

Why does SHEP work where others have failed?

- **Trainers' understanding of the service user group enabled them to build strong, constructive relationships.** The trainers had an in depth awareness of the service users' problems and could help them to develop realistic goals and expectations. The respect that the trainers earned from clients allowed them to use a 'tough love' approach when necessary
- **A holistic approach was used. Service users did not have to overcome addiction and mental health problems prior to joining SHEP.** Employment training and support for other aspects of people's lives have been shown to be mutually supporting; boosting confidence, creating routine and giving a sense of achievement that can facilitate further progress
- **Location of training in hostels made it easier** to engage residents and contributed to a change in the hostel culture. Residents initially not keen on SHEP joined up after seeing the projects positive impact on their peers
- **Social enterprise employment allows service users to continue developing their vocational skills while gaining work experience.** Participants in Revive had their confidence boosted by working on jobs that customers had paid for. They were paid with vouchers, which allowed them to benefit financially without jeopardising benefit payments or threatening their recovery from substance or alcohol misuse
- **Partnership with employers;** key to Revive's success was its ability to create partnerships with companies interested in employing Revive 'graduates'. Successful links have been brokered with several construction companies.

All three training projects continue, with different funding arrangements. If you would like more information on SHEP then please contact Don Macdonald, St Mungo's Group Manager, Skills and Employment at don.macdonald@mungos.org

St Mungo's opens doors for homeless people. Mainly based in London and the South, we provide over 100 accommodation and support projects day in, day out.

We run **emergency services** – including street outreach and emergency shelters. We support homeless people in their **recovery** – opening the door to health care, and getting more homeless people into lasting new homes and training and work than any other charity. And we **prevent** homelessness through our high support housing and support teams for people at real risk.

By opening our doors, and our support services, we enable thousands of homeless and vulnerable people to change their lives for good every year.

To receive future Recovery Results briefings or other St Mungo's information, visit www.mungos.org and sign up to our newsletter

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.

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SINGLE HOMELESS ENTERPRISE PROJECT (SHEP)

How an innovative St Mungo's social enterprise project is combining skills and employment training to help homeless people into work

November 2011

Introduction

St Mungo's Single Homeless Enterprise Project was set up as a pioneering project. It has surpassed targets for helping homeless people into employment, and has helped many more to move closer to the labour market through overcoming the low self esteem, substance use and inactivity that were preventing them from getting their lives back on track.

The fact that such a small percentage of our clients are in employment reflects the multiple barriers to work faced by homeless people, as well as the changing nature of the labour market. Despite these persistent problems, there has been little specialist skills and employment training available for homeless people.



SHEP was led by the London Borough of Camden with support from the Department of Work and Pensions and funding from the Treasury/Cabinet Office Invest to Save Budget. It continues to operate via a number of non statutory funding streams, including revenue from the social enterprise element of the project. This briefing highlights the project's achievements in the period 2007/10.

SHEP has shown that a skills and employment programme built around the needs of homeless people can lead to significantly improved outcomes for a group that other providers struggle to engage with.

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SHEP's outcomes

St Mungo's works with rough sleepers, homeless people and vulnerable adults at risk of homelessness. A quarter of our clients have no qualifications at all and just 5% have worked within the last year.

There were 117 service users on SHEP programmes, exceeding the projects initial target by 34%. Of these participants:

- **53% achieved an Open College Network qualification**
- **18% moved into work**

Of those who entered employment, all earned above the minimum wage and most worked full time. The majority have entered into construction or painting and decorating work, however, others have gone into a variety of sectors including catering and retail.

Many service users with addiction and mental health problems found that SHEP helped them to overcome, or better control, these problems.

Service users structured their lives around attendance on the programme, took responsibility for their actions and progressed through a sequence of achievements. Our 42 years of working with homeless people has demonstrated that these 'soft' outcomes are vital to our clients' recovery and are a precursor to 'hard' outcomes such as entering into employment or permanent housing.

How SHEP works

The programme consists of three training programmes based around painting and decorating, construction and sound recording, as well as a social enterprise, Revive.

On joining SHEP service users can progress through the programme at their own pace, working towards Open College Network Level One Award and Construction Skills Certification Scheme card (Health & Safety).

Employability training, CV help, literacy and numeracy support and interview preparation is also provided. What makes SHEP special is the additional expert help provided, for example to overcome mental health problems and substance misuse. Service users have the opportunity to supplement their training through gaining experience working for Revive, a social enterprise drawing on skills learned through Bricks and Mortar and the painting and decorating training.



Phil - a Bricks and Mortar service user

"I've never had a full-time job. A period of my life I've spent in prison, roundabout ten to twelve years; in for six months, out for two, in for six. I got sick of that and stopped and settled in for a bit and got into drugs, heavily into heroin, selling and taking."

SHEP gave Phil a sense of self-worth which he needed to quit drugs and move on.

"Bricks and Mortar gives me something to do every day and it gives me a sense of responsibility. I've never had the feeling where people come up and ask me 'how do you do this?' and 'how do you do that?' It's a funny feeling, I'm not used to it, but I like it,

and I want more of it."

A second interview revealed that Phil had completed rehab, had got in touch with a family member with whom he had had no contact with for many years and was about to start a computer course at college. He feels that his life has changed completely since starting SHEP.

"This morning I went to see [a SHEP trainer]. On his wall he's got a photograph of everyone who's been on the course. I'm looking at the pictures and I went to this one, I know that guy. It took me five minutes to realise that I was looking at a picture of myself."