

11.0 Social Services

A total of 38 individuals were identified on the City of Edinburgh Council homeless data base as both homeless and an injecting drug user. There is no routine or obligatory question on the current system so this is likely to be a significant underestimate and therefore not representative of the homeless population of drug users in the City of Edinburgh.

Of the 38 individuals identified, the ethnicity of most was 'white Scottish', with three 'white other' and one 'mixed'. There were eight women and 30 men. Their ages ranged from 28-53 with a mean age of 35.

The reasons for homelessness of the women on the database were mainly due to violence: 'violent dispute with partner' (3/6); 'violent dispute with parents' (1/6); and 'non domestic violence' (1/6) were all cited reasons. The main reasons for men were: 'friends/relatives no longer able to accommodate' (12/30); 'discharge from prison' (7/30); loss of previous accommodation for some reason (8/30); and 'non violent dispute with partner' (2/30).

The source of income for 32 (84%) people was benefits, one person had no income and one person was self employed. Thirty (79%) were in temporary accommodation and the total time for these people in temporary accommodation was 4,390 days, with the average time per person of 146 days.

Of the 38 individuals on the database, 32 (84%) were currently using heroin and five of the remaining six were using cocaine or crack cocaine. Eleven of the 38 people (29%) were on a script for methadone and several of these were taking other drugs such as gabapentin, diazepam or mirtazipine, either on prescription or from the street. The outcomes recorded were: 'housed' 5/38; 'entered into long term care e.g. hospital, prison' 2/38; 'lost contact' 9/38; and the remaining 21 either had nothing recorded under outcome or were classified as intentionally homeless or not homeless.

11.1 Inclusive Edinburgh

Inclusive Edinburgh is a multi agency approach to developing effective services for people with complex housing, health and social care needs. It has senior level buy-in across the Police, NHS Lothian, Health and Social Care, Housing, Criminal Justice and relevant parts of the Third Sector. There are a number of work streams that present significant opportunities to address the needs of people who are injecting drugs. The most relevant include:

- **Inclusive Homelessness Service**

Inclusive Edinburgh is developing an integrated service for people who are homeless with complex care needs. This will bring together the Edinburgh Access Practice, the Access Point and the Third Sector into a single service for this group of people. Many of these people will include homeless people who are people who inject drugs. The service will use evidence based approaches including the development of a psychologically informed environment. Currently the Edinburgh Access Practice provides opioid substitution therapy (OST) to a significant proportion of their patient group.

- **Single Case Coordinator Test of Change**

People with complex care needs may need to access a range of services if their needs are to be met effectively. As a result this can be challenging and complex for those trying to benefit from this broad range of services. A test of change is underway to establish a Single Case Coordinator to both deliver and facilitate access to these services. This approach is recognised good practice and is in line with other approaches to meet the needs of this group across the country. Further information is available at <http://meam.org.uk/>.

- **Measuring success**

Indicators are being developed and tested for services working with people with complex care needs. There is significant evidence that this group of people will require more time to build trust and engage with services prior to achieving change. Alongside this, care plans will need to be broad ranging and reflect client need and aspirations for change.

- **Choose life**

People who are homeless or have problem drug use are more at risk of suicide than the general population. Inclusive Edinburgh provides suicide prevention training for staff working with these at risk groups.

- **Escalating Concerns procedure**

The Escalating Concerns Procedure sets out an approach to responding to the needs of people with complex care needs who do not meet Adult Protection criteria. It enables services to work together at the operational level, and, senior management level, to manage risks and promote solutions. Further information is available at http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20029/have_your_say/948/inclusive_edinburgh.

11.1 Key findings: Social services

- It is difficult to draw conclusions from the data available as it is incomplete due to no routine or obligatory question on drug use in the database. It was not possible to link these records to those in NHS services due to a lack of a common identifier or systems being used for data sharing in this population. This means that it is difficult to provide continuity of care.
- However, this group presents opportunities for greater health and social care integration.
 - i. five of the six women are homeless due to being victims of violence
 - ii. twenty six out of the 38 individuals identified were not in treatment for addictions.
 - iii. a high number of individuals were lost to follow up or had no data recorded on outcomes. This may be an indication of the chaotic nature of their lives and supports closer working between homeless and addictions services since engagement in treatment can promote stability and engagement with social services.