a form of temporary accommodation. For those staying outside or living a transient lifestyle it is obvious that basic needs, such as food and showering facilities, could be met by Doorway. However, the need for services by those who first attended while living in their own tenancy is not so apparent. When asked why they needed Doorway's help despite being housed 5% answered that their tenancy was at risk. 19% needed help with budgeting, 19% were experiencing problems with alcohol and drug and 14% needed support for mental health problems. The final two categories were 'unemployed' (5%) and 'other'. The most pertinent answers from the 'other' section were that respondents specifically mentioned coming to Doorway for food (19%) and social contact (19%). When amalgamating the categories which include financial problems 48% of guests had come to Doorway for support, even though they had their own tenancy, because of limited or unstable finances. It is worth noting that 86% of guests still had their properties at the time of the survey.

Our guests on their first visit, then, are almost equally split between those who are in tenancies and those who are homeless. Those who are homeless stay in a variety of accommodation which may contribute to a chaotic lifestyle. The guests who attend despite being housed do so mainly out of financial instability. It is worth noting, however, how many guests attend in order to maintain social contact. When asked why they first attended one respondent stated that they came for company as they were 'very isolated'. As previously stated, we understand homelessness to be an issue of multi-deprivation. The answers given here then are the immediate response of why a guest came to the drop-in, not a definitive account of the issues they may be experiencing. Guests could be having difficulty with all of the issues raised in the survey categories. The needs presented to Doorway by the guests therefore are multifarious and mixed.

Section 2: Use of drop-in services

As previously mentioned Doorway takes a comprehensive approach to support. This combined with the variety of needs of our guests means that we provide a wide range of services. This is reflected in Doorway's mission statement which can be found below.

Our Mission Statement

To realise this vision, Doorway will strive to:

- Provide a warm, safe, non-judgmental environment.
- Train staff and volunteers to engage with guests and form professional bounded relationships.
- Use these relationships to promote growth in guests' self esteem, confidence and aspirations.
- Provide information, support and, where necessary, practical help that will empower people to make and act on informed choices arrived at by themselves.
- Provide activities within the centre which are likely to enhance guests' skills and raise self-

confidence as a first step towards changing their lives.

- Encourage and empower guests to become involved in the running of the centre and in forums designed to give service users a voice.
- Promote the needs of homeless and marginalised people locally by means of high quality PR, thereby helping to reduce discrimination towards them and influencing the local community to become more supportive and less judgmental.

The survey recorded the percentage of guests which used each service Doorway provides. The figures can be seen below.

Type of service	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Meals	49	98%
Food parcels	35	70%
Rough sleeper pack	6	12%
Clothing	31	38%
Sleeping Bag	8	16%
Tent	6	12%
Showers	15	30%
Laundry	12	28%
Use of telephone	21	42%
Social contact	37	74%
Help with housing	26	52%
Access to healthcare	10	20%
Help with benefits	11	22%
Access to alcohol agency	9	18%
Access to drug agency	12	24%

When analysing these figures through the framework of Maslow's hierarchy we can understand what type of needs Doorway's services meet. The first eight services in the table we can categorise as meeting physiological needs; the first tier of the hierarchy. The most used service falls within this category showing that most guests, perhaps primarily, engage with Doorway in order to receive a meal. There is also a high percentage of guests who have used the food parcel service. This supports the analysis of the previous section which suggests that both homeless guests and guests with tenancies use Doorway due to unstable financial situations. The remainder of the services in the table, apart from social contact, can be categorised into Maslow's second tier: safety. The use of these services are also substantial. I suggest that social contact fits into the third tier: belonging. This service has the second highest percentage of use, with 74% of guests using Doorway in order to maintain social contact with others. This supports the analysis in section one which shows that 19% of guests with tenancies primarily used the organisation for social contact.

Using the framework allows us to analyse the type of needs that our guests use Doorway for support with. 14% of respondents use Doorway purely to meet physiological needs; the first eight services in the table. 4% use the organisation only for tier one and tier two needs; services that relate to basic needs and safety needs. Surprisingly, and perhaps impressively, 80% of the

respondents use Doorway services that cover all three tiers previously mentioned. This is due to the large amount of guests who use Doorway for the social aspect of the organisation. This concept of social contact or the tier of belonging can be easily engaged with in a negative way. One can suggest that it is not the role of a charity created to engage with rural homelessness to provide services of social contact for those who have tenancies. However, I suggest that this is part of the comprehensive approach to support that Doorway provides. When asked, further on in the survey, what impact Doorway has had on the guests' lives 40% of the respondents mentioned the social aspect of the organisation. One respondent stated 'put things in context, not the only one experiencing problems'. Others mentioned the opportunity Doorway provides for talking to people about their problems and increasing their social confidence. A respondent stated 'good to get out to talk and meet people. Stop isolation.' Another respondent summarised the social contact aspect of Doorway as making them 'stronger in my mind'. I suggest that for those experiencing issues of multi-deprivation isolation be a common problem. This can be more apparent for those experiencing mental health problems and also unemployment. Providing an opportunity for social contact is therefore a vital part of a comprehensive approach to support for those experiencing multi-deprivation.

Maslow's final tiers of esteem and self-actualisation can be seen to be engaged with by the range of projects and activities that Doorway provides. 17% of respondents had used, or regularly use, activities provided by the organisation. 66% of respondents had not used any of the activities but out of these respondents 45% wanted to take part in the future. The table below outlines the number and percentage of respondents which use each activity.

Activity	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents (out of 17 respondents who use activities)
Music	8	47%
Creative writing	8	47%
Blog	2	12%
Football	4	24%
Tuesday Group	1	6%
IT	6	35%
Moving On	2	12%
PHUs	0	0%
Table tennis	2	12%

53% of those who use activities only take part in one project and 47% take part in two or more. Of those who did two or more activities, 75% were long-term guests who had been attending the drop-in for over three years. Also, the longest established activities, music and creative writing, are those which have the highest attendance. These two previous figures suggest that consistency and time contribute to which guests use which activities. Long-term guests tend to be those who use activities more and when they do engage with a project their attendance is regular. This can be seen to support the concept of the hierarchy; that tiers of need are cumulative. When a guest has perhaps a more stable life with a consistent routine they are more likely to engage with an activity. Within the framework of the hierarchy this can be seen as the first three tiers of need being met to

a certain extent and therefore allowing the guest to engage with different activities rather than those related to meeting basic needs.

Section 3: Impact of services

The third section of the survey asked questions regarding the impact that Doorway services had made on the lives of the guests over the last twelve months. This was followed by the question 'can you sum up why Doorway matters to you?' I will use the first part of this section to analyse impact using a quantitative approach and then use the question on why Doorway matters to engage with the research in a qualitative way through case studies. The table below documents the data on the impact of Doorway's services.

Service/Impact	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Hot meals	49	98%
Social contact	40	80%
Somewhere safe	40	80%
Someone to talk to	34	68%
Practical help	16	32%
Relax and try new activities	36	72%
Help to find work	9	18%
Help to register on the housing list	10	20%
Help to get own home	8	16%
Increase skills	17	34%
Help with finances	10	20%
Feel more confident about...	21	42%
Other: i)Help keep up hygiene, helped me adjust ii)Put things in context iii)Carry on with artwork	3	6%

The first three services that guests found had made the biggest impact on their lives follows Maslow's hierarchy. Guests received hot meals (a basic need), appreciated Doorway being somewhere safe and were affected by the opportunity for social contact or 'belonging'. The fourth highest percentage (relax and try new activities) can also be seen to support the final two tiers of the hierarchy; esteem and self-actualisation. I suggest that these figures show that Doorway is engaging with guests on all levels of types of need. Guests can choose to use the organisation in order to fulfil just basic needs or to become engaged to an extent where they can increase their skills and allow their creativity to flourish.

I will now look at the impact Doorway has on its guests from a qualitative perspective. I suggest that this approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of the organisation on guests' lives and provides the opportunity for the research to be understood within the framework of a narrative, rather than stand-alone data.

Case Study 1: Respondent 5

Respondent 5 is a guest who has been using the drop-in centre for over three years. They had a tenancy when they first visited Doorway but stated that their income was so low that they needed help with food. This guest still has their own tenancy. The respondent uses Doorway for all three levels of the needs hierarchy and, pertinently, has been able to get in contact with an alcohol agency through using the drop-in. The services that have made an impact on their life in the last twelve months include hot meals, someone safe, social contact and someone to talk to. They state that Doorway has allowed them to 'put things in context, [I'm] not the only one experiencing problems'. When asked why Doorway matters they asserted that it is a 'support agency that makes you feel like you are still part of humanity, not just a number'.

Case Study 2: Respondent 10

Respondent 10 has been visiting the drop-in centre for between seven and twelve months. When they first came they were homeless and were staying in temporary accommodation. Unfortunately, they are still in this situation. Again, this respondent uses Doorway's services for all three levels of the needs hierarchy. The impact Doorway has made on this guest's life includes practical help, such as providing laundry and showers, and helping the guest to register on the housing list. The guest asserts that the drop-in has helped them to accept their situation and realise that they are not isolated. Doorway has also allowed them to keep up their standards of hygiene and adjust to their new situation. When asked why Doorway matters they stated: 'stopped me doing an armed robbery and becoming a criminal. Helped me adjust to being homeless from having a business and a home – practical help with a sudden change in circumstances.'

Case Study 3: Respondent 39

Respondent 39 has been using the drop-in services for between three and six months. They were homeless when they first visited and were staying with family and friends. They have used Doorway for help with all three categories of need, including accessing drug and alcohol agencies. The impact of the services over the past year having included helping the guest grow in confidence in all aspects of social life, helping to increase skills and helping them to find their own home. When asked why Doorway matters they stated 'without the help of Doorway I would have probably tried suicide again'.

These case studies illustrate the numerous needs that our guests have and the variety of ways that Doorway meets these needs. The organisation provides practical support such as helping guests to register on the housing list and offering showering and laundry facilities. It offers support in the form of signposting such as helping guests get in touch with drug or alcohol agencies. Furthermore, it provides what seems to be a rather simple but necessary service, that of letting people know that they are not isolated in their problems. As we can see from the case studies these services deliver hard outcomes which might not be measurable through data. These include impacts on guests' lives such as enabling them to take another approach to their problems than that of crime, or being a point of contact for someone who is suicidal.

Section D: Hopes for the Future

This final section of the report looks at whether the respondents plan to use the drop-in centre in the next six months, what they would like to change in their lives over the next six months and how Doorway can enable these changes. I will also briefly discuss the impending welfare reforms and the effect they will have on our case studies respondents. (A separate report has been written about the effect of the welfare reforms and can be found here: <http://www.doorwayproject.org.uk/News/Doorway%20Report%20on%20Welfare%20Reforms%20&%20Agency.htm>)

88% of respondents stated that they hope to use the drop-in centre over the next six months. 2% said they did not, while 10% failed to respond. The table below documents what guests would like to change over the next six months.

Would like to change	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Work	10	20%
Health	4	8%
Well-being	1	2%
Finances	6	12%
Hobby	3	6%
Home	11	22%
Training	2	4%
Confidence	5	10%
Fitter	3	6%
More assertive	3	6%
Substance Use	8	16%
Meet new people	11	22%

The guests were encouraged to provide multiple answers for this question most of which have been placed within these categories. The answers that did not fit into this division include:

- 'sort my life out'
- 'see my daughter'
- 'break through from depression'
- 'start treatment and understand more about it'
- 'take one day at a time'

The data shows that finding a home and meeting new people share the highest percentage of guests wanting change in these areas. This is closely followed by wanting to change their work-life which in this context mostly means finding or being able to work. When carrying out the surveys many people spoke about desperately wanting to find work even though they had a disability and had been told by medical staff that they couldn't work.

When asked how Doorway could help the respondents make these changes the responses were varied. Some mentioned specific practical suggestions such as support with liaising with the council and contacting an adoption organisation. One respondent stated 'I don't know that's your

job'. 27 guests gave a response to this question and out of these 26% suggested support from Doorway would help them to make these changes. 26% also specifically mentioned that Doorway carrying on with what it was already doing would be sufficient. The respondents would like to make changes on all levels of the hierarchy of need but almost a third suggest that Doorway's established services would enable them to do this.

When looking at questions regarding the future for our guests a big factor over the next year will be the Welfare Reform Act. At least 84% of respondents to the survey are claiming benefit and 12% did not answer the questions about benefits. A large percentage of these respondents are claiming disability benefits which will be most affected by the reforms. I will now return to our case studies respondents and analyse their benefit situation again with the aim of providing a narrative, but this time in regards to the effect of the reforms.

Respondent 5:

Respondent 5's benefits have been reduced over the last year, I suggest as part of the preparation for reform. They were reduced due to the guest no longer qualifying for disability benefit despite having a curvature of the spine and going blind. As mentioned previously this guest came to Doorway due to financial problems. When asked about the effects of this change to their benefit they state 'under control before, now pick and choose which bills to pay'. They also state that it causes them depression and anxiety. It appears that Respondent 5 came to Doorway with financial problems, has been able to adapt to and be in control of their finances but that might be undermined by welfare reform.

Respondent 10:

At the time of the survey Respondent 10 couldn't claim an adult Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) rate because of their lack of address. When asked about the impact of this on their life the guest replied that the system assumes claimants will have an address and that the money isn't enough for him to eat healthily without proper cooking facilities. The respondent stated that they felt 'not in control at all'. The engagement of benefits agencies with those without an address is not necessarily affected by the reforms. However, the streamlining of benefits and conditionality of payment may move Respondents 10 onto job-seeking benefits for which they will probably have to attend work schemes or placements. There are a range of issues that may arise regarding being homeless and attending these schemes such as the aforementioned lack of address to receive information concerning the schemes. This could result in Respondent 10 losing their benefits. As previously mentioned Respondent 10 stated that support from Doorway stopped them turning to crime to solve their problems. With this extra pressure from the benefit system this may again seem a feasible option to this respondent.

Respondent 39:

Respondent 39's benefits have increased over the last year due to a mental health assessment. They are able to claim Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and receive increased mental health assistance. They state that this has had a positive impact on their lives as they are able to 'better my quality of life; food and clothing'. However, the reforms look to get rid of DLA in order to streamline disability benefits into one set of payments. It is unclear whether Respondent 39 will qualify for support under the new reforms. As previously mentioned, support from Doorway has enabled this respondent to stabilise their life and not feel suicidal. Again, the potential effects of the welfare reforms on this respondent are unknown but could have a serious impact on their life.

Conclusion:

In this report I have looked at the needs presented to Doorway by our guests, the ways Doorway attempts to meet them and the impact that the drop-in centre has on our guests. I have suggested that Doorway attempts to engage with our guests' needs on all levels on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, from providing for basic needs such as food and warmth to providing a creative project for women to enjoy mutual support.

Our guests still want to make many changes in their lives which they feel Doorway can and does support them with. I suggest that Doorway's impact is important, and in some cases vital, to our guests' lives as our case studies show. However, our guests face a period of uncertainty and change over the next eighteen months due to the introduction of the welfare reforms. Doorway has begun to attempt to meet these needs through reassurance and information sharing, but will become an even more important source of support in these times of change.