

## Substance Use Services in St Mungo's hostels

Welcome to the third in our series of fact sheets about how St Mungo's offers successful solutions to people with complex health needs.

### Health facts about St Mungo's residents

- More than 90% of St Mungo's clients need more than a home. Other needs include drug and alcohol addiction, untreated health problems, unemployment and a lack of basic education and skills
- 70% of our clients require support with *four* or more of these needs
- In 2006, 52% of rough sleepers accessing St Mungo's services had issues with drug use<sup>1</sup>

Without receiving support for a drug addiction, many drug users turn to crime to fund their habit. St Mungo's Substance Use Teams offer realistic and accessible solutions to people with drug problems, enabling our clients to break free of their anti-social behaviour and drug use and move towards finding a secure, independent home and a job.



*Complex needs?  
Successful solutions  
from St Mungo's*

### Health solutions from St Mungo's

Independent research commissioned by St Mungo's indicates that early intervention and support from St Mungo's Substance Use Services dramatically improves the chances of someone with a drug habit giving up for good.

**St Mungo's intervention also substantially saves costs. Every year, for every resident who accesses our Substance Use Services, the taxpayer is saved £155,025.**

When an individual is referred to a St Mungo's hostel they receive a health check and their needs are assessed. Our Substance Use Team works flexibly with an emphasis on harm reduction. We help people to manage their drug use, as it is an important first step to reduction, detox and rehabilitation. We provide the appropriate treatment to help break the link between drug misuse and crime.

#### References:

- (1) Figure of 535 rough sleepers and 279 with drug issues taken from St Mungo's 2006 Residents Needs Survey. Please note that this is an under-estimation of the number of rough sleepers housed. In 2005/06, 980 rough sleepers were admitted.

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## Without St Mungo's intervention

The following example presents financial costs that would be incurred if the individual was unemployed and addicted to crack cocaine. Based on the strong link between crime and substance use, it is likely that the individual would turn to theft to fund their drug habit. There is a strong possibility that the individual would also end up in prison. This would carry a cost of £165,000<sup>2</sup> for putting the offender back through all the elements of The Criminal Justice System. However, this figure has been excluded from the total yearly calculation.

Situation	Cost for two years
As the effects of opiates, cocaine and crack wear off so quickly, they are expensive drugs. Because of their addictive nature there is a strong link to crime as users seek to fund their habit. For a £100 per day crack cocaine habit the average cost of theft would be £500 per day <sup>3</sup> .	£365,000
Following arrest the individual would have to attend court.	£1,110 <sup>4</sup>
<b>Total over two years</b>	<b>£366,110</b>

## Successful health solutions from St Mungo's

Treatment	Cost for two years
Whilst staying in St Mungo's Great Guildford Street Hostel, the individual would receive harm reduction/minimisation treatment.	£54,060 <sup>5</sup>
The individual would also receive out-patient methadone support.	£2,000 <sup>6</sup>
<b>Total over two years</b>	<b>£56,060</b>

The costs in this example have been based on two years as this is the average length of stay of a resident at a St Mungo's hostel.

## Conclusion

Research shows that St Mungo's intervention provides a cost saving to the taxpayer of **£155,025** every year, for each person that receives harm reduction/minimisation treatment in a St Mungo's hostel.

## Working together for successful solutions

We are keen to join together with other healthcare providers so that we can continue helping more homeless and vulnerable people to make lasting life changes. **To find out how you can work with us, please contact Kate Whalley, St Mungo's Group Manager for Health on 020 8762 5688 or e-mail [Katew@mungos.org](mailto:Katew@mungos.org).**

## Complex needs? Successful solutions from St Mungo's

### References:

- (2) Social Exclusion Unit
- (3) Crisis, *How many, how much?* (2003)
- (4) The Home Office Research Findings number 103, *The Cost of Criminal Justice*
- (5) Cost of treatment at St Mungo's Great Guildford Street Hostel
- (6) Social Exclusion Unit, Reducing re-offending

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