

Conclusion

Long term investment is needed to help solve the single biggest issue homeless people face after their obvious housing problem - ill health. We can't do it without the NHS medical teams: the medical teams can't do it without us.

Recommendations

- St Mungo's would like to work with PCTs across London to offer a London wide healthcare facility where homeless people can be cared for when they are discharged from hospital
- St Mungo's want to work with PCT's to implement practical health solutions for homeless and vulnerable people
- We need the Public Health Authorities to work alongside St Mungo's to develop and implement a range of solutions
- Commissioning of joint services: together we can save more lives.



There is much to do. To find out more about health services at St Mungo's, please contact Peter Cockersell on 020 8740 9968, or email: peterc@mungos.org. To request a copy of our health report please email: info@mungos.org.

St Mungo's is opening doors for London's homeless. Every year we help more than 5,000 homeless and vulnerable people find responsive and integrated solutions for problems with housing, employment, training and health.

We offer pioneering services to men and women who have complex and overlapping needs that often exclude them from mainstream services. Our work is essential for preparing people with mental health, substance use, alcohol and housing problems to move on.

Our substance use teams worked with over 600 people and our mental health team over 800 last year helping them address their drug and alcohol problems.

And to constantly improve the quality of our services we welcome diversity and build partnerships so that we reflect and help our local communities across London.

For information on subscribing to 'Briefings', please call 020 8762 5500.

Dissemination of our good practice is funded by charitable voluntary income. We are grateful to our donors whose support enables us to share this information briefing.

St Mungo's, Griffin House,
161 Hammersmith Road, London W6 8BS

Tel: 020 8762 5500

Fax: 020 8762 5501

www.mungos.org

Charity exempt from registration
I&P Society No. 20598R Housing Association No. LH0279

St Mungo's 
Opening doors for London's homeless

SOS

Sick of Suffering

St Mungo's report into the health problems of homeless people

With over 35 years experience **changing lives**, St Mungo's are now calling on the Department of Health and PCT's to work with us to **save lives**.

St Mungo's carried out a comprehensive survey into the health problems of 601 homeless people.

Key figures from the health research showed that:

- 2 in 3 homeless people have physical health problems and more than 1 in 3 who need treatment are not receiving it
- 1 in 2 of those with a physical health problem that is related to sleeping rough are **not receiving treatment**
- More than 1 in 3 (38%) of those with respiratory problems are **not receiving treatment**
- 1 in 3 homeless people with cardiovascular problems are **not receiving treatment**.

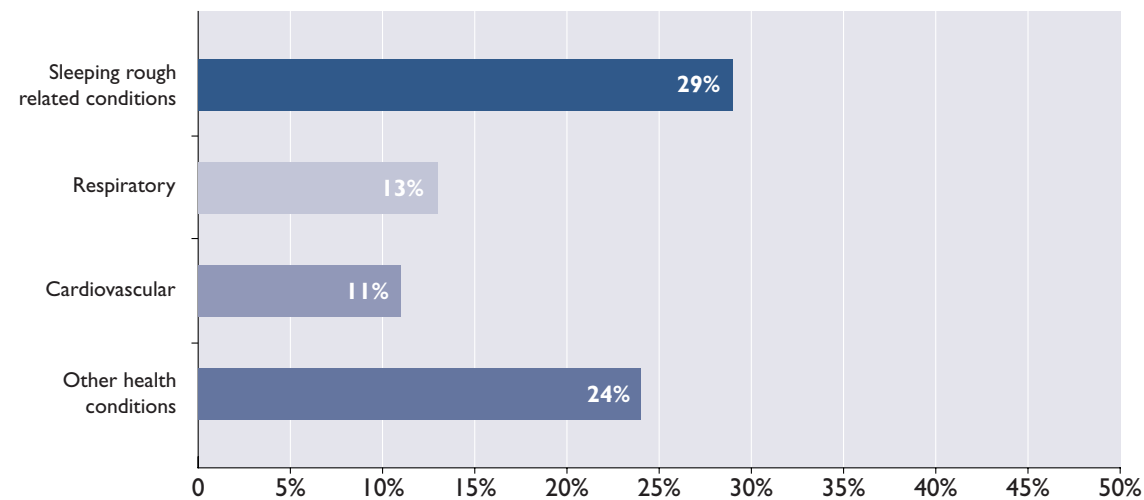


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Health problems

The survey results show:

Physical health problems suffered by homeless people



Sleeping rough conditions - bronchitis, pneumonia, trench foot, frostbite, wound infections etc.

Respiratory - asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia etc.

Cardiovascular - heart problems, blood pressure issues (high/low), diabetes etc.

Other - cancer, epilepsy/seizures, renal damage, hernia, liver damage



Amanda is 30 and slept rough for 4 months. She was too ashamed to visit a GP surgery.

"I was conscious of the way I looked and I felt so ashamed of the state I was in. You feel so invisible, so worthless and so low that you stop thinking that you deserve any better."

"You only find out about drop in clinics if you meet someone in the know and you often have to walk for miles in pain. You need to know when it is open and more often than not, by the time you get there they are too full to see you."

The problem

Only a small minority of homeless people actually receive treatment for their health problems. This is because:

- They are isolated and alienated
- Too scared or ashamed to get help
- Many are socially vulnerable, extremely withdrawn and incapable of social behaviour
- They are discharged NFA or self-discharge
- They don't wait for treatment and don't complete treatment.



Solution

St Mungo's take a long term view to save lives and money. We are experienced at changing lives. We now need health officials to work with us to save lives.

Our joint work with NHS medical teams, whether it's substitute prescribing or primary health care, show what results can be achieved. When our expertise in working with homeless people joins forces with NHS expertise in treating them, **more** people complete treatment, **more** lives are saved.

Together we can do more than either of us alone.

"You just keep on going, through the pain, through the discomfort, until it gets to the point when you get scared, when you actually think "I might die if I don't see someone about this" and that's when people seek help."

Rob, St Mungo's resident

"St Mungo's is not afraid to be innovative, forging partnerships to pioneer new ways in helping homeless men and women to address their drug use and begin the process of rebuilding their lives."

Dr John Dunn, Lead Consultant in Substance Misuse Psychiatry, Camden & Islington Mental Health & Social Care Trust, Response - North Camden Drug Service