

raising the roof

the bi-monthly publication of **VHG**

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sponsored by



Change is the only certainty

This was the theme of Kevin Marshall's speech at VHG's AGM as he explored the changing relationships and perceptions of the voluntary and statutory sectors.

His journey through his own career in both sectors through the eighties to the present day mirrored VHG's conception and journey to the services that VHG now provides. Kevin identified a key feature of voluntary sector providers as a 'willingness and ability to embrace change' and the changing attitude of the local authority towards voluntary sector organisations in this period from paternalistic to enabling. The

Supporting Agencies Liaison Group is an example of how closer working and building trust in the relationship between the sectors has enabled Norwich agencies to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the Supporting People Programme. Kevin highlighted the role of VHG in facilitating this change as being a platform which ensures the voices of smaller organisations are heard, as well as networking, providing resources, training, and information.

Councillor Bernard Smith asked if Kevin felt that the problems were greater or smaller than they were twenty years ago. Kevin responded that the problems were more complex and that resources are far

tighter, which means that the sectors must work together and make use of each others' strengths and work together in different ways.

Rebecca Foreman of the Cambridge Homeless Partnership put to Kevin Marshall that Norwich has been said to be a good example of barriers between the statutory and voluntary sectors being broken down and could he provide examples of how this has happened.

Kevin felt that this was due to a focus on the welfare of tenants and their housing and support needs.

This leads to a shared vision with the voluntary sector and provides a platform to achieve success together.

Norfolk Charities tackle 'full cost recovery' issue

Charities across the region and the country are finding the financial struggle to provide services increases. As they find the road to 'full cost recovery' on contracts with Local Authorities (a key recommendation of the Treasury's 'The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery') further away than ever.

As Malcolm Dean reported in the Guardian (18.09.02) "The aim is not to use the 500,000 voluntary and Community groups as a stick to beat local councils, nor to undercut their services. The aim is to tap into value added services which, though hard to quantify, includes an ability to support

hard to reach groups, promote innovation and involve service users."

This year, in members' AGMs, VHG has heard finance and C.E.O. reports listing the following common, financial challenges:

- **Inflation uplifts in contracts remained 2% whilst many charities pay their workers at Local Government pay scale rates which were set this year at an average increase of 3.8%.** Charities have been forced to subsidise this pay increase from unrestricted funds or reserves. This issue impacts on the recruitment of quality staff where voluntary organisations cannot offer a reasonable salary.
- **Insurance costs rose by up to 400%** for some; £11,000 to £50,000 in one case.
- **Rents increases** have also hit charities.

These funding issues have been taken up by the NVS and by the members of the Norfolk Voluntary Mental Health Providers Forum. NVS warn that unless local authorities begin to take financial responsibility for the Norfolk Compact, which

was one of the first to be entered on the National Compact Register, it will be 'mothballed' from January 2003 when the ESF funding ends. The Compact includes codes of

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practice on funding and the NVS conference on the 28th October explored how to tackle 'breaches' of this code.

Gary Barnes, Chairman of VHG warns: "Though relationships have improved, the voluntary sector is far from standing on a level playing field in terms of funding relationships. If the Compact development is threatened by a lack of funding we must wonder how seriously we can take the County's assurances that there will be a corporate action on the Compact through ALL County Council departments."

For further information on the Government targets for statutory organisations please access the Active Communities website on www.homeoffice.gov.uk/acu/acu.htm or the Treasury at www.treasury.gov.uk. NVS have highlighted 3 targets in their newsletter (October 2002).

Emma Daniel,
VHG

*Peter Whitfield (treasurer) and
Emma Daniel (member service
co-ordinator).*



VHG-AGM
8 Page Special

Newsinbrief

Accommodation Register Worker

Meryl Alexander has taken up the post of Accommodation Register Worker at VHG this month. She will be aiming to increase the numbers of private landlords in Norwich willing to let their properties to people in receipt of Housing Benefit. To contact Meryl please phone 01603 617299.

InterACT conference

Bookings are arriving thick and fast for VHG's Managing Inclusion Conference on the Homelessness Act and the Supporting People strategy. Plenary speakers include representatives from Homeless Link, Shelter, The Homelessness Directorate, SITRA and regional local authorities. Please contact VHG for a brochure by telephoning 01603 617299.

West Norfolk Mental Health Directory

This is now available in paper and CD ROM formats by contacting West Norfolk MIND (formerly King's Lynn & District MIND) on 01553 776966. Paper copies are free to voluntary organisations working in the District and CD ROMs cost £5 which will contribute to update costs.

Wintercomfort Renovate Daycentre

On the 20th September Wintercomfort reopened their day centre for the homeless at Overstream House. This facility has been renovated and altered to include a computer training suite, counselling suites, brand new laundry and showering facilities and has a modern cafe atmosphere in the main room. There are also kennels for clients' dogs.

Newsinbrief

Substance misuse service for the homeless extended

NORCAS have been contracted through the Drug Action Team to provide a Norfolk county wide service for people with drug or alcohol problems who are homeless or vulnerably housed.

The main aim of this service will be to work with clients to enable them to maintain and access accommodation and hence be able to more fully integrate into the community. The

outcomes for such a project are numerous: Increased stability in peoples' lives, improved health and psychological well being, greater numbers of people accessing treatment and the positive effect this has on wider society.

The new NORCAS service draws on the experience of the substance misuse service at St. Martin's Housing Trust. This service started in 1995 and worked to similar aims and objectives until it finished at the end of September 2002. The NORCAS service replaces and incorporates the Norwich based St. Martin's Housing Trust Service and aims to continue and build on its good work. The NORCAS Norwich based workers are already busy ensuring that there is continuity of service for clients of the old St. Martin's Housing Trust Service. NORCAS and St. Martin's Housing Trust working

together at the earliest possible point have achieved this continuity. The St. Martin's Housing Trust staff have all been retained by NORCAS and we sincerely believe that the hand over has had no negative effect on existing service users. In fact the workers already discovering the advantages of working for a specialist treatment agency are numerous for clients.

The next task of this service is to expand into the rest of Norfolk. We will soon be recruiting new staff in order to take this forward. However, before staff are in post it will be necessary to consult specialist drug and alcohol services and accommodation providers around the county. It is imperative to understand local need and adjust accordingly. We will be working across a huge, mostly rural area and this will be the biggest challenge for us. Our aim is to be fully up and running early in the New Year. We will be able to offer support to clients and accommodation providers in order to work together to tackle the issue of drug/ alcohol and accommodation problems.

Experience tells us that for many people who contact the new service it will be the first time a drug and alcohol service has worked with them. One of the most rewarding things is to see trust develop when working with a person and from that trust, positive change can develop. To see someone move from an emotionally and physically chaotic life to a more stable one is very satisfying for both staff and clients. (photographs posed by model)

By Dan Mobbs, Norcas.

To contact the NORCAS homelessness service telephone (01603) 766 993.

Drugs and Homelessness - the figures

The issue of substance misuse amongst homeless people is an emotive one. We have seen how the media have portrayed people with drug and alcohol problems in a very poor light. There is little appreciation for the difficulties that such people have had to face in their lives. The stories we hear, in our role as a substance misuse team, are often shocking and upsetting.

Studies have shown drug use amongst homeless populations ranging from 66% (DrugScope 2000) to 89% (Hammersley and Pearl 1997). There has been a greater recognition of this issue within Government. The Rough Sleepers Unit (RSU) has gone to some lengths to tackle this increasing problem. The link between homelessness and substance misuse is mentioned in detail in the national drugs strategy "Tackling Drugs

to Build a Better Britain" (1998) and the RSU's strategy "Coming in from the Cold" (1998). The Government's Social Exclusion Unit (1998) acknowledges that resettlement for homeless people is more likely to be more successful if there is support for peoples' substance misuse problems.

The issue of homelessness is also being better understood. Shelter (2002) explains how homelessness is not simply an issue of rough sleeping. For many people it may be that their accommodation is vulnerable; they may be sleeping on friends' floors or living in hostels or supported housing; it may mean that the accommodation they are in is inappropriate or poorly maintained. Ultimately it means a person hasn't got a stable place that they call home.

by Dan Mobbs

Centrepoint warns of potential rural youth homelessness crisis

Centrepoint's September 2002 Rural Youth Homelessness Network Briefing warns that councils are seriously underestimating the levels of homelessness in the 16 - 25 year age bracket.

This is because councils are primarily using their official local authority figures to gauge need. Single young people usually don't count as a priority need and therefore won't appear in homelessness applications, acceptances or on the housing register. If areas don't recognise the needs of this age group and underestimate need the provision will be inadequate and inappropriate.

The implementation of the Homelessness Act means that local authorities are conducting reviews of the statutory and non-statutory provision in their area. This work is additional

Centrepoint, in this group of young people are:

- Mobility - this group tend to move often 'sofa surfing' at friends' and relations' homes
- Perception - young people may not consider themselves to be vulnerably housed or homeless unless they are rough sleeping
- Seasonal homelessness - this group may be squeezed out of accommodation to make room for holiday makers so measuring homelessness at one point in the year may not give an accurate picture

Sparse service delivery - which means that it is difficult to get a true picture of rural youth

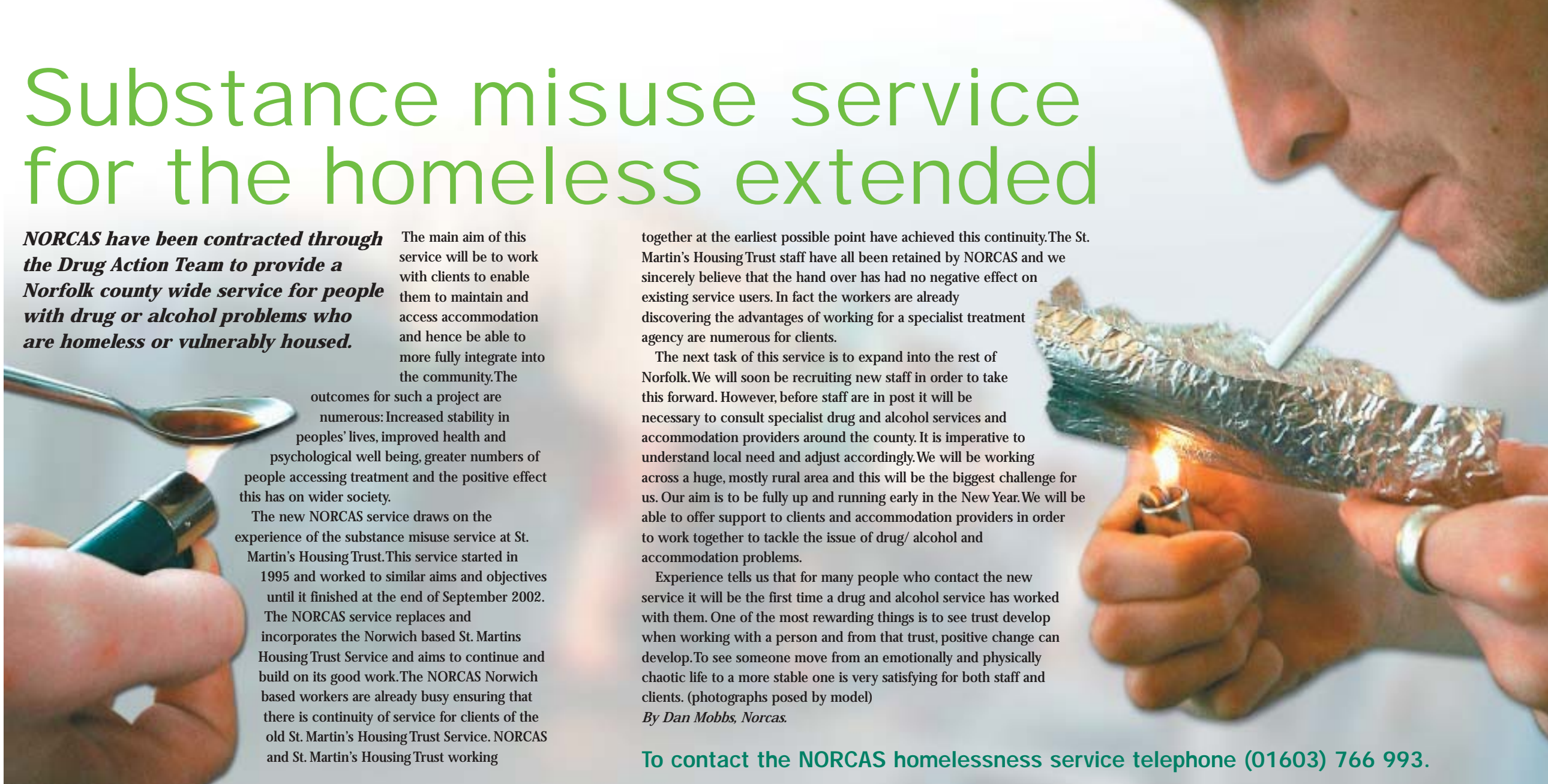
to the duties under Supporting People and Connexions. Barriers to measuring housing need, identified by

homelessness even from existing providers

Centrepoint recommend that in measuring the housing needs of young people in rural areas 'the net is cast wider' in order to get a more accurate picture. Centrepoint also feel that a large proportion of evidence should be from qualitative research gained from interviews with 'experts', that is people who have experience of rural homelessness as well as service providers in the statutory and voluntary sectors.

A step by step guide to measuring rural youth homelessness (including a method for estimating unmet need in an area) which Centrepoint has developed is available by emailing d.robinson@shu.ac.uk or jo.lavis@counttryside.gov.uk.

By Emma Daniel, VHG





“Promoting community wellbeing through the provision of high quality affordable housing and caring services.”

Anglia Housing Group's mission statement



Anglia Housing Group
Anglia House
8 Central Avenue
St Andrew's Business Park
Thorpe St Andrew
Norwich NR7 6HR

Tel: 01603 705079 Fax: 01603 709404
www.anglia.org.uk

Hold Hands for Mental Health

West Norfolk MIND organised their second 'Hold Hands' event in King's Lynn in October 2002. This event was successful and members of the public, staff and services users joined hands around King's Lynn centre. The event is intended to raise awareness of Mental Health issues. Dancers performed in the streets as part of this celebration of Mental Health.



Norwich Hostel for Women gets a make over.

Hinde House is a large, listed building in central Norwich. Previously a YWCA it was transferred to Orwell Housing Association in April 2000 and houses 30 women. Having successfully attracted a major repairs grant from the Housing Corporation which was match funded by Orwell Housing Association we were able to upgrade the standard of housing for our clients. This refurbishment cost £473,000.

The refurbishment has meant that some resident's rooms have been enlarged and more rooms have been provided. There are kitchen, bathroom and toilet facilities on each floor. The communal kitchen and dining facilities have also been modernised. The staff areas have been improved including the offices and accommodation.

The refurbishment has taken over six months and we are still waiting for outstanding furniture deliveries! However the staff and residents who have borne these changes patiently and with a sense of humour will soon be able to breathe a sigh of relief and enjoy really high quality surroundings. Orwell Housing believes that the work has created a really first class, welcoming environment for the vulnerable clients we house.

By Alison Thorpe, Orwell Housing

Suicide Prevention Strategy

Suicide is the most common cause of death in men aged under 35 and is the main cause of premature death for people with mental illness. Moved by these figures the Government White Paper.

"Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation" set an ambitious target to reduce the death rate from suicides by at least one fifth by 2010. As part of meeting that aim, the Department of Health has recently published the National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England.

Implementation of the Strategy will be led by the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) who will also co-ordinate on-going activities which complement the aims of the Strategy. The Strategy has six main goals, which are:

1. To reduce risk in key high-risk groups.
2. To promote mental well-being in the wider population.
3. To reduce the availability and lethality of suicide methods.
4. To improve the reporting of suicidal behaviour in the media.
5. To promote research on suicide and suicide prevention.
6. To improve monitoring of progress towards the Saving Lives: Our Healthier nation target

for reducing suicide.

Among the actions being taken to meet these targets is implementation of the so-called "Twelve Points to a Safer Service" for local mental health services. Especially for those of you working on the frontline who want to see the standards which local mental health services are working towards, I have listed the twelve standards below:

1. Staff training in the management of risk every three years.
2. ALL patients with severe mental illness and a history of self-harm or violence to receive the most intensive level of care under the Care Programme Approach.
3. Individual care plans to specify action to be taken if a patient is non-compliant or fails to attend.
4. Prompt access to services for people in crisis.
5. Assertive Outreach Teams to prevent loss of contact with vulnerable or high-risk patients.

// Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation

6. Prescribing a typical anti-psychotic medication for all patients with severe mental illness who are non-compliant with typical drugs due to side effects.
7. Local strategies for dual diagnosis.
8. In-patient wards to remove or cover all likely ligature points.
9. Follow up within 7 days of hospital discharge for ALL people with severe illness or a history of self-harm within the previous three months.

10. Patients with a history of self-harm within the previous three months to receive no more than two weeks supply of medication.
11. Local arrangements for information sharing with criminal justice agencies.
12. Policies to ensure a post incident multidisciplinary case review and ensure information is given to relatives.

Homelessness does not receive a specific mention anywhere in the Strategy, but reference is made to the importance of housing and tackling other social exclusion issues to ensure the well-being of people with mental health problems. The Strategy recognises the importance of improving the clinical management of alcohol and drug misuse among young men who carry out deliberate self-harm and includes a commitment to make training available in suicide risk assessment for people working in substance misuse services. Among other specific measures outlined in the strategy are safer prescribing of anti-depressants, improving safety at suicide hotspots such as bridges and railway lines and improved monitoring of suicides. Copies of the 'National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England' are available from HILG's website as 'downloads' on www.hlg.org.uk. By Mark Kitney, HILG

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with housing
need

The key high risk groups are set out in the table below, which shows the current average suicide rates per year and the target for 2010.

Target Group	Current Suicide Figures (average per year, England only)	Target by 2010
Young Men	1300	1040
People who currently have, or recently had, contact with mental health services.	1200 (Male: 67%, Female: 33%)	960
People who have self-harmed in the year before suicide.	1180 (Male: 57%, Female: 43%)	944
Prisoners	85 (Male: 94%, Female: 6%)	68
High Risk Occupational Groups	Agricultural Workers 52 Doctors 17 Nurses 27	77 (Overall target)

Note: Figures taken from the National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England.

St Matthew Housing:

Developing new services for local homeless people

accommodation, resettlement and training

New funding is enabling local housing association and registered charity St Matthew Housing (SMH) to develop new services for people in housing need. The organisation, which was established in Norwich in 1973, provides good quality supported accommodation and other services for single, lonely, vulnerable people throughout East Anglia and the East Midlands.

Its aim is to enable residents to achieve their potential by leading fulfilled lives in

line with their own hopes and wishes.

Residents come from many different backgrounds. They include people with mental health problems and learning difficulties, people with physical disabilities,

substance or illegal drugs' misusers, people who have been homeless, ex-offenders, young people at risk and older people in need of support.

Last year, St Matthew Housing accommodated and supported 961 people. Of these, 480 were new residents who moved into rooms vacated when other people moved on. In total, the organisation received 2,834 referrals, which meant it was only able to support 1 in every 6 people who were referred to them.

St Matthew Housing's current work is split into 3 main areas: providing accommodation (of which they provide 3 different types: houses, group homes and move-on flats); helping residents move on to independent living via its resettlement scheme; and enabling residents to develop new ICT skills and access training opportunities.

Anyone who is single and homeless or who has a serious housing need can apply for St Matthew Housing accommodation. Its three different types of accommodation offer varying levels of support and independence.

With the support of the Sainsbury Family Trusts, the organisation was able to set up a pilot resettlement scheme in Norfolk 3 years ago.

Resettlement staff

assisted SMH's Norfolk residents who were considering moving on to independent living, helping with things such as filling in forms, budgeting, cooking, and finding and furnishing a flat. In April 2002, SMH was able to extend this scheme to cover all the 6 counties in which it operates, by taking advantage of the public funding available under the new 'Supporting People' regime and the Transitional Housing Benefit mechanisms.

This new service is a logical extension of the service provided by the move-on group houses and flats. Residents on the resettlement scheme have an improved chance of successfully establishing themselves in independent living, thanks to the support the scheme workers give them for a minimum of one year after they move on.

From Autumn 2002, thanks to £360,000 part financing from the European Social Fund (ESF), SMH will be able to provide computer training to residents in its projects. The grant from the ESF will pay for computers to be installed at projects and also cover the costs of external training organisations running in-house courses for residents. This project is called ROUTES and will enhance the prospects of residents, in some cases enabling them to find employment; for others, it will raise their expectations and help them to develop a sense of achievement through successfully completing training courses.

Together with the general support received from SMH's house staff and volunteers, plus the support from its resettlement workers, ROUTES will play an important part in enabling residents to fulfill their potential. It exemplifies SMH's strategy of satisfying not just residents' housing needs, but looking to the requirements of the whole person.

ROUTES funding has been granted

under the ESF Objective 2 (Equal Opportunities), Measure 2 (helping people with many disadvantages improve their job prospects). SMH received technical assistance during the bidding stage from Sally Kelly at the Guild. According to Norman Mellor, ROUTES project manager at SMH, "Sally's help and support proved invaluable and was a major factor in the successful outcome of our bid to the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East)."

ROUTES will involve SMH residents in a programme of additional support, which will enable them to overcome personal and institutional barriers to achieving their full potential. These barriers are (for example): low levels of literacy and numeracy and lack of qualifications; lack of confidence; lack of awareness of opportunities; the location and timing of courses; funding ineligibility to cover course fees; real cost of training (travel, course materials, etc); limited or no public transport; impact on benefits; and discrimination.

According to St Matthew Housing's ROUTES Co-ordinator, Helen Hall, ROUTES is set to run for 21 months in total. She comments, "The first 3 months of this have been research, finding out about potential computer hardware suppliers, potential training providers, and community training providers and on line training. Importantly we have also been informing other people in St Matthew Housing about what ROUTES is how they can get involved."

The first ROUTES training activities have now started and all of St Matthew Housing's projects will receive their computers by January 2002.



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**Would you like to be part of an innovative, quality service?
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Julian Housing Support is a Norfolk Charity working with people who have experienced mental ill health.

Outreach Floating Support Worker, Norwich - 1 F/T Post

This additional post has been created by our new partnerships with Norwich City Council and other housing agencies providing tenancy support to people who are recovering from severe mental distress. Our Norwich team works from an office in the centre of the City.

If you have experience or qualification in housing, mental health or social work, we can offer you a quality working environment, supportive supervision, on-going training and career development, and the opportunity to work in a dedicated and optimistic team.

Salary £14,711 to £17,236 plus travel allowance, pension scheme and other benefits.

For an application form and information pack, please e-mail info@julianhousing.org. Alternatively write to Elkie Hudson, Julian Housing Support, Janet Rowe House, 1a Oak Street, Norwich, NR3 3AE or ring 01603 767718.

Closing date for completed application forms 25th November. Interviews will be held during the week beginning 9th December.



Committed to Equal Opportunities

Registered Charity No. 1067883

Visit our website: www.julianhousing.org

For further information about any of St Matthew Housing's services, contact Norman Mellor, Funding and Marketing Manager/ROUTES Project Manager on 01603 442010 or email norman.mellor@stmatthewhousing.org

Training Dates

MANAGING AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE

8/11/02 09.30-16.30

*Norwich Trainer: Bob Banham
(Course Full)*

INTERACT CONFERENCE
HOMELESSNESS ACT
& SUPPORTING PEOPLE

14th & 15th November 2002

Peterborough

MANAGING DIFFICULT PEOPLE

19/11/02 09.30-16.30

*Cambridge Trainer: Maggie Wheeler
In Partnership with CHP (Course Full)*

SUCCESSFUL KEYWORKING

20/11/02 09.30-16.30

Norwich Trainer: Clare Pastorius

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

20/11/02 09.30-16.30

Great Yarmouth Trainer: Norwich MIND

MANAGING DIFFICULT PEOPLE

22/11/02 09.30-16.30

Norwich Trainer: Maggie Wheeler

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

25/11/02 09.30-16.30

Norwich Trainer: Norwich MIND

ASSERTIVENESS
AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING

28/11/02 09.30-16.30

Norwich Trainer: Diane Woodhouse

ADVANCED DRUG AWARENESS

05/12/02 09.30-16.30

*Great Yarmouth Trainer: Simon Floyd
(Course Full)*

FURTHER INFO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING
OUR TRAINING OR A TRAINING BROCHURE,
PLEASE PHONE KERRY ON 01603 617299.

ADDITIONAL COURSES

IF THERE IS A NEED FOR A COURSE AND
WE CAN ATTRACT DELEGATES WE WILL
ENDEAVOUR TO ARRANGE IT IF YOU MAKE
US AWARE OF THE NEED.
WE CAN ALSO ARRANGE "IN HOUSE"
COURSES FOR YOUR STAFF FOR A SMALL
FEE ADDED TO THE COST OF THE TRAINER.
VHG IS WILLING TO HELP YOU SOLVE YOUR
PROBLEMS AROUND STAFF DEVELOPMENT
AND IF WE CANNOT HELP YOU WE WILL
FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN.

Norfolk Mental Health Alliance Street fair

Despite the bad weather at the start, the street fair was very well attended. Dr Ian Gibson MP opened the event with a very clear message about the stigma attached to mental illness and thanked the organisations involved in reducing the stigma attached to mental illness and attempting to reduce the discrimination. Stallholders included ISU (Involving Service Users), Norwich PCT, ASSIST Trust and Meadowlands as well as craft and produce stalls. Live music was heard all day and the stalls in the Church delivered complementary therapies as well as a demonstration of origami by Kyoko, Norwich MIND's Japanese Student.

Jessica Rice, Norwich MIND



A day in the life of...

I am manager of one of the two houses that the organisation run. I manage a hostel in King's Lynn for men aged 16-30, although in exceptional circumstances we will house men over 30. The hostel is staffed 24 hours but my role is 9-5 (usually!). When I arrive in the morning we have a handover where night staff can keep us informed of any events which occurred during the night which need action or just to keep us aware of any potential problems. At the moment I am handing over to a new manager as I am moving on and he is shadowing me this week in order that he can get to grips with the systems and procedures. I see two residents for support sessions before I do our weekly fire alarm check.

At lunchtime I go for a short walk around the cricket pitch to get some fresh air and a change of scenery. In the afternoon I organise the weekly housekeeping budget and go shopping. I ask the residents if there are any special requests. Generally we buy a mixture of fresh and frozen produce and lots of fruit as the residents like it. We always have a full Sunday lunch or, in summer, we have a barbecue instead. When I return I

collect some fees from the residents who pay a top up over their benefits and record this properly. Most of our residents pay without needing to be prompted but sometimes I need to remind people.

I am called to the Magistrates court to interview a potential resident with his Solicitor, Probation officer and the Youth offending officer. I explain the house rules and the facilities. He needs a bail address. I am satisfied that he understands what the project can offer. He is coming over tonight. I dash back to the project for the hand over to the evening staff. I inform them that we have a new resident

Adrian Horn
Barnabas House

and complete the necessary paperwork whilst another member of the team

ensures that the room is ready. An ex-resident who we provide floating support to in his new tenancy comes in and asks if he can stay for an evening meal. I agree to this and have a chat about how he is getting on before I go home.