

doorway

Moving on from Homelessness in North Wiltshire



'Sofa Surfing' by John Wiseman – Doorway Guest

Annual Report

**April 1st 2007 to
March 31st 2008**



Guest sleeping rough in Chippenham



Doorway SleepOut January 2007

Contents

Our Vision	3
Activities	4
Doorway and Complex Needs – the Domino Effect	6
Giving Marginalised People a Voice.....	8
The Moving On Project.....	9
Resources	10
The Team	10
Partnerships	11
Funding and Support.....	11
Our plans for 2008/9 are to:	11
And finally.....	12
Appendix 1	i
Doorway Provisional Project Income and Expenditure	i
Details of Grant Funding.....	ii
Appendix 2	iii
Monitoring the Drop-in	iii
Appendix 3	v
Community Engagement Programme Statistics	v

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) provides a safe place for (the guests) were they can be respected and treated with dignity.”

Patsy Davies, Swindon and Wiltshire Alcohol and Drugs Advisory Service (SWADS)

Doorway is a partnership between CVS North Wiltshire and The Salvation Army, Chippenham Corps. The project offers a **Drop-in** for homeless and marginalised adults twice a week supplying basic needs such as freshly cooked meals, shower and laundry facilities, food and clothing parcels and sleeping bags in a safe welcoming environment.

“Poor nutrition and eating behaviours not only have physical health consequences, but also impact on mental health, motivation and lifestyle choices.”

“The Seeds of Exclusion”: Salvation Army report 2008

“The cooking today was completely amazing!!”

Guest with complex needs including brain damage

“I am very impressed by the ability of the kitchen staff and also the centres helpful team that supervise the warm drinks ...clothes washing sometimes help with essentials....coats trainers etc”

Homeless guest



Sue with volunteer Clare

Trained volunteers supervised by professional paid staff befriend guests and help them with practical tasks such as dealing with State Benefits and utility services.

“I think (Doorway) is great because I feel so safe coming down and if I want to talk to someone I can and you can meet new people and everyone is so friendly.”

Guest with history of homelessness and substance use

“When I was in a mess it was something to look forward to in the week hot food and someone to look to.”

Former drug addict and dealer – now managing his own tenancy

Activities

Informal and more structured activities build skills and develop guests’ self confidence and a belief that they can change their lives for the better. Table tennis, newspapers, drawing materials and computer games are always available in the drop-in.

Structured activities led by volunteers this year have included:

- **Music improvisation** – weekly sessions led by volunteer Albert



Music improvisation Christmas 2007

- **Jewellery making** – led by volunteer Cathie who said:

“Jewellery making was a success. It took women and a couple of men away from their problems. They achieved making something pretty for themselves or others. It definitely de-stressed and built up confidence.”

- **The Tree of Hopes and Wishes** – In December 2007 guests and staff dressed a Christmas tree for the Central Methodist Church Christmas Tree Festival. The theme was ‘Hopes and Wishes’, which were recorded on labels hung from the tree. The process was emotionally demanding for all concerned and one of our volunteers recorded her feelings:

“I went to see the tree too and even tho’ I knew most of the comments, ‘cause I got them first hand, I was a blubbing mess... I’m proud to have played a part in it”

Shinead, Doorway volunteer

Hopes and Wishes included:

***“Health and happiness.” “A bed to sleep in and a roof over my head.”
“A good pair of boots that don’t leak.” “A flat nowhere near an off licence.” A
night shelter for people sleeping rough and passing through.”***

A full list of hopes and wishes can be found on our website



The Tree of Hopes and Wishes – Christmas 2007

The Salvation Army report, “The Seeds of Exclusion” 2008 notes that a high proportion of the homeless adults they surveyed lacked supporting relationships and had little or no contact with their families. This is echoed in our guests’ wishes for:

“Phone call from Mum”; “For my family to come and see me”; and “I want to see my daughter and adopted son”

For some guests, moving around as a child meant they never had experience of building lasting friendships. In our 2008 survey 22% of our regular guests had been in care and 25% came from service families. Over 5% had themselves served in the armed forces. We suspect that figures may be higher for guests who attend a few times but choose not to engage further.

Structured activities facilitated by professionals have included:

- **Monthly music workshops** involving up to 10 guests have been an important catalyst for self expression and personal development. Sessions were led by professional musician/teacher, Al Summers, who described progress achieved:

“Guests have used music as a language where words have been too painful or had too much baggage attached to them. This was one of the initial points of creative music workshops. Regular guests are now finding they can use words because music forms a comfortable and level meeting place”.

Al Summers

We saw very positive social interaction during both informal and structured music sessions and a marked increase in self esteem and motivation in all who took part:

“(Today) the music making was non-stop with total inclusion, a good deal of co-operation & mutual encouragement, with everyone allowing for others’ contributions.”

Al Summers

- **Weekly IT Club.** Guests have learnt how to use various software packages, including surfing the Internet and using email, supported by staff from Westlea’s eChippenham

“Doorway has changed my opinion of homeless people totally – they’ve opened my eyes to beyond the stereotype.”

Emma Jane eChippenham Agent



Emma Jane with two members of the Doorway IT club, Phil and Julian

For a trial period in 2007 Doorway distributed the **Big Issue** to up to 3 local vendors. This was seen as an important way of building guests’ self esteem and reducing begging in the town and will resume in 2008/9.

Doorway and Complex Needs – the Domino Effect

“For some people, the causes of homelessness are clear cut, but for others they can be more complex – where homelessness is not just a housing problem. People may have mental health problems, or substance abuse, or unemployment or a history of offending and chaotic lifestyles.”

Quoted from: “Sustainable Communities: Settled homes; Changing lives”
Department of Communities and Local Government Report 2005

Doorway is unique in North Wiltshire, being aimed at adults with complex needs which may or may not include homelessness. In many cases these issues will affect our guests’ ability to acquire and maintain a tenancy and we work with Westlea

Housing Association, C4 floating tenancy support and other partners to address some of these needs.

“I would love to be clean! Off alcohol.”

From Tree of Hopes and Wishes, Christmas 2007

Very few of our guests present with one sole problem. For many an experience such as relationship breakdown, bereavement, ill health or redundancy has triggered a chain of adverse events – a domino effect - which culminates in housing insecurity or homelessness, often involving increased drug or alcohol use along the way.

“Self-destructive alcohol and drug consumption, leading to dependency, is thought to result from the need to self-medicate and compensate for emotional deficiencies associated with an individual’s current circumstances and /or early childhood experiences.”

“The Seeds of Exclusion”: Salvation Army Report 2008

Whereas the estimated incidence of diagnosed mental illness each year in the general community is 25%, in a survey of regular drop-in users in 2008, 55% said they had a history of mental illness requiring treatment. 67% were taking prescribed medication for physical or mental illness, including substance dependency.

For detailed results of the Guest Survey – see appendix 2

Fear of violence and feelings of extreme anxiety and insecurity from living on the streets are frequently expressed:

- ***I wish people would stop abusing us***
- ***I wish I had somewhere I could cook my own food***
- ***I want people to stop hating us. I’ve seen the way they look at us.***
- ***I wish I could leave my stuff and it will still be there when I get back***
- ***Somewhere safe to sleep***

From Tree of Hopes and Wishes, Christmas 2007

53% of those surveyed had a criminal record – mainly theft or burglary to support a drug or alcohol habit or anti-social behaviour resulting from substance use or mental illness. Of these 36% had served custodial sentences.

Leaving care or a controlled environment such as prison, hospital or the armed services can be a critical time in people’s lives. Without an address and a place to have a shower and make oneself presentable one has little chance of obtaining work. Doorway offers these facilities as well as support to write CVs and apply for jobs online:

“I have been coming to the Doorway since leaving prison on 20th November. I start work on Monday 21st Jan thanks to the kind help I have received from all the staff here i.e. phone, dinners and clothes. Also The Salvation Army who gave me a great Christmas dinner. Thanks to you all. PM”

Some guests have less happy outcomes. One guest who had served in the Army, a substance user who had been excluded from most agencies in Chippenham

because of his aggressive and threatening behaviour, wrote to us after he had left the town:

“Cheers for trying to help but its a waste of time trying to sort your life out, its unreal they don’t give a shit.....like I say thanks for trying”

We assisted him to obtain benefits and gave him essential items such as food and sleeping bags. Our skilled staff built his trust and managed his challenging outbursts so effectively that there was no question of excluding him from the drop-in.

It is very rare for anyone to be excluded from the drop-in - we only excluded one guest temporarily for anti-social behaviour during the whole year.

Giving Marginalised People a Voice

Violent and other crime against homeless and marginalised adults, particularly by gangs of young people, often goes unreported because for various reasons victims are suspicious of authority.

Doorway has tackled this problem in two ways:

- **Active membership of forums** set up to address issues around community safety such as the Chippenham Neighbourhood Community Policing Team meetings and marginalisation such as Wiltshire Social Inclusion Partnership (WSIP). As a result Doorway has developed an excellent working relationship with the Police.
- A highly successful **Community Engagement Programme** led by Lisa Lewis, our Marketing and PR Officer, reaching all sections of the community, including schools and colleges, churches, businesses, voluntary and statutory services, community groups and individuals. (see Appendix 3 for details)

This programme raises awareness of issues around homelessness and marginalisation via the website, the media and talks to groups. It presents the ‘human face’ of homelessness and promotes the positive work which is done in the drop-in for the benefit of the whole community. Guests are encouraged to contribute to our PR events and media releases. Our aim is to reduce the fear and prejudice against homeless people and to increase understanding and commitment to the project by local people.

Some very effective work has been carried out in local primary and senior schools:

*“Pupils were surprised to hear some hard hitting facts about homelessness, especially awareness of homelessness in their own community and the fact that it can happen to anyone!
.... two of my pupils spoke to me after the lesson to say that their opinions of the homeless had changed. They learnt that homeless people are humans just like you and me; they just need some additional support in life like we all need from time to time”*

*Mark Perraton, Teacher of Personal, Social and Religious Education,
Sheldon School*



Pupils from Hardenhuish School raised £2,000 for the project from an 'own clothes' day

Doorway is also a member of Chippenham Chamber of Commerce, believing that the effectiveness of work achieved in the drop-in depends on understanding and support from all sections of the community.

“Trading round the corner from Doorway initially made us apprehensive as strangers appeared in the streets that we did not understand. J was a typical example We have found him a good guy who is dealing with his problems without recourse to aggression. He will heed any requests – like moving his bag from our doorway or smoking elsewhere when our doors are open.

We commend everyone who is involved in this project for helping those displaced to help themselves”

*Sandie Webb, Revolutions Café
Chamber of Commerce Member*

The Moving On Project

Guests are supported by trained staff to deal with a considerable variety of issues in their lives during drop-in sessions and staff regularly provide moral and practical support and signpost to specialist agencies such as Housing Options, CAB and C4 floating tenancy support. Staff have also accompanied guests to hospital and GP appointments.

“I very much see the Doorway Project as a place where the initial groundwork and preparatory work can be done with guests. It provides a safe and secure place for them to be, until they may reach a point where they feel that they might want to move on and therefore referred to the appropriate agency at that time.”

Patsy Davies SWADS Wiltshire

However we have long believed that there were gaps in existing services which could most appropriately be provided within the trusting relationships which we have developed with our guests at Doorway.

Thanks to a 2-year grant from Chippenham Borough Lands Charity we were able to appoint a Support Services Manager, Karen Moore in May 2007. She piloted our **Moving On Project** supporting guests to identify their life goals and work towards them via small achievable changes in their lives. 5 guests had initial interviews and 2 have gone on to deal successfully with issues including budgeting, debt management and relationships. Feedback has been very positive and we have seen remarkable signs of change in those who have taken part.

One formerly homeless guest commented:

“I’ve never looked at my life like that before”

More volunteers will be trained in 2008/9 to deliver the Moving On project which is now part of Doorway’s core services.

Resources

The Team

One of our greatest strengths and crucial to the success of the project is the team of paid and voluntary staff who bring such a wide variety of skills and experience to the project united by their deep commitment to our guests and our community.

We have 5 part-time paid staff. David Thompson, Support Worker helps run the drop-in and train staff and is employed by The Salvation Army. The other 4 staff are employed by CVS North Wiltshire: Margaret Cleverley, Project Manager, responsible for day to day management of the project and for fundraising; Fiona Toseland, responsible for administration; Lisa Lewis, PR and Marketing Officer, responsible for Community Engagement, information and administration; and Karen Moore, Support Services Manager, who recruits, trains and supervises volunteers and provides direct support to guests.

By the end of the year we had increased our drop-in volunteer team to 40. They work on a sessional basis in the kitchen and supporting guests directly in the drop-in. Average drop-in attendances increased by around 40% this year compared with 2006/7 and we have struggled at times to prepare the quantities of food needed and to staff the centre safely. However the dedication of the volunteers and their willingness to work extra shifts has meant that we have managed to open for 97 sessions – 2 more than in the previous 12 months.

In addition we are supported by the project Advisory Group, volunteers who monitor Doorway and use their wide-ranging skills and experience to support the Project Manager, and the Friends of Doorway, volunteers in the community who raise funds and raise awareness of the work of the project. We are also very grateful to Christine Smith who has given her time to produce the staff newsheet each month and to Dr Hariratnajothe Ahilan, a local GP, who advises on medical matters.

Partnerships

Doorway is of course a partnership between two key community organisations, supported particularly by local churches. In addition we have developed partnerships with other agencies which considerably enhance our drop-in services. During 2007/8 the following agencies held advice sessions during drop-ins:

- Chippenham Credit Union
- Community 4 floating tenancy support
- Westcountry Training and Consultancy Services

Funding and Support

The Salvation Army contribution in kind (staff time and premises including all utility services) is valued at around 25% of the needs of the project. We also receive regular donations of food, clothing and bedding from the public. CVS North Wiltshire is responsible for raising and accounting for the remaining funds, a task which is carried out by paid staff employed by CVS and a team of volunteers.

This has been a year of considerable financial insecurity, but thanks to our dynamic fundraising and PR programme we had achieved sufficient funds by March 31st to secure the project for at least a year until March 31st 2009.

In 2007/8:

- Voluntary donations from local people and organisations totalled £20,648
- Local churches donated an average of £600 a month
- The SleepOut in January 2008, our first major fundraising event, raised over £10,300 by March 31st
- Friends of Doorway raised £768 by means of coffee mornings and their recycling project
- Over £52,000 was raised in grants from voluntary, statutory and charitable sources

For details of income and expenditure and a list of grants, see Appendix 1.

Our plans for 2008/9 are to:

- Review our business plan and carry out a complete organisational review to ensure that they meet the needs of a strong and effective project
- Continue to work towards sustainable funding – we need to raise over £50,000 for 2009/10
- Seek new and creative ways to increase the community's understanding and commitment to the project including producing a promotional video
- Develop our work with schools and colleges to reduce preventable homelessness among young people and to dispel prejudice which leads to the victimisation of homeless people

- Develop our work with local businesses to increase awareness and opportunities for sponsorship
- Actively seek new partnerships which will enhance our services to guests
- Develop a strong working relationship with the management of the hostel which will open in the coming year.

And finally...

This is my final report as manager of Doorway as I plan to retire in the coming year. I am very proud to have been given the opportunity to be part of such an important project and after a year of rapid expansion and considerable financial insecurity when the threat of closure was never far away, I am very proud to have led the team which was absolutely determined that Doorway would survive. I know that my task of laying the foundations of Doorway is now complete. I am leaving a strong and vibrant project already highly valued by its guests and increasingly appreciated and supported by the community it works to serve.

My thanks go to all who have supported me in my role – in particular Captain Mary Wolfe, my mentor, without whose vision Doorway would never have begun; staff of CVS North Wiltshire who gave us essential administrative and other support; my colleagues, David Thompson, Fiona Toseland, Lisa Lewis and Karen Moore whose energy and expertise ensured the high professional standards for which the project is well known; our team of volunteers who with love, generosity of spirit and sheer hard work have created the warm, welcoming, positive atmosphere of the drop-in; and of course our guests whose courage in desperately hard and often dangerous circumstances has been my inspiration from the start.

Margaret Cleverley
Doorway Manager

Appendix 1

Doorway Provisional Project Income and Expenditure (subject to audit)

(1st April 2007 - 31st March 2008)

	<i>Salvation Army Contribution in Kind</i>	£	Expenditure 1.4.07 to 31.3.08
Expenditure			
Staff Salaries	<i>12,232.00</i>		56,430.06
Other Staff Costs			3,081.45
Volunteer Costs			3,343.64
Centre Costs	<i>5,274.00</i>		5,274.00
Maintenance/Repairs etc	<i>1,648.00</i>		1,841.45
Operational Costs			
Office Accommodation	<i>6,592.00</i>		6,592.00
Postage, Printing & Stationery		1,471.90	
BT Phone & Internet		1,141.78	
Membership Subscription		72.85	
Publicity		747.14	
			3433.67
Insurance	<i>82.00</i>		82.00
Equipment Purchase/Replacement			790.77
Services for Clients			
Food		2,952.31	
Facilitated Activities Sessions		2,363.39	
Toiletries		74.46	
Other Guest Activities		82.62	
			5,472.78
Management Costs	<i>1,833.00</i>		7,935.00
Total Expenditure	<i>27,661.00</i>		<u>94,276.82</u>
Income			
<i>Salvation Army (Donation in kind)</i>			27,661.00
Income carried forward			18,407.00
Grants – all sources			52,850.91
Donations-General			20,649.29
Donations-Friends of Doorway			768.30
Sales of Big Issue			56.49
SleepOut -Sponsorship			10,341.20
Learning Curve- volunteer training			140.00
Total Income			<u>130,874.19</u>

NB Salvation Army contributions in kind are shown in italics

For audited accounts, see CVS North Wiltshire Annual Report and Accounts 2007/8

Appendix 1

continued

Details of Grant Funding

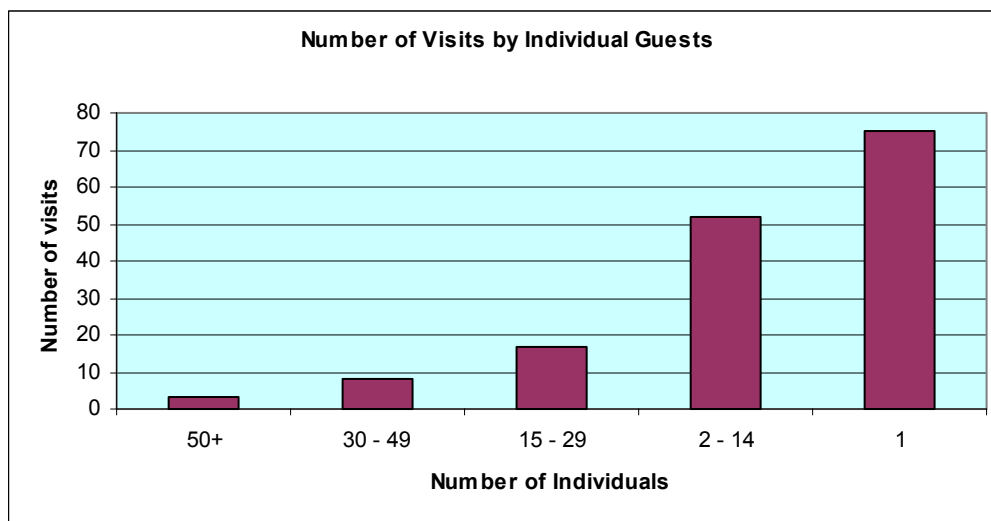
We are very grateful to the following organisations which have supported the project with grants and donations:

Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation – Guest activities	1,000.00
Westlea Housing Association	10,000.00
Coutts Charitable Trust	500.00
Jack Lane - food for guests	1,500.00
Football Association via Chippenham Football Club	2,500.00
Alchemy Foundation – Guest activities	500.00
Chippenham Borough Lands Charity-Support Services Manager's salary (1 st of 2 years' funding)	18,651.00
North Wilts DC Area 3 Committee - equipment	493.00
Dulverton Trust (Computer training)	2,000.00
Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation – for information database	1,257.00
Zurich Community Trust	4,000.00
Lloyds TSB Foundation – Manager – part salary for Community Engagement (1 st of 2 years' funding)	9,797.00
North Wiltshire District Council	3,000.00
Thomas Wall Trust – outreach to schools and colleges	1,011.00
North Wiltshire Safety Partnership – community engagement	2,000.00

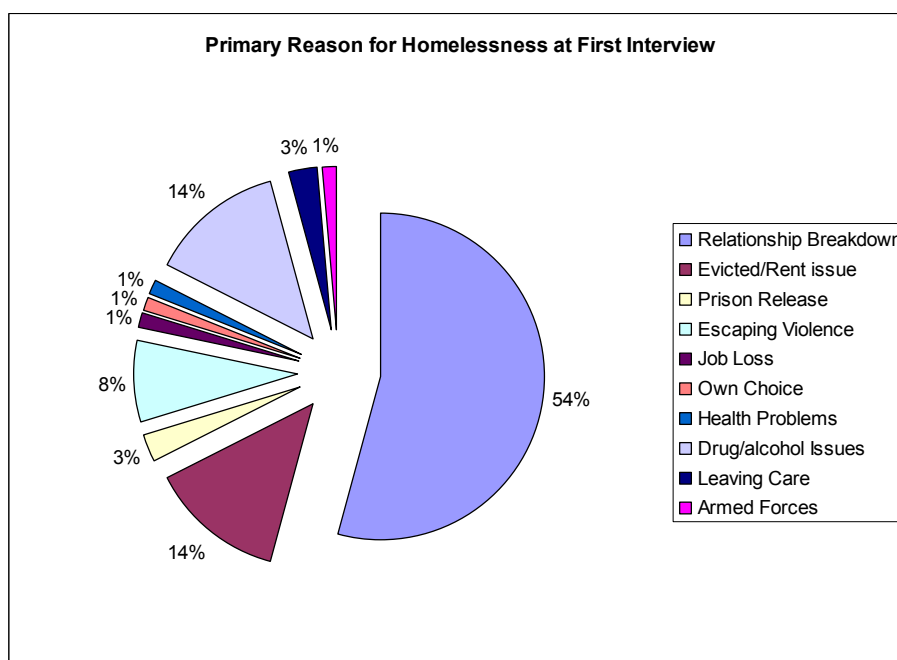
Monitoring the Drop-in

Between April 1st 2007 and March 31st 2008:

- We opened for 97 sessions and served 3219 meals
- Average attendance was 34.4
- Up to 12 guests were sleeping rough in or near Chippenham on any one night
- 253 individuals used the drop-in - of these about 1/3 visited only once
- 155 attended for the first time

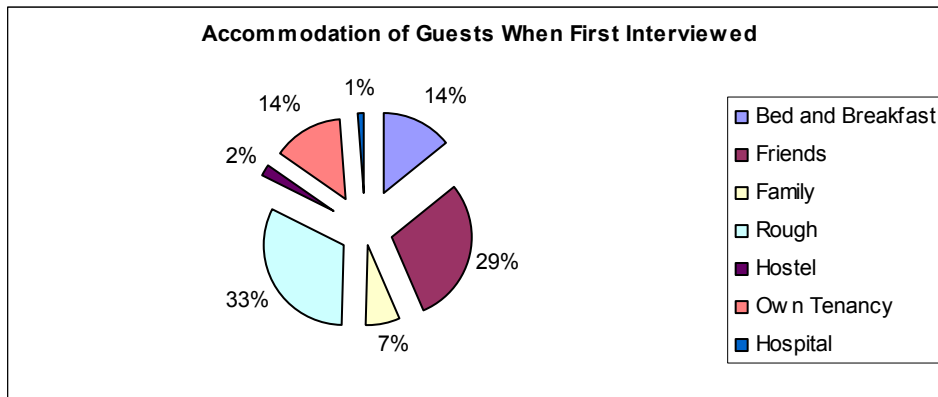


Of those who attended for the first time, 51% were willing to give information about themselves:

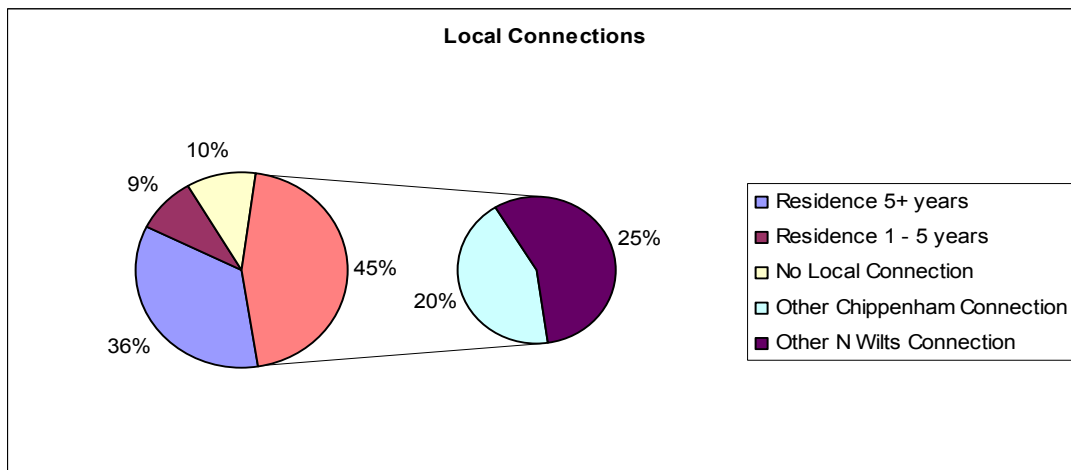


- 33% were sleeping rough
- The majority - 54% - were homeless as a result of relationship breakdown

- 14% had a home but had complex needs likely to affect their ability to manage a tenancy



- The average age was 35 – but nearly 23% were aged under 25
- 90% of all those who attended and who were willing to give information had a strong local connection with Chippenham or North Wiltshire



Guest Profiles – evidence of complex needs

In 2008 a survey of 36 guests who attend the drop-in regularly showed that:

- 55% had a history of mental illness requiring treatment
- 67% were taking prescribed medication for physical or mental illness
- 31% regularly used non-prescription drugs and 25% said their drug use was out of control
- 50% believed that now or in their past their consumption of alcohol or illegal substances had been out of control
- 25% came from service families and over 5% had themselves served in the armed forces
- 22% had been in care
- 75% were living on State Benefits (Incapacity Benefit or Jobseekers' Allowance) and only 11% had paid work
- 53% had a criminal record
- Nearly 20% had served a prison sentence

Community Engagement Programme Statistics

The Community Engagement Programme is designed to reduce local prejudice and fear of homeless and marginalised people and thus we hope to reduce the amount of unprovoked aggression against these people. It also aims to raise awareness of the positive work achieved by Doorway and to enlist the support of the local community which benefits from our work.

Between April 1st 2007 and March 31st 2008 we:

- Updated our website, improved search engine optimisation and received up to 3269 unique hits per month
- Issued 22 media releases and achieved regular positive media coverage
- Organised the sponsored SleepOut in January 2008 which for the first time attracted coverage by BBC Points West news and consequent reporting on the BBC website.
- The SleepOut not only raised significant funds but also generated positive publicity which attracted a lot of new public interest and offers to support the project
- Gave talks to 21 groups and organisations
- Worked with Wiltshire College and 4 primary and 3 senior schools
- Joined Chippenham Chamber of Commerce and contributed to Wiltshire Social Inclusion Partnership and Chippenham Neighbourhood Policing Team meetings
- Set up a comprehensive information database of local agencies to improve signposting on behalf of guests
- Contributed statistics on local homelessness to North Wiltshire District Council's Homelessness Strategy