



**WINTER
SHELTER
NOTTINGHAM
2006-2007**

Establishing the need

A number of individuals from Christian backgrounds in Greater Nottingham came together having been continually and increasingly aware of the number of homeless people seeking ad hoc assistance from our churches. This was reinforced both by the experiences of individuals involved on the 'soup run' circuit in Nottingham and from frontline homelessness professionals encountering persistently and consistently high levels of rough sleeping in Nottingham.

We were aware of the differing statistical and anecdotal accounts as to the numbers of rough sleepers in Nottingham.

Homeless Watch 2005 (A Snapshot Survey Of Homelessness In Nottinghamshire) says: **"the most notable finding from the 2005 Survey is the continued high levels of rough sleeping...the actual number of individuals recorded as rough sleeping was 270".¹**

The same report recommended a review of provision for rough sleepers and states that this might need to be short term, eg a winter shelter.

Throughout all stages of the Winter Shelter, the more contact we have had with local church and voluntary sector agencies working in homelessness, the more the need for this project has been reinforced.

We regard people who are rough sleeping as among the most vulnerable, excluded and impoverished group of individuals in our society.

Having become increasingly and unavoidably aware of these needs and frustrated by the situation we came together drawing upon a Biblical heritage that has at its heart the person of Jesus: born in temporary accommodation and living a life of transience for 3 years of his adulthood. *"the Son of Man has no place to lay his head" (Luke 9:58).*

We were aware that the churches in Nottingham are very well placed when it comes to providing a response to a need such as homelessness. We have well established networks; human resources, including many people already involved in working with homeless people; buildings and other practical resources; particular funding streams and a willingness to contribute materially at a grassroots level. There is also a freedom

¹ The report, which is for the whole county, can be downloaded from www.hlg.org.uk/homelesswatch.htm

which allows for creativity and quick responses, even more so than the mainstream voluntary sector. And all of this is underwritten by guiding principles of the faith that speak of reaching out, of overcoming injustice.

The Steering Group

Contacts through formal and informal Christian networks, reaching across denominations, brought together a group of people with a wide range of experiences and expertise in this field. A steering group was formed with individuals who included: experienced homelessness workers currently working in the 'secular' sector; a street pastor involved in leading soup run initiatives; a current and a previous day centre/project manager; two people from local churches who brought experiences with them of responding to ad hoc requests for help from homeless people; and the local diocesan urban officer. This mix reflects the richness and professionalism of the human resources available to a faith-based project such as this.

The Steering Group began its work in April 2006. The task in hand was to consider and develop a Christian response to the needs of rough sleepers this winter. We considered various options but the idea of a temporary accommodation project seemed to fit best with the perceived needs. We decided that this should be at a location somewhere in Nottingham, but it became increasingly clear that Thomas Helwys Baptist Church in Lenton was to be the most willing and suitable premises. The impetus for the project had come from this church.

We had some key considerations that determined the shape of our response. Our project would need to be:

1. *meeting the needs*: it would need to be of practical help to its service users
2. *manageable*: it would need to be structured and sufficiently systematic to be operable on what would inevitably be a part time basis
3. *achievable*: it would need to be realistic and simply effective

4. *safe and secure*: risk assessment and active risk reduction would need to underpin all aspects of the project

Our response: Winter Shelter

The Steering Group working with Thomas Helwys Baptist Church resolved to set up a temporary night shelter for 15 homeless people (male and female) and that this would run from 24 December 2006 to 20 January 2007. We would provide a simple bed, an evening snack and breakfast. The venue would be in the church hall and foyer at Thomas Helwys.

What we did in order to set up the Winter Shelter:

- investigated potential venues across Greater Nottingham
- nurtured the vision for the project in its 'host church' at Thomas Helwys Baptist Church
- formally notified the local authority planning department regarding change of use
- contacted churches across Greater Nottingham inviting support
- contacted local businesses, including the Lenton Church Square Working Group
- contacted the local school and the Lenton Centre
- held discussions with the local police
- held discussions with one of the local city council elected representatives, Councillor David Trimble, who happens also to be have responsibility for housing and homelessness
- notified the Homelessness Solutions Manager for the City of Nottingham
- sought advice and discussed our requirements with the local authority Environmental Health department
- sought advice and discussed our requirements with the Fire Service and local authority fire officer
- in order to learn from their experiences, met with the professionals running the temporary winter shelters in Mansfield and Worksop
- talked and corresponded with other night shelter projects in Loughborough and London
- liaised with homelessness agencies in Nottingham, ie the projects that became our referral points, as well as the London Road Project

- extended the church insurance with the Baptist Union Insurance Company in order to take into account the needs of our project
- worked very closely with the Street Outreach Team in order to design a project that was not only safe but most relevant to the current needs of rough sleepers

Finance

We compiled a budget of our projected costs. This budget was continually revised as we progressed.

We requested financial support from a range of faith based funding streams as well as from local charitable trusts and local churches and individuals.

We received funding from the following:

Anonymous donation from local trust fund: £5000

Church Urban Fund (Mustard Seed): £5 000

Baptist Union of Great Britain (Against The Stream): £2 000

Thomas Farr: £2 000

Trinity Methodist Church: £500

Leen Valley Methodists: £500

Coutts & Co: £500

Lady Hind Trust: £500

St Mary's Church, Wollaton Park: £73.73

Other individual and church donations

We applied for funding from the Nottingham City Council Winter Support Fund, but our application was unsuccessful.

We received numerous other donations of clothing, bedding and foodstuffs from various churches, individuals and agencies, as well as from Boots.

Volunteers

Through word of mouth and various targeted flyers we were able to reach significantly diverse groups of people.

In some instances the project did its own recruiting, ie when

people heard about the project taking place in their community they said they would like to volunteer!

More usual was volunteer recruitment through community and church networks, more specifically through contacts in the homelessness sector, flyers and conversations in various church settings and a well placed article in the Wollaton Link magazine. The composition of our volunteer team was thoroughly ecumenical as well as reaching well beyond church people.

All volunteers were required to attend a training session prior to working at the shelter.

The number of volunteers involved in the Winter Shelter was 55.

Paid workers

We planned (and achieved for every session) that we would staff the project with 3 paid workers each night.

We recruited via an advertisement in the Nottingham HLG newsletter, "Homing In". The Steering Group's informal church and homelessness sector networks backed this up.

We aimed to have a mix of experience and gender for each shift.

We employed 14 people; these workers had varying levels of experience of homelessness working. There were 7 men and 7 women on the paid team. The majority of the workforce was not particularly from a Christian faith background.

Staff were employed by Thomas Helwys Baptist Church and payroll was administered by Community Accounting Plus.

Training

We held a 3-hour training session twice in one day prior to the commencement of the project.

The training was mandatory for volunteer and paid workers.

Areas covered: procedural aspects of the project; food hygiene; personal safety and risk/other management issues; drugs and alcohol awareness; physical health issues.

Training was delivered by: a homelessness worker with many years experience of night shelter working; NHS Homeless Nursing Team; Health Shop; a member of the Steering Group with current experience of homelessness working.

Policies and procedures

We drew upon the experiences and expertise of other relevant projects and thought through very carefully what would be necessary, prudent and effective in guiding all people involved in the Winter Shelter.

Consequently, we devised a wide range of policies and practical procedural guidelines

We carried out risk assessments on fire safety, food hygiene, general hygiene, violent incidents and other emergencies and shaped our procedures accordingly.

Drugs and alcohol

Our policy was to be clear that there was no place for illegal substances or alcohol on the premises. There was a facility for service users to deposit their alcohol with staff for safekeeping and collect as they left in the morning.

We had some concerns that alcohol dependent service users would struggle with not being able to drink on the premises nor being able to leave the project temporarily. This however

remained manageable both for staff and the service users concerned.

Our policy was communicated to service users at point of referral and upon entering the project. It was reinforced by staff awareness through training and ongoing vigilance as well a willingness on the part of service users to cooperate.

The church is a no smoking building. Throughout the planning process this was one of our main practical concerns. To allow service users to stand outside the project smoking would undermine the security of all concerned whereas to smoke inside would not only have health implications for all people at the project but might not sit comfortably with the integrity of the church building.

All advice that we received was to make space somewhere indoors for smokers, this was the outcome, with the entrance 'vestibule' being used as a smoking area and various measures being put in place to ensure ventilation and air-freshening. This arrangement seemed to work really well for all concerned.

Assembling of resources

A substantial part of our preparatory work was gathering all of the things that we had worked out were needed for a temporary night shelter.

Our fundraising enabled us to purchase many of the items. For instance, we bought airbeds, heaters, mobile phones, various safety related items.

We asked for and received substantial donations of bedding, food and clothes from Thomas Helwys and a number of local churches and projects. We were also given toiletries by Boots.

This aspect of the project needed careful management and communication to ensure that a balanced and appropriate range of items was requested and/or received.

Premises

All people involved in the Winter Shelter were really appreciative of the willingness of Thomas Helwys Baptist Church to host the project.

The church is situated in Lenton, within walking distance of the city centre.

The parts of the building used for the Winter Shelter were: the hall (sleeping area); foyer (social space); kitchen with a serving hatch adjoining the foyer; toilets leading off the foyer; an entrance area/vestibule (smoking area); and a corridor off the foyer which provided a quiet consultation space leading to a small room used by staff for safe storage and night time sleeping breaks.

Referral procedures

These were developed in conjunction with the Street Outreach Team and other frontline homelessness workers.

Referrals would only be accepted by telephone between 10am and 5pm, from the following agencies:-

Street Outreach Team, Handel Street Day Centre, Emmanuel House Day Centre, Homeless Team (Nurses), Salvation Army (Sneinton House), Friary Drop-In, Nottingham HLG.

Each referring agency was given a referral form and risk assessment and was then required to go through these with any potential service users before phoning the Shelter Coordinator with the same details.

When the Shelter Coordinator was satisfied that no further investigation was required, particularly with regard to risk or dual occupancy a referral could be accepted.

Service users were then given a ticket in order for them to access the Winter Shelter between 9-10pm that night.

A referral could only be made for the immediate night ahead.

No "door services" or unreferrals admissions were to be offered or accepted, ie no ticket, no service

Service users needed to access their bed at the Winter Shelter between 9pm and 10pm. Queuing before 9pm was firmly discouraged and if seen as happening, was to result in exclusion from the project. Late admission was to be denied. These stipulations were important in our desire to have a minimal impact upon the local community in Lenton.

We sought to accommodate dogs as best we can. In the event we did not have any dogs at the project.

We decided that we would have no automatic exclusions but would conduct individual risk assessments on the basis of the service user in question and our ability to manage the risks they present.

Winter Shelter Up And Running

The project became live on Christmas Eve 2006 with referrals being accepted from 10am on that day.

3 members of the Steering Group took it in turns to be the "Shelter Coordinator": holding the designated mobile phone; receiving referrals and overseeing the setting up and clearing up of the project, usually for a period of 24 hours.

Referrals were taken until the project bed list was full or the 5pm cut-off point had been reached.

In the evening the Shelter Coordinator would take the referral information to the project, oversee setting up and handover to the Shift Leader and Project Workers at 8.30pm.

At 8pm the 3 volunteers would arrive and set up the airbeds and bedding in the sleeping area as well as preparing refreshments etc.

At 8.30pm the 3 paid workers began their 12-hour shift. The paid staff consisted of 1 Shift Leader and 2 Project Workers.

Between 9pm and 10pm was 'checking in time'. Service users were greeted by 2 project workers. They were then able to have refreshments, watch a DVD or chat. 'Lights out' time was 11.30pm.

During the night all 3 paid workers stayed on duty and there was an on-call arrangement with the Shelter Coordinator.

At 7.00am the 3 volunteers arrived for the morning shift and any service users not yet up and about were awakened. Breakfast was served and then service users were required to leave the locality by 8.00am (in order to minimise any impact on the local community and for the safety of our users)

Service users stored their own bedding in marked Ikea bags, if they were planning to return the next night.

At 8.30am the paid staff left having handed over any key information to the Shelter Coordinator who would then ensure that provisions and clean bedding were in place for the next session and prepare for taking referrals from 10am.

For 28 days the Winter Shelter ran on this basis and thoroughly became part of the networks of provision for homeless people.

For 28 days a highly committed team of experienced and inexperienced, paid and unpaid workers got to grips with providing a service for some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

By whichever criteria we would wish to judge the Winter Shelter, our assessment is that it was a success.

Number of people using the Winter Shelter

REFERRALS

A total of 94 different people were referred to us.

We are certain that there was potential for more people to have been referred, as we are aware that many agencies held back from contacting us once they knew that we were full. During the last 3 weeks of the project this was the case by 11am each day.

Referrals were received from the following agencies (*in the following quantities*):-

- Emmanuel House Day Centre (45)
- Handel Street Day Centre (29)
- Salvation Army (Sneinton House) (21)
- Street Outreach Team (13)
- Friary Drop-In (11)
- Nottingham HLG (2)

We received referrals from 6 projects in respect of **94** individual people

A total of **46** different people stopped at the project. Of these 46 people...

- 31 had been sleeping on the streets, in doorways, garages etc the night before accessing us
- 6 had been stopping with family/friends the night before coming to us
- 4 had been in another hostel the night before
- 1 had been in B & B the night before
- 1 had been in hospital the night before

- 43 had been in Nottingham the night before
- 9 had 'acknowledged' substance misuse issues apparent at the time of referral
- 17 had 'acknowledged' alcohol issues apparent at the time of referral
- 8 had 'acknowledged' heroin usage issues
- 2 had 'acknowledged' crack usage issues
- 22 had no problematic alcohol/substance issues identified at the time of referral
- 18 were identified as having mental health issues or learning disability
- 12 were able to go to alternative accommodation directly from the Winter Shelter *because of interventions made by paid and unpaid staff at our project*
- 18 were known to be in other accommodation before the end of our project
- 14 are whereabouts unknown
- 3 of our former service users were known to be sleeping rough in Nottingham as at 25th January 2007
- 28 were known to be in other accommodation as at 25th January 2007
- 7 were referred directly or indirectly by us to the Mental Health Support Team for Homeless People
- 4 were seen by the NHS Homeless Nursing Team at their drop-in on our premises

(for more detailed statistics see Appendix 5)

Here are some of the things that service users said about the project...

- ✓ "it has been a respite"
- ✓ "very helpful, very friendly"
- ✓ "very good"
- ✓ "really enjoyed it, felt secure, good night's sleep"
- ✓ "All the staff are wicked! I hope they can do this again"
- ✓ "perfect for me"
- ✓ "magic"
- ✓ "been marvellous - not just for me, but all the lads coming in"
- ✓ "should be permanent"
- ✓ "what would make it better?...no need, it's all good!"
- ✓ "helpful people, good facility"
- ✓ "I think this shelter is wicked"

WE ASKED A SAMPLE OF 18 SERVICE USERS TO ANSWER SOME MONITORING QUESTIONS (SEE APPENDIX 4 FOR FULL DETAILS). Here are some of the main findings:-

- a. 2 of the service user sample would not fill in the form at all. This may be indicative of their levels of suspicion of services
- b. the length of time that individuals had been rough sleeping prior to the Winter Shelter varied from 1 night to 6 months.
- c. 10 of those asked had visited Housing Aid
- d. 10 of those asked were using Emmanuel House
- e. 8 were using Handel Street
- f. 7 were using Street Outreach Team
- g. 5 were using the Friary
- h. 4 were accessing the Mental Health Support Team for Homeless People

EVALUATION

- a. The level of usage: 46 individuals accessing the project, demonstrates that there was a basic need that was met
- b. For many of the people using the project we provided an invaluable safe shelter whilst other accommodation options could be explored or were waited for
- c. In spite of doubts raised by some critics of the Winter Shelter, our careful and thorough planning paid off: the project operated with few practical difficulties
- d. The accommodation was simple and worked, it enabled easy management
- e. Having no showers was a drawback
- f. Multi-usage of the premises generated some extra work and maintenance/clearing up pressures
- g. Some other users of the premises decided not to operate whilst the project ran: questions here about sustainability of this approach in the future
- h. Safety and security: was thought out and planned very carefully
- i. Referral process worked well in most instances: problem of losing referrals in the period from referral time to checking in time at Winter Shelter
- j. Excellent collaborative working with other agencies throughout
- k. Extra agencies sought to make use of us, eg. police, probation, mental health services
- l. We had lower numbers of heroin and crack users than we had anticipated
- m. The requirement that service users re-refer each day worked well in ensuring that contact with other services was maintained

- n. Shelter Coordinators, paid and unpaid staff undertook much more follow-up work for service users than was envisaged originally, eg trying to get more permanent accommodation
- o. An excellent broad base of volunteers and paid workers has been established, across Christian denominations and across communities and branches of the homelessness sector. Social capital has been established!
- p. A positive response to the project has been received from: local community, police, other homelessness agencies, the service users, volunteers and paid staff
- q. It was really useful having the Homeless Nursing Team conducting a drop-in once a week at the project

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) On the basis of the high numbers both of referrals and attendees at the Winter Shelter, together with the reactions of frontline workers across the homelessness sector, we firmly believe that there is a definite case for more *easy access* accommodation for homeless people in Nottingham.
- 2) As a group of concerned citizens now with the experience of the Winter Shelter, we should seek to have ongoing conversations with the City Council and other significant agencies in Nottingham in order to open a way for increased provision and/or a more collaborative approach
- 3) We should endeavour to raise the profile of rough sleeping all year round
- 4) We should capitalise on the links that have been made across and within church denominations, across communities and between the churches, Winter Shelter and other agencies

5) If there is no significant change in significant current provision and no clear evidence that levels of rough sleeping have decreased, we should operate a similar project in winter 2007-2008

If the Winter Shelter is to run again in 2007-2008, we should..

- 6) retain the model from this year since it has largely been successful
- 7) continue with the requirement for service users to register every day with a referral agency, as this ensured continuing and, in many cases, increasing engagement with those services
- 8) look at refining the existing referral system in order to reduce the potential for 'voids' (empty beds)
- 9) consider running for a longer period of time and possibly at a different time of the winter
- 10) consider a different, or multiple venues, if we are to run for longer, as the accommodation at Thomas Helwys, whilst excellent in most respects, necessitated an impact on other users of the premises
- 11) pursue all appropriate possibilities for partnership working with other agencies
- 12) enhance our training with a more practical procedural edge
- 13) look closely at how we manage the issue of smoking
- 14) develop more formally the role of the Shelter Coordinator, most particularly with regard to follow up work, eg. connecting service users with other services

Appendix 1

Thanks are owed to..

- ✓ Baptist Union of Great Britain
- ✓ Church Urban Fund
- ✓ Community Accounting Plus
- ✓ Emmanuel House Day Centre
- ✓ Environmental Health Department, Nottingham City Council
- ✓ Friary Drop In
- ✓ Handel Street Day Centre
- ✓ Health Shop
- ✓ Holy Trinity/Priory Church, Lenton
- ✓ Homeless Nursing Team
- ✓ Hope, Worksop
- ✓ Lenton: various people in the local community
- ✓ Lenton Centre
- ✓ Lenton Methodist Church
- ✓ London Road Project
- ✓ Malt Cross
- ✓ Mansfield Winter Shelter
- ✓ Nottingham Christian Centre
- ✓ Nottingham HLG
- ✓ Salvation Army (Sneinton House)
- ✓ St Mary's Church, Wollaton Park
- ✓ Street Outreach Team
- ✓ West Bridgford Baptist Church
- ✓ Thomas Helwys Baptist Church
- ✓ Trent Vineyard/Vineyard Arches Project

✓ ***Winter Shelter Steering Group***

Annie Bell

Sarah Barton

Ben Bridges

Gerard Goshawk

David Jones

Peter Ridal

Steve Simmonds

- ✓ Numerous other individuals who made donations, gave encouragement and advice, got involved as workers (paid and unpaid).
- ✓ And 46 people that responded so meaningfully to what we were seeking to do!

THANK YOU!

Appendix 2

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE WINTER SHELTER (as at 28.2.2007)

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Anonymous Donation	5000.00	Salaries of Workers	6655.61
Trinity Methodist Church	500.00	Inland Revenue	1856.79
Coutts Charitable Trust	500.00	Petty Cash	330.00
Leen Valley Methodists	500.00	First Aid Supplies	188.95
Sir John Eastwood Foundation	1000.00	Air beds	198.80
Thomas Farr Trust	2000.00	Bowls and bags	24.78
Lady Hind Trust	500.00	Keys for staff	46.84
Baptist Union	2000.00	Equipment	76.09
Gifts from individuals	<u>332.73</u>	Air Purifier	14.97
Total	12,332.73	Oil Radiators	134.94
		Cleaning equipment	61.18
		Food	166.58
		Postage	16.76
		Volunteers expenses	271.77
		Mobile phone call time	195.00
		Training	20.00
		Newspapers	20.09
		Photocopying	41.90
		Stationery	43.06
		Mobile Phones	89.97
		Phone Calls on land line	13.17
		Rental Costs	50.00
		Laundry	15.28
		Church Building utilities costs	543.00
		Balance in hand	<u>1257.20</u>
			12332.73

Appendix 3

**FOR PHOTOGRAPHS,
FOR MORE STATISTICS,
TO DOWNLOAD THIS REPORT
AND TO LISTEN TO A BBC RADIO NOTTINGHAM PACKAGE ON
THE WINTER SHELTER GO TO**

www.thomashelwysnottingham.org.uk

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT, FOR MORE
DETAILED STATISTICS, CONTACT THE MINISTER AT THOMAS
HELWYS BAPTIST CHURCH: 0115 9414063**

Appendix 4

WHAT SOME OF THE AGENCIES INVOLVED WITH US HAD TO SAY...

*"The **Street Outreach Team** found the Winter Shelter a valuable, accessible resource providing much needed emergency accommodation for a vulnerable client group. The shelter was professionally run, with the staff and volunteers providing a compassionate service for the limited amount of time the shelter was allowed to run"*

Karen Bell, Street Outreach Team

*"The Winter Shelter (WS) was a real asset to **Emmanuel House (EH)** and its visitors. EH can support individuals in finding accommodation but the vast majority of the time this process takes days or often weeks. Homeless individuals that present at our centre will often end up as rough sleepers while accommodation is found for them. The WS was a great resource as it provided a safe location for homeless people to sleep until they could secure settled accommodation. EH was one of several organisations that could refer people to the WS and once this information became more widely known, the number of homeless people presenting at EH increased dramatically.*

The incentive of the WS brought EH in contact with more vulnerable people, who we were then able to support. When we were then working with these individuals, the presence of the WS made it easier for us to work with clients. This was because each person had to be referred each day and issued with a coupon, so they had to return to EH, and because sleeping in a safe staffed location allowed them to have a degree of stability in their lives; they were more motivated in working with others towards their goals. The facility of the WS also allowed staff to find more suitable accommodation for visitors. When people are rough sleeping, it is necessary to find the quickest available accommodation for them and not prioritise the suitability of it. Knowing that an individual had access to the WS meant that staff could work towards accommodation that would take longer to access but was clearly appropriate for the person concerned.

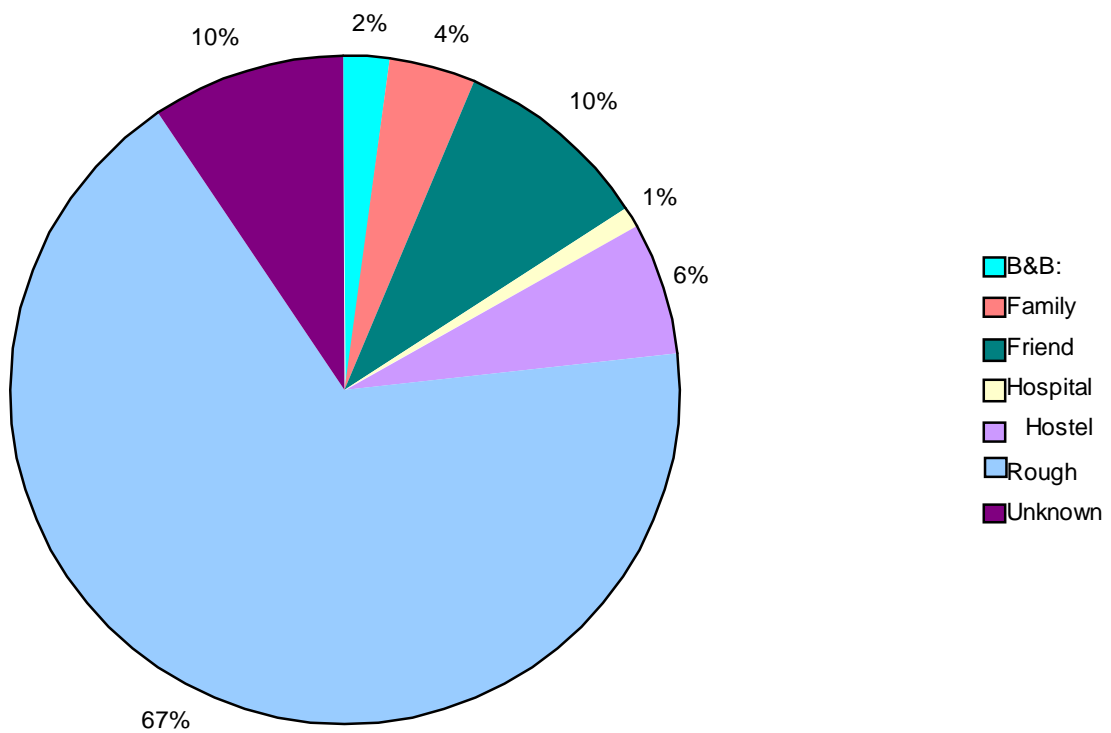
The WS was run by experienced workers in the area of homelessness; this meant that the work that was begun at EH didn't need to end when the centre closed for the day. Liaising with the WS staff allowed them to continue the support offered by us and also to report back relevant information that EH could use to support our clientele. The existence of the WS greatly improved the effectiveness of EH's services and I feel that it is very unfortunate that it is not an all year facility with it's own full-time set of staff. After the first few days of its operation it was full to capacity every day and unable to accept all of the referrals made to it. It is clear that there needs to be a bridge between rough sleeping and temporary accommodation and a night shelter would fulfil this purpose, the success of the Winter Shelter confirms this."

Lyndon Campbell (Rough Sleeper Worker) & Hannah Baguley
(Resettlement Worker)

Appendix 5

SOME MORE DETAILED OUTCOMES

WHERE SLEPT PREVIOUS NIGHT



Key

B & B: 2%

Family 4%:

Friend: 10%

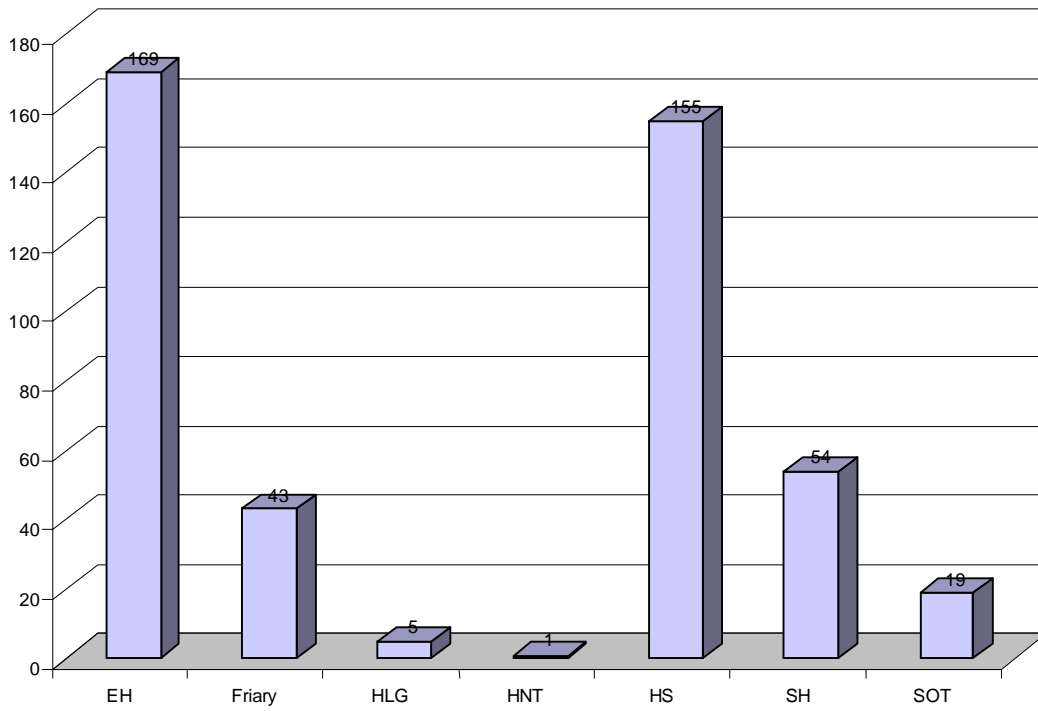
Hospital: 1%

Hostel: 8%

Sleeping rough: 67%

Unknown: 10%

TOTAL NUMBER OF REFERRALS



Key: EH=Emmanuel House Day Centre
Friary=Friary Drop In (West Bridgford)
HLG= Nottingham Hostels Liaison Group
HNT=Homeless Nursing Team (NHS)
HS=Handel Street Day Centre (Framework Housing Association)
SH=Sneinton House (Salvation Army Hostel)
SOT=Street Outreach Team (Framework Housing Association)

AGE RANGE OF REFERRALS

