

'More than a roof': Launch of the DTLR Report into tackling homelessness.

The main focus of 'More than a roof' is those accommodated in temporary and unsuitable housing. 77,940 households in England were living in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2001. 12,000 of these were living in bed and breakfast hotels and over half of these were families.

The Government's commitment is to end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families with children by the end of 2004.

"This indicates homelessness is a priority for the Government", says Shelter, which has campaigned continuously for a tough B&B target, also Shelter welcomed the announcement of an extra £10 million made available to housing providers by changes to housing benefit rules enabling them to increase leases from the private rented sector."

Strategies for meeting this target are outlined in the report and the emphasis is on the requirements of the Homelessness Act for Local Authorities to review their homelessness problem and to

develop homelessness strategies for their areas. This requires Local Authorities to join up locally with agencies

who are accommodating or supporting those housed in temporary accommodation.

Importantly the

Homelessness Act places a new duty on social services to work with housing

authorities in formulating a homelessness strategy. Preventing and working with homelessness is about more than providing accommodation as the work of VHG's members across the region illustrates. Indeed, Lousie Casey in the foreword to 'More than a roof' asserts:

'Helping someone to rebuild relationships with family or friends, stay in education or take up training or employment and deal with a drug, alcohol or mental health problem is as much about tackling homelessness as ensuring a roof over their head.'

Joining up with the Supporting People programme is emphasised in this report in 'Tenancy Sustainment' where the work of resettlement teams

is recognised as making significant progress in ensuring that more tenancies are sustained.

Gary Barnes, Chair of VHG, responded to this report :

'VHG welcomes the More than a roof report and the emphasis on joined up strategies for tackling homelessness. VHG members are experienced in tackling both homelessness and the causes of homelessness and take pride in the fact that their targets are the targets of those individuals and families that they work

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with. It is through the work of front line agencies where tackling homelessness is more than tackling a statistic and meeting targets.'

Working with each other and local authority partners is already a day-to-day reality for most voluntary agencies and to address the needs of the 400,000 homeless people in England (Crisis figures) will take investment at a national and local level.

Helen Read of Shelter Norfolk said today, "We are particularly worried about the number of homeless people who are not even able to access temporary accommodation in B&B or hostels because their complex needs and behaviour means the current provision is unsuitable or not made available to them.

"Brave and imaginative thinking needs to happen now to develop new provision linked with support to address this groups needs and the needs of those who live with or alongside them".

For a copy of the More than a roof report telephone the DTLR on 0870 1226 236. *Emma Daniel VHG*



Newsinbrief

VHG Welcomes New Members

VHG is pleased to welcome the first new members of 2002: Jimmy's Nightshelter in Cambridge, Hellesdon Hospital 'Hostels & Day Centre' and, The Great Hospital which is Norwich's oldest charity at over 750 years old! It is fantastic to see the network of VHG extend to new members after our November 2001 relaunch. Emma Daniel, Member Services Co-ordinator, feels that new members are important to bring a greater wealth of experience to the network and to gain from the knowledge and experience that is already shared by VHG members.

New Training Programme Update

VHG are issuing our new training programme with this edition of *Raising the Roof* and we are ready to take bookings. Kerry Giles, Training Administrator, is also available to organise training from our extensive list of trainers on an in-house basis. Please telephone with any enquiries about courses which aren't included on the programme itself on 01603 617299.

Five-a-side Football Tournament

VHG are currently working to organise an inter-agency five-a-side football tournament for summer 2002. If any organisations are interested in entering a team or have fundraising ideas connected with this tournament please contact Emma Daniel at VHG.

Emmaus UK Challenge Stereotypes

Emmaus UK's report *New Lives* "challenges the stereotype of homeless people as work shy, irresponsible and self-centred scroungers." The report, which examines attitudes of Emmaus residents, found that most wanted to work and to actively participate within their communities. For a copy of the report telephone 01223 576103.

Newsinbrief

Managing in the voluntary sector

The Edexcel/BTEC Professional Development Certificate In Voluntary Sector Management has been developed in conjunction with the Voluntary Sector. Twenty places were taken up on the first course and learners report that the experience has been a very positive one.

"I have found the course extremely useful in my working role. Having worked in the voluntary sector for some time I'm discovering new ways of thinking about things and a broader knowledge." MIND

"I am really enjoying the course, can't wait for the rest!" Deaf Connexions

The course consists of five modules which can be taken individually with the full Professional Development Certificate awarded on completion of all six modules. Modules cover

- Voluntary organisations in context
- Personal and Professional Development
- Organisational skills in a Voluntary Organisation
- Managing people in a Voluntary Organisation
- Financial skills in a Voluntary Organisation
- Marketing a Voluntary Organisation

The course is delivered at City College Norwich, each module having one day a week teaching for five weeks.

"Taking a day out of work to do the course has been of real value to me as it gives me a chance to think problems and issues through in a supportive and creative environment." Age Concern Thetford

The cost of the course is £510 plus certification costs and full funding for this is available through the NVOTDS (previously VOLCAAN) Bursary scheme for eligible organisations. The college is currently taking applications for the course for entry in September 2002.

If you'd like more information or to make an application please contact: Suzanne Crouch,

Voluntary Sector Studies,
Centre for Professional
Development, City College
Norwich. Phone: 01603
773354,
Email:scrouch@ccn.ac.uk

Students engaged in group sessions studying stress management.



Steve Morpew - Human Resources consultant

New code of practice for employers...

At last the long awaited code of practice for Employment Practices under the Data Protection Act has been published – well some of it anyway. Part 1 is on recruitment and selection, and there follows parts 2 to 4 at roughly monthly intervals covering employment records, monitoring at work and medical information. The code applies to employed staff and volunteers. As part one comes in at sixty pages long, the complete code may well be a hefty volume. It could be a pretty daunting prospect for employers.

Part one is however an extremely useful guide to

good recruitment practices. Together with the checklists and frequently asked questions the guidance covers a lot of ground.

An example is what to do with interview notes: The right for interviewees to see their interview notes

- Storage of notes
- Destruction after a reasonable period
- Procedure for gaining access to interview notes
- Procedures for interviews

As with many of the vast array of new rules and regulations around employment law and practice, there is no point trying to carry them around to bolt onto existing policies and procedures. The most sensible and manageable way forward is to regularly review what you do in the light of the new rules and build in best practice.

The first step is almost certainly to register with the Information Commissioner under the Act if you have not already done so. Check their website for more information – www.dataprotection.gov.uk

Steve Morpew, Steve Morpew Associates,
01603 615200.

Steve Morpew is an Employment specialist who works with voluntary sector organisations both within and outside of the region. Steve Morpew Associates provide both training and consultancy.

If members would like training on the new code of practice please register your interest with Kerry Giles at VHG on 01603 617299.

Comment

One of VHG's strengths is the facilitation of networking.

The MIS events have continued to be successful in giving opportunities for networking as well as providing up-to-date information. Prior events have been really influential to our members. For instance, the event in December has helped in the formation of some of our members' Drugs Policies.

Another opportunity for networking arises through our training programme. Our training continues to have excellent feedback. We have now produced our summer training programme – if you need further copies please contact the VHG office. Please book as early as possible. This not only makes VHG's life easier, but also ensures that you will be able to have a place on the training course of your choice.

We have a lot of specialist skills within our membership and it is good to have one of our members, Norwich MIND, leading a training day on Mental Health Awareness in May. Peter Gianfrancesco, Chief Executive of Norwich MIND, has written the article 'a day in the life of...' this is well worth reading. It is always interesting when members write about their 'typical' day (if there is ever a typical day for any one of us!).

VHG continues to increase its membership. The enthusiasm of the new members is so encouraging and will be of benefit to the wider membership. If you know of any organisation or individual that is likely to be interested in becoming a member of VHG, please let us know so that we can make contact with them and send them a membership pack.

Finally, the usual reminder, if you have any queries or comments please do not hesitate to contact the VHG office.

Joan Kinnings-Smith
Acting Chief Executive VHG

From the Editor

If you want to contribute to Raising the Roof or to tell us what you think of the publication. Please contact the editor on 01603 617299. Tell us if you would like to have several copies. Show it to staff and clients and let us know what they think. Send Emma Daniel article ideas for future editions. We intend to promote your work in a variety of ways – but this magazine is to be a vital part of that process. Let us help you by contributing your news and views. Send us your press releases, details of events and project updates.

Emma Daniel, VHG.

Training Dates

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

11/04/02 & 12/04/02

09.30 – 16.30

Suffolk Trainer: Brian Walker

BASIC DRUGS AWARENESS

24/04/02 9.30 – 16.30

Norwich Trainer: Simon Floyd

BASIC FOOD HYGIENE

29/04/02 09.30 – 17.00

Norwich Trainer: Melanie Hines (Health Education Section)

FINANCE FOR NON-FINANCIAL MANAGERS

02/05/02 09.30 – 16.30

Norwich Trainer: Joan Kinnings-Smith

INTRODUCING SUPERVISION

07/05/02 09.30 – 16.30

Norwich Trainer: Maggie Wheeler

BASIC HEALTH & SAFETY

17/05/02 09.15 – 17.30

Norwich Trainer: Melanie Hines Health Education Section)

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

24/5/02 09.30-16.30

Norwich Trainer: Norwich MIND

ADVANCED DRUGS AWARENESS

30/05/02 09.30 – 16.30

Norwich Trainer: Simon Floyd

FIRST AID FOR FRONT LINE WORKERS

07/06/02 09.30 – 13.30

Norwich Trainer: St. Johns Ambulance

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND YOUNG PEOPLE

11/06/02 09.30 – 16.30

Norwich Trainer: Simon Floyd

MANAGEMENT OF AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE

12/06/02 09.30 – 16.30

Norwich Trainer: Bob Banham

WORKING WITH PSYCHOSIS

20/06/02 09.30 – 16.30

Norwich Trainer: Jane Wallace

INTRODUCTION TO WELFARE BENEFITS

25/06/02 10.00 – 16.00

Norwich Trainer: Minerva Training

ASSERTIVENESS AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING

03/07/02 09.30 – 16.30

Norwich Trainer: Diane Woodhouse

MANAGING DIFFICULT PEOPLE

09/07/02 09.30 – 16.30

Norwich Trainer: Maggie Wheeler

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING OUR TRAINING PLEASE PHONE KERRY ON 01603 617299. DUE TO DEMAND WE ARE CONTINUALLY RUNNING COURSES IN BASIC HEALTH AND SAFETY, BASIC FIRST AID AND THE TWO DAY MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING COURSE. TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST PLEASE PHONE ON THE ABOVE NUMBER.

Allied for positive mental health 2002!

The Norfolk Mental Health Alliance includes statutory and voluntary mental health organisations and mental health user and carer groups.

The purpose of the Alliance is to increase public awareness and understanding of mental health and to reduce the stigma and discrimination experienced by people with mental health problems. They emphasise that everyone needs to look after their mental health.

The Alliance organises events to promote positive mental health. As well as organising its own events the Alliance

supports other local groups who wish to organise their own events to promote mental health. The following events are already planned for 2002:

Art Exhibition at the Maddermarket Theatre 10th - 21st June 2002

A float at the Lord Mayors Street Procession 13th July 2002

5th Annual Street Fair in Upper St. Giles Street, Norwich, date to be confirmed.

If you would like to join the Norfolk Mental Health Alliance or get involved with any of these events please contact Jill Rees, Chair of the NMHA on 01603 421108.

A day in the life of...

A typical day for me involves being in numerous places, dealing with multiple issues and, first of all, being there for my family. This means that my day always starts at about 7am and involves getting the kids ready for school and, for half of the week, driving them there before I get to work.

I usually arrive at work at about 8.30am (earlier if I'm not doing the school run) and my work day always starts with a 'race against time' as I try and deal with mail, email, phone messages and other stuff before staff arrive. Once they do, it's just about impossible to get too much done as, at present, I have several staff sharing my office.

The good news is that we are increasing our Head Office space as part of the changes at Sembal House (our 28 bed hostel). For those of you who don't know, Sembal House is changing to a smaller,

more rehabilitation focused unit and will open in June. Part of the change involves moving our Outreach Team onto the same site to promote good integration and continuity of care with the new service. This means that we are very busy dealing with Architects, Builders, other suppliers and, like all charities, constantly seeking to get the best possible deal. A typical day at the moment involves a lot of coordination, haggling and planning

around these site changes.

On another note, we are seeking a Manager for our innovative mental well-being service, Mind Body & Soul so I am busy preparing the ad, the selection schedule and preparing for what I hope is a good response. This week I have had two new staff start. Our new full time Office Administrator, Jenny, has started and is already making my work life a lot easier. The second new staff member is Clare who is leading our Rural Distress Project which is essentially a mobile version of Mind Body & Soul that goes out to rural and remote Norfolk communities. So, a typical day at the moment means orientating new staff, writing bids for more development and convincing others that this is a good idea.

Peter Gianfrancesco –
Chief Executive, Norwich Mind

My day finishes about 5 and usually involves picking one or both of the kids up from school. Today, however, I am out of here at 2pm to see the school play. I have a lot of flexibility in my job and, as a mental health organisation, we are keen to encourage the right work / life balance for our employees including me!