

Special Rural Edition

Spring 2006

Supporters Newsletter





Welcome

to the first edition of the Wallich Clifford Community's newsletter for 2006. It's a little late, but we would like to wish you all a happy and prosperous 2006 and thank you for your continued support of our work. The generosity of our supporters in the run up to Christmas was overwhelming. The thoughtful gifts given to our projects across Wales helped make the season special for the people we help. In addition may of you donated money in response to the Christmas appeal featured in our last newsletter.

As you can see, this newsletter is different to our usual format. It features a copy of our report, 'The Stigma of Rural Homelessness in Wales', and highlights some of the important work we are already doing to support homeless people in more rural parts of Wales.

Please take the time to look through the report and thank you again for supporting the work of the Wallich Clifford Community.

The Stigma or Rural Homelessness in Wales

The Wallich Clifford Community, has published a unique study of rural Welsh homelessness. The study, 'The Stigma of Rural Homelessness in Wales', has been produced with the help of Prof. Susan Hutson of Glamorgan University and used the expertise gained by the charity in urban areas to contact 134 homeless people across Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Powys.

Professor Hutson explained why this report is so important:

"Much less is known about rough sleeping and homelessness in rural areas, unlike the more 'visible' homelessness in cities and towns. The Wallich Clifford Community recognised this significant gap in understanding and with funding from the Lloyds TSB Foundation embarked on an ambitious three-month research project."

The research team gained the trust and understanding of the people they met by offering a similar Rough Sleepers Intervention Team (RSIT) service to the ones the Wallich Clifford Community provides in Cardiff, Bridgend, Swansea and Newport. The RSIT provides hot food, drinks and blankets to people sleeping rough and helps them to find a safe and appropriate place to stay.

This unique approach has resulted in a study and subsequent report, which measures not just the

numbers of rural homelessness, but also the personal moving stories of the individuals and the stigma they suffer. These stories are captured in case studies, used in the report to highlight specific issues, and provide a fascinating insight into the lives of this most vulnerable and excluded group of people.

'Mary a Big Issue seller in her 30s, cares for a 12 year-old girl, Katy, but will not sell the magazine in the town where Katy goes to school for fear for her being bullied.'

'One child found by the team was just 13 years old. Problems at home and a turbulent relationship with his mother led to him to frequently sleep rough for 2-3 nights at a time.'

'Alice, in her 40s, was living in a chapel house until she was evicted when a new vicar required the house. Unable to find an affordable alternative, Alice says she is 'very embarrassed and distraught' at finding herself homeless, ashamed to ask friends for help.'

'Simon lived in London with his partner and worked in fashion. After his partner died in childbirth, Simon had no family or support in the area and moved to Aberystwyth to be with his homeless cousin.'

The patterns of homelessness that have been uncovered in this study, suggest that in many ways, homelessness affects those in rural counties as it does in urban areas. The numbers are perhaps less, but the issues are the same – drugs, alcohol and family breakdown. With increasing house prices in rural areas coupled with poor employment and a lack of opportunity, particularly for younger people, homelessness is certainly a problem that could quickly escalate.

The Wallich Clifford Community's Chief Executive Stephen Gamgee commented:

"Over the last 28 years the Wallich Clifford Community has been working in Welsh urban areas and has established successful services to meet the needs of homeless people. This report has identified these needs also exist in the rural areas of Wales on a scale which demands the range of urban services be replicated to tackle rural homelessness. The logistical difficulties of operating any service should not be a barrier to offering all homeless people in Wales the support to gain access to safe, secure and stable accommodation."

Wallich Clifford Community in Rural Wales

In Ceredigion

The Tenancy Support Service

Based in Aberystwyth the Tenancy Support Service is one of a range of successful services we operate in Ceredigion. The Tenancy Support Service supports people who are living in rented accommodation and are having difficulty maintaining their tenancy. They are also able to help people living in temporary accommodation to find and maintain a more permanent home. Projects like this play a major role in the prevention of homelessness as they give people the help they need to work out their problems and continue to live in their own homes.

The Solutions Service

In addition to the Tenancy Support Service we also have a Solutions Worker. This worker helps people who are already homeless as well as those at risk of becoming homeless and helps them to find solutions to any problems they are facing not just housing.

The Aberystwyth Resettlement Project

The Aberystwyth Resettlement Project provides accommodation and support for homeless people over the age of 18. Experienced and professional staff help people to gain the skills needed to eventually live independently and maintain a secure tenancy.

In Carmarthenshire

Clos Sant Paul

Clos Sant Paul provides a safe stable temporary home for young homeless people. They live in self-contained flats, with 24-hour support from staff, where they can develop the skills they will need to live independently. Clos Sant Paul is also the base for a Tenancy Support Project similar to the project in Ceredigion.

Carmarthen Mediation

Our Mediation service provides intervention and support to young people aged between 16 and 25 that are at risk of becoming homeless for any reason. Mediation is offered to those who feel that their relationship with their parents/carers has broken down, a common cause of homelessness amongst young people.

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In Monmouthshire

Youth Solutions

Our Youth Solutions service also provides support to young people that are at risk of becoming homeless. Through a series of weekly surgeries, drop in services and contact with local colleges, this project is quickly building a positive reputation in local communities. Our Youth Solutions Service held 230 drop in advice sessions in the first 6 months of operation, and helped 54 young people, around half of whom are aged just 16 or 17.

In Powys

Temporary Accommodation Project (T.A.P.)

The Powys Temporary Accommodation Project works in partnership with Powys County Council, receiving referrals where a person is considered in need of support whilst staying in the council's temporary accommodation. The project aims to house people appropriately according to their required level of support, and works in partnership with each person to ensure their long-term goals are reflected in their choice of accommodation.

Supporting our Work

Ways to help include;



Donate

Donations from supporters provide valuable unrestricted funding that we can use to develop added services for those most in need. Donate online, or by post.



Volunteer

We welcome volunteers from all walks of life; contact us for an application pack.



Payroll Giving

A tax effective way to give directly to the Wallich Clifford and encourage your colleagues or employees to do the same. We can provide all the necessary information to start a scheme.



Promote

Promote the work of the Wallich Clifford in your workplace, amongst your friends and family, in your local church or social club. Arrange a visit from the Wallich Clifford or receive our quarterly newsletter.



Contact Us

For further details about supporting the Wallich Clifford Community or any other enquiry, please contact:

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