



**South Hams
District Council**

**TOTNES STREET NEEDS AUDIT
16 April 2010**

**Liz Edgecombe
Gill Bray**

STREET NEEDS AUDIT SUMMARY

A Street Needs Audit was carried out on 16 April 2010, the purpose of which was to gather information about the extent and nature of street activity in Totnes, specifically targeting vulnerable people and rough sleepers with a view to identifying their needs and finding out whether active action plans were in place for individuals. The decision was made to carry out the audit following reports of an increase in anti-social behaviour in the town.

A key aim of the audit was to provide a multi-agency approach to street management, working with statutory and voluntary agencies with a view to minimising the impact of street activity and the community safety concerns it creates and to work with service users in order to address their street based lifestyles.

A small working group was set up to help organise the audit, clarify the aims and plan the key steps required to successfully evaluate the extent of the support needs of vulnerable people and rough sleepers in Totnes. The working group comprised:

Liz Edgecombe (SHDC)
Gill Bray (SHDC)
Mark Hatch (Life Revival Ministries)
Nicola Glassbrook (Devon PCT)
Jill Davies (S Hams CVS)
Vanessa Handley (Homemaker SW)
Sarah Mitchell (Addaction)

It was agreed that the Soup Kitchen located in the St John's Ambulance building in Totnes would be used as a base for the audit and arrangements were made for the building to be open between the hours of 6am and 8 pm. The audit was designed to provide a snapshot of street activity in Totnes and an assessment form was formulated and forwarded to various voluntary and statutory agencies, together with Church leaders and all members of the South Hams District Council Homelessness Forum for their comments, together with a request for them to provide any information about "hot spots" for street activity in Totnes.

For the purposes of the audit, street activity is defined as:

Begging
Street Drinking
Selling Big Issue
Rough Sleeping
Engaged in behaviour likely to cause a nuisance
Engaged in behaviour likely to intimidate the general public
Drug related activity
Busking
Sex working

Attendance at the Soup Kitchen was also recorded.

A Volunteer Briefing was held on 9 April 2010 and was attended by two Police Community Support Officers who provided further information regarding hotspots in the town. The following were discussed at the briefing:

- Aims of the audit
- Health and safety
- Best practice
- Hot spots for street activity.

At the briefing, volunteers were given information about health and safety and best practice guidelines. Volunteers were advised that they would be provided with an ID letter, a supply of assessment forms and a list of emergency numbers. Volunteers were also asked to complete a time-table detailing when they would be available. It was agreed that teams of two would go out from 6am to 9am, 10am to 1pm, 2pm to 5pm and 5pm to 8pm. The routes were chosen to target hot spot areas and the times of the shifts determined which routes were prioritised.

The following information was obtained and recorded on the Assessment form (Appendix I)

- Personal details
- Accommodation status
- Services used
- Type of activity being undertaken
- Client's perception of reason for homelessness

A secondary Brief Assessment Form (Appendix II) was also provided in order to record the activities of clients who had already had their details completed on the full Assessment form by an earlier team of assessors. For this reason a physical description of the client was requested to reduce the risk of them being assessed more than once.

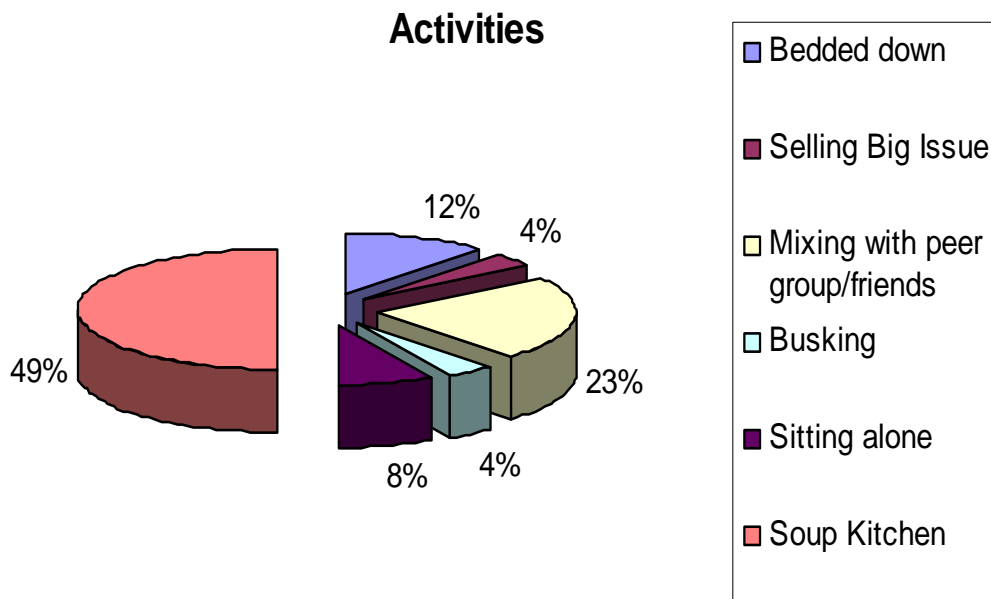
The following hot spots were identified in the town:

- Mill Lane and Mill Tail
- High Street
- Station Road outside the Soup Kitchen
- Garages behind Station Road
- Market Square
- St Mary's Churchyard
- The Plains
- Vire Island
- Start of Riverside Walk
- The Old Guildhall
- Bank Lane

A reconnaissance of the hot spots was carried out by an SHDC Officer prior to the audit and by a Police Community Support Officer and a member of SHDC staff on the morning of the audit. The Old Guildhall was targeted for the early morning shift as the most likely area for rough sleepers.

Results

The following results are collated from the audit assessment form completed on 16 April 2010.

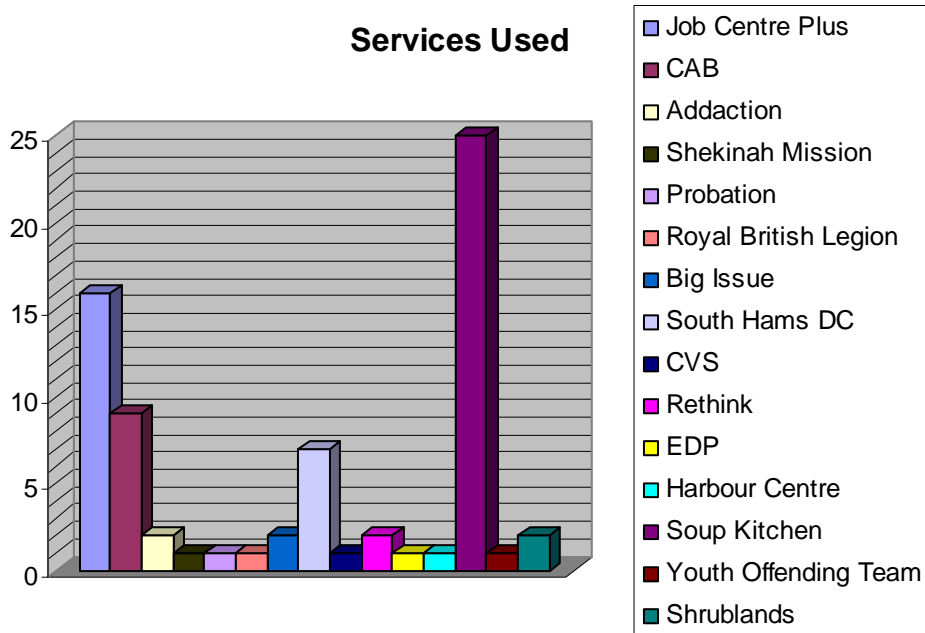


Activities when encountered	
Bedded down	3
Selling Big Issue	1
Mixing with peer group/friends	6
Busking	1
Sitting alone	2
Soup Kitchen	13

There were 33 contacts made which included 29 separate individuals who were involved in a street activity or attending the Soup Kitchen, some clients having been assessed more than once. There were several contacts made with clients who were not involved in a street activity or attending the soup kitchen and their comments and experiences have been noted. Some individuals refused to give their name or provide information in response to other enquiries on the assessment form.

Clients used a mixture of local services and services offered in other areas, such as Shrublands in Torquay and the Harbour Centre in Plymouth. The services are listed with the number of clients who disclosed they used them. Several clients used more than one service.

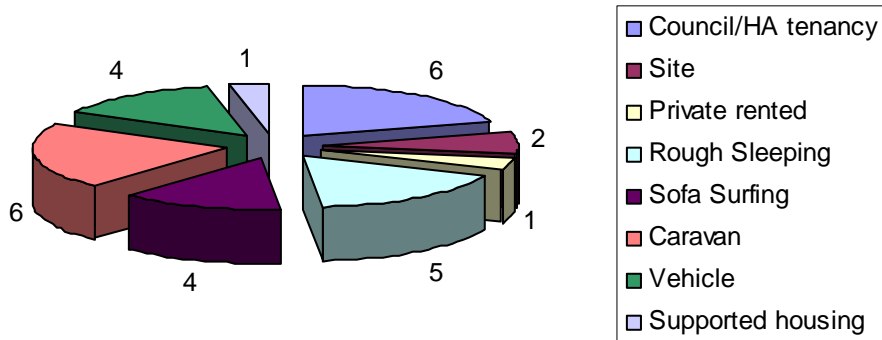
The Soup Kitchen was by far the greatest service used followed by the Job Centre and CAB.



Services Used	
Job Centre Plus	16
CAB	9
Addaction	2
Shekinah Mission	1
Probation	1
Royal British Legion	1
Big Issue	2
South Hams DC	7
CVS	1
Rethink	2
EDP	1
Harbour Centre	1
Soup Kitchen	25
Youth Offending Team	1
Shrublands	2

Of the clients who stated they were rough sleepers, 3 were found bedded down. Accommodation used by clients included staying in vehicles and caravans and 1 client was staying in supported accommodation outside the area.

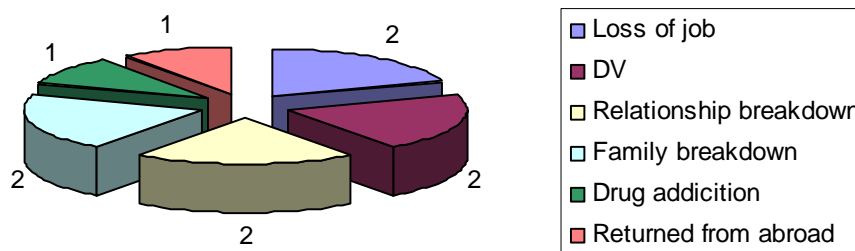
Current Accommodation



Type of Accommodation	
Council/HA tenancy	6
Site	2
Private rented	1
Rough Sleeping	5
Sofa Surfing	4
Caravan	6
Vehicle	4
Supported housing	1

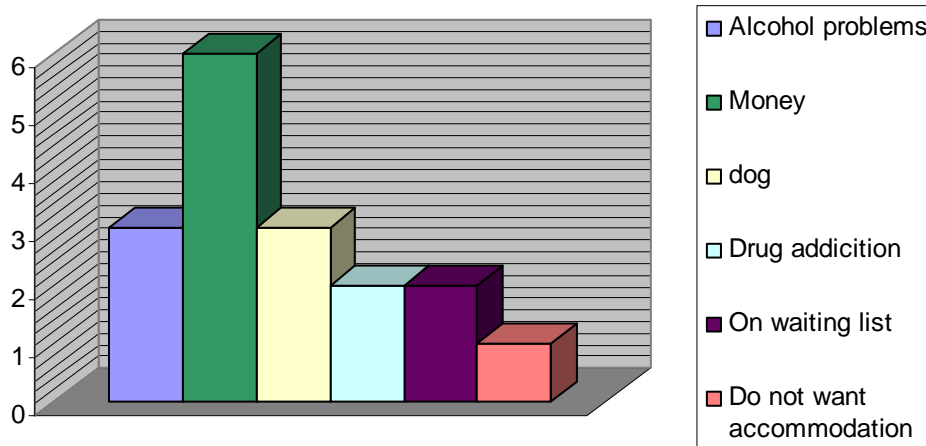
Clients were asked what had led to them becoming homeless and what barriers prevented them from being accommodated. Where applicants replied to these questions, the reasons given were as follows:

Reasons for homelessness



Reasons for homelessness	
Loss of job	2
DV	2
Relationship breakdown	2
Family breakdown	2
Drug addiction	1
Returned from abroad	1

Barriers preventing people from being accommodated



Barriers preventing people being accommodated	
Alcohol problems	3
Money	6
dog	3
Drug addiction	2
On waiting list	2
Do not want accommodation	1

When interviewed, clients were asked if there was anything they would like to feed back to us:

- Would be lost without Soup Kitchen
- Use soup kitchen for emotional support
- Felt vulnerable following release from hospital following drug overdose, need supported accommodation
- Police harassment – constantly bothered and moved on
- Banned from every off-licence in town – police constantly on people’s backs
- Police – zero tolerance
- Addiction services non-existent in Totnes
- Just need to get myself sorted
- Services should be more accessible and extensive. Places like the soup kitchen are less judgmental and accepting
- Soup kitchen keeps people alive and sane
- Why is there not more affordable housing in Totnes for homeless people?
- Lost confidence in the council and felt looked down on
- The church should be bigger and have shower and laundry facilities
- Would like to attend the soup kitchen but worried about people with alcohol problems
- Very difficult to get crisis loans
- Have been offered deposit scheme
- There should be a lot more help for young people in bad situations
- Getting back to work helped me back to a home and to my mum
- The soup kitchen is brilliant and should be government funded