



REPORT on BATH STREET AUDIT

30th SEPTEMBER 2009

Compiled by John Isserlis November 2009

Contents

A Introduction

Ai Background to the Street Audit

Aii Preparatory Information

B Audit Analysis

Bi Inclusion of Data beyond the Audit

Bii Exclusion of Data within the Audit

Biii Audit Outcomes

Biv Outreach Data Jan-Nov

C Street Count 19th November 2009

D Conclusions

E Next Steps & Recommendations

F Acknowledgements

G Appendices

- **1. Maps**
- **2. Assessment forms long and short**
- **3. Follow up interview form**

This report outlines the findings from the Street Audit conducted on behalf of the B&NES Task and Targeting Group, by multiple agencies in Bath on 30th September 2009. The report includes additional information regarding the need for the audit, its remit and the planning processes involved in undertaking it. I have also chosen to include information relating to the two Street Counts undertaken during 2009 and statistical information provided through the Julian House Homeless Outreach Service. It is hoped that the addition of the supplementary information gives greater context and enhances understanding of the subject matter contained within the body of the report

Introduction

Local authorities are charged by central government to work in partnership, initiating strategies and commissioning services which have the effect of reducing the incidence of and the need for rough sleeping within the authority. The current government target was outlined on 18th November 2008 by Communities and Local Government (CLG), within the new rough sleeping strategy – “*No One Left Out - Communities ending rough sleeping*”, a fifteen point action plan that sets out a vision to work with partners to end rough sleeping by 2012. The principal target is simply to reduce rough sleeping and the need for rough sleeping to zero by 2012.

One of the ways in which CLG and local authorities have monitored rough sleeping is through an annual Street Count which takes place during the Spring or Autumn. This count is undertaken as a partnership between CLG the local authority and statutory and voluntary agencies working in the area with rough sleepers. It is acknowledged that the methodology and strictly proscriptive guidelines – “*CLG Guidance on Evaluating the Extent of Rough Sleeping*” March 2007 Revision, used for a Street Count do not give anything more than an indication of local trends, however Street Count is still seen as a critical tool in evaluating the performance of a local authority and it’s commissioned services in respect of the problem of rough sleeping.

B&NES has conducted, with exceptions, annual Street Counts over the last 10 years, missing out counts in years following a very low number found in the preceding year. A scheduled Street Count took place in Spring 2009 co-ordinated by B&NES. The Street Count took place on the night of April 2nd 2009 and was carried out by a CLG representative, Local Councillors, staff

from B&NES Housing Department, Drugs and Homelessness Initiative, Julian House and the Bath Abbey. On the night the count found 10 rough sleepers, bedded down in locations across Bath. Of concern to CLG and the others involved was not only the high number of individuals found rough sleeping, but also the aggressive attitude and behaviour of one group of rough sleepers. It was felt that their behaviour at least in part may have led from their own sense that they had “rights” to the space in which they were sleeping and could therefore use intimidation and antisocial behaviour to prevent public intrusion into this space. CLG, in particular, felt that there was need to examine the local approach to rough sleeping and to provide support and guidance to the authority and service providers working with rough sleepers in B&NES.

Background to the Street Audit

CLG met with B&NES officers and Councillors, and key agencies including Julian House, Big Issue, BADAS, DHI, Genesis Trust and the Bath Abbey Homelessness worker. One of the suggestions from CLG, taken up by BANES, was the establishment of a Task and Targeting Group (T&T), that could focus on Street Based Lifestyles, including Rough Sleeping. Julian House volunteered to co-ordinate the Task and Targeting Group and to take on the role of Chair.

One of the tasks proposed by CLG, based on best practice in other authorities, was for the T&T Group to conduct a Street Audit across Bath. The aim was to gain a baseline picture of the scale of street based activity within this loose community grouping. It was already known that this would include those who use or are likely to use support services and/or accommodation services provided by homelessness agencies, those in temporary and supported accommodation and those who although in accommodation, still, at least in part, live street based lifestyles. It was understood in advance, that an audit of this service user group would encompass a number of people with substance misuse issues and therefore support agencies working with this group were included in the preparation for and completion of the task. Similarly there are people from within the broader community of those with street based lifestyles, who are actively engaging in behaviours designed to take control and initiative for themselves in addressing their situation, it was therefore important to include the Big Issue amongst the agencies involved in the audit.

During the period July to September 2009 the scale and scope of the Street Audit was discussed and defined by the T&T Group. Consideration was

given to extending the audit to cover parts of Bath away from the central area and also to include Radstock and Keynsham and to increase it's scope to include younger people involved in drinking in parks and gardens. Due to resources and practicalities of conducting an audit over such an extended area and scope it was agreed that the audit should focus solely on the central part of Bath. A street map of Bath (Appendix 1) was broken down into three audit areas, each of which could be reasonably covered during an hour by a pair of auditors on foot.

The audit's purpose was to gain good information about each of the individuals observed during each audit session. Based on the good practice and experience gained by the Exeter Street Homeless Outreach Team during their audit in February 2009, T&T Group agreed to use the audit assessment forms the Exeter team had developed. Two audit forms were used during the B&NES Street Audit (Appendix 2). The longer version of the form was used where direct interview with an individual on the street was possible and the brief version used where direct interview was either seen to be overly intrusive or pose a danger to those involved in conducting the audit – so observation was made at a distance.

The audit was to be conducted by pairs of auditors going out to one of the map areas for an hour and using the assessment forms to record what they found. The audit on 30th September started at 06:00 and finished at 23:00. Pairs of auditors went to each map area during the following times:

- **06:00-07:00**
- **10:00-11:00**
- **14:00-15:00**
- **18:00-19:00**
- **22:00-23:00**

Although a Street Audit and a Street Count are two separate procedures, it had been thought that combining the two events in order to get a 24 hour record of activity across the city would enhance the picture gained from the audit. However, B&NES felt that the audit and the count should be conducted separately, partly in the hope and belief that the Street Audit on the 30th September would create a focus on identified clients which could address some patterns of individual rough sleeping in advance of a formal Street Count which was planned to be undertaken on 19th November 2009 (greater detail on the Street Count is given later in this report). It was therefore agreed that the Street Audit would not act as a Street Count. By virtue of conducting the audit in the early morning between 06:00-07:00 and again in the later evening between 22:00-23:00 it was likely that some people would be seen

bedded down and rough sleeping, and this is what happened when the audit took place.

In addition to the agreed map areas the Memorial Gardens at Livingstone Road, was also visited at 11:00 and 14:30. This area, outside of the mapped audit zone, was reported by the police as having a high number of street drinkers who regularly sat there and were involved in nuisance behaviour as well as drinking. It was felt reasonable to include this exception to the agreed audit map in order to increase the comprehensive approach we had committed to try and undertake.

Preparatory Information

In order that the audit should be a success it was clear that detailed comprehensive information should be provided to auditors in advance. This detail comprised of a list of 59 known service users who were likely to be seen during the day of the audit. The list was compiled by Julian House Outreach Service, Big Issue and the Police at Manvers Street station with support from staff at DHI, BADAS and the Abbey. Basic detail was given about each client on the list including name, D.O.B., gender, current accommodation and whether they were a Big Issue vendor. The list was intended to be an aid to those involved in the audit as it would mean that if a client from the list was seen during the audit, auditors would know that we already had detail about that individual within recording systems at Julian House and/or the Big Issue office and quite probably at other agencies as well. Where a client seen on audit was already on the briefing list, auditors could dispense with asking some of the detail about date of birth place of birth current accommodation etc. as this was information already held. In this way those seen on the street during the course of the audit would also be spared the chore of giving information which they would be aware agencies already hold. Many clients resent that they are continuously asked for the same information rather than for new or currently relevant information which may be more readily used to address presenting support needs. It was not expected that the briefing list would be fully comprehensive in respect of those seen by auditors on 30th September, but sought to give as much information as possible prior to the event.

All auditors were invited to a briefing session in the two days leading up to the audit, at which they were given detail about the purpose of the audit, assessment forms, briefing list and map areas. Auditors were also given a

briefing on health and safety in respect of approaching unknown clients in potentially hazardous situations. The following agencies supplied auditors: DHI, BADAS, Avon and Somerset Police, Big Issue, Bath Abbey, Julian House and B&NES Public Protection Team; two B&NES Councillors also took part. In total 28 auditors were used on the day to cover the audit areas.

Audit Analysis

With exception of specifically defined information, as described below in “Inclusion of Data beyond the Audit”, the data represented in this section is drawn from the Street Audit assessment forms, completed in Bath on 30th September 2009 between 06:00 and 23:00. This data has been taken from the 78 Full and Brief Assessment forms completed by auditors during the day.

Data has been presented without interpretation, although occasionally the author’s descriptions may have veered towards this. All data is available to members of the Task and Targeting Group for review by request from the author. As the collated data contains individual client names and details it is not possible to share the data set with a wider audience, except in the forms in which it appears below. I would be happy to discuss providing further analysis if other agencies require it.

All data collected during the Street Audit plus additional client information and information included from outside of the scope of the audit has been placed onto a database from which the graphical and statistical representations below have been developed.

Inclusion of Data beyond the Audit

In addition to the information which was returned on the Full and Brief Assessment, the audit has chosen to include client detail drawn from the following areas:

- Occupants of Julian House Night Shelter on 29th and 30th September
- Attendees at Julian House Day Centre on 30th September
- Attendees at Genesis Lifeline Centre on 30th September
- Vendors who came to the Big Issue Offices on 30th September

- 15 people who are well known to services in Bath and have well established street based lifestyles but who were not seen on the day.

The reason for inclusion of these individuals onto the data list, is that they are people who have street based lifestyles (at least in part), and they were present in Bath on 30th September. So in order to provide a comprehensive assessment of activity and as a means to identifying further unmet need, it was therefore a significant and necessary inclusion.

As in many cases the audit information gained through filling assessment forms was not complete, work has continued following the audit to add detail against an individual's name, this was necessary most notably in the fields of "current accommodation" and "local connection".

On the day of the audit no current clients were on the Julian House "Excluded List".

Exclusion of Data within the Audit

The returned audit forms were in the large part very useful. In some cases however the extent of detail on the forms most principally the name of the individual seen, was not sufficient to include the form as part of the finalised data set. A total of 11 partial forms and records have been excluded from the data set where the individual has been identified as "X". A further 5 forms have been re-examined due to similarity of the name on the form with a client already on the developed "master list". Through a process of checking using existing agency resources the individuals on these 5 forms have been combined with another, authenticated and verifiable identity.

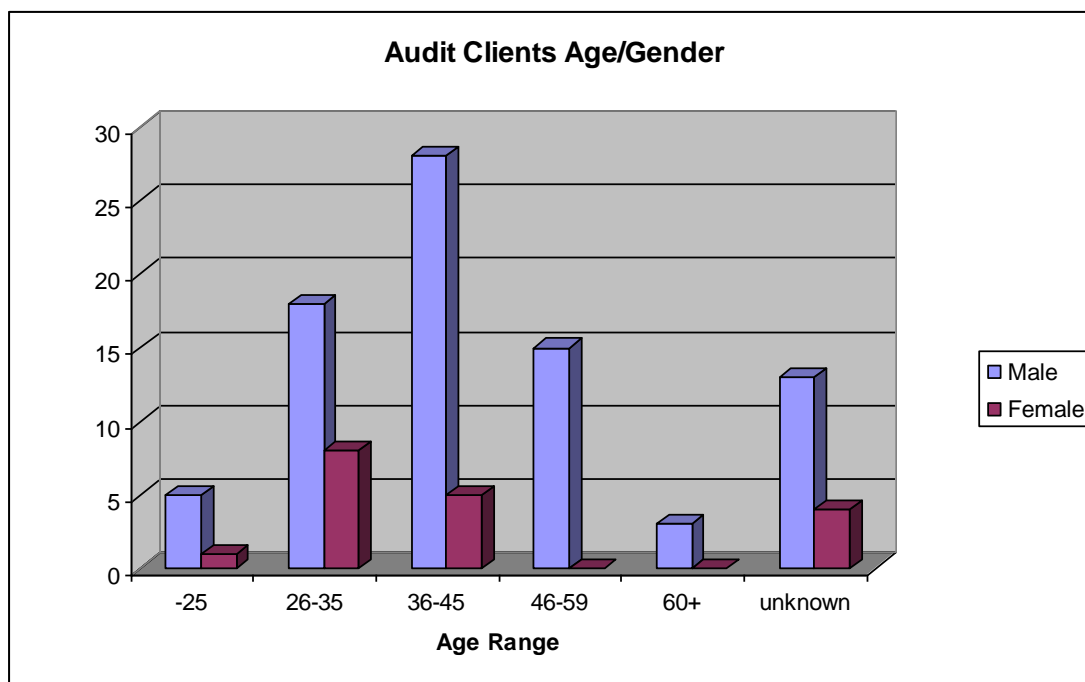
This total reduction of 16 people from the audit reduces the overall number of those included in the audit data set from 101 to 85. However with the addition of 15 people who were unseen anywhere on the day the total data set comprises of 100 individuals.

Audit Outcomes

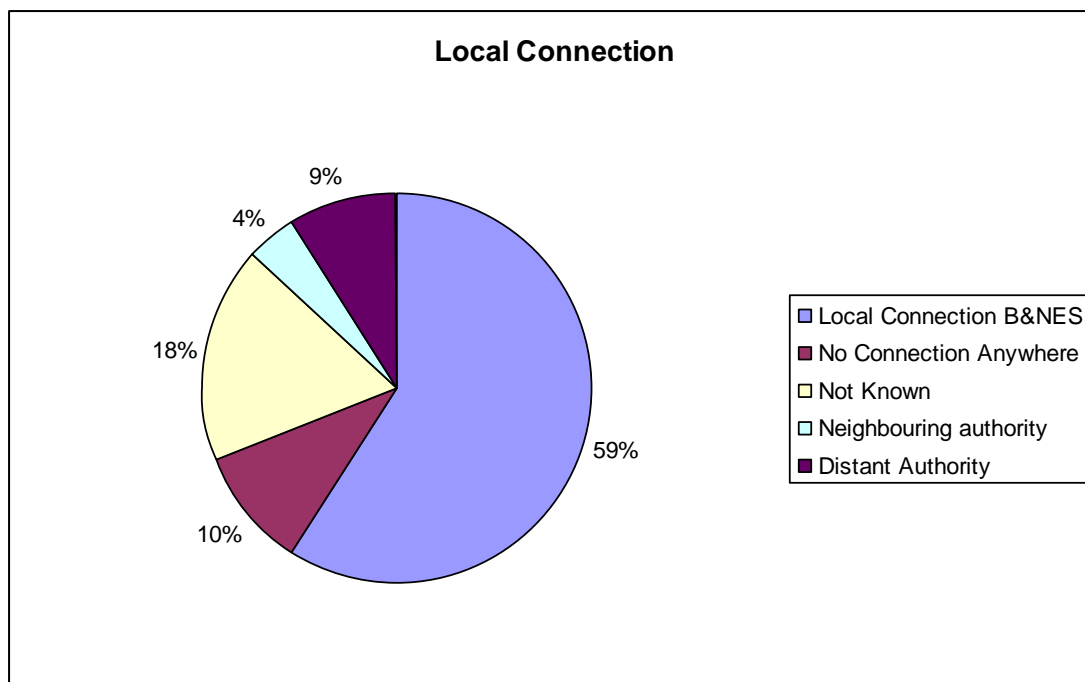
The following information, some displayed in graphic formats is extracted from the full data set. In many fields there are gaps in the data and in other

areas clients are represented in more than one field simultaneously, for this reason totals represented rarely equal exactly 100.

The age of clients seen ranged between 17 and 71 years old. With the 59% of the data set falling into the 26-45 year old groupings. The gender split of 81% male 19% female is consistent with the average representation seen in both Julian House Day Centre and Night Shelters.

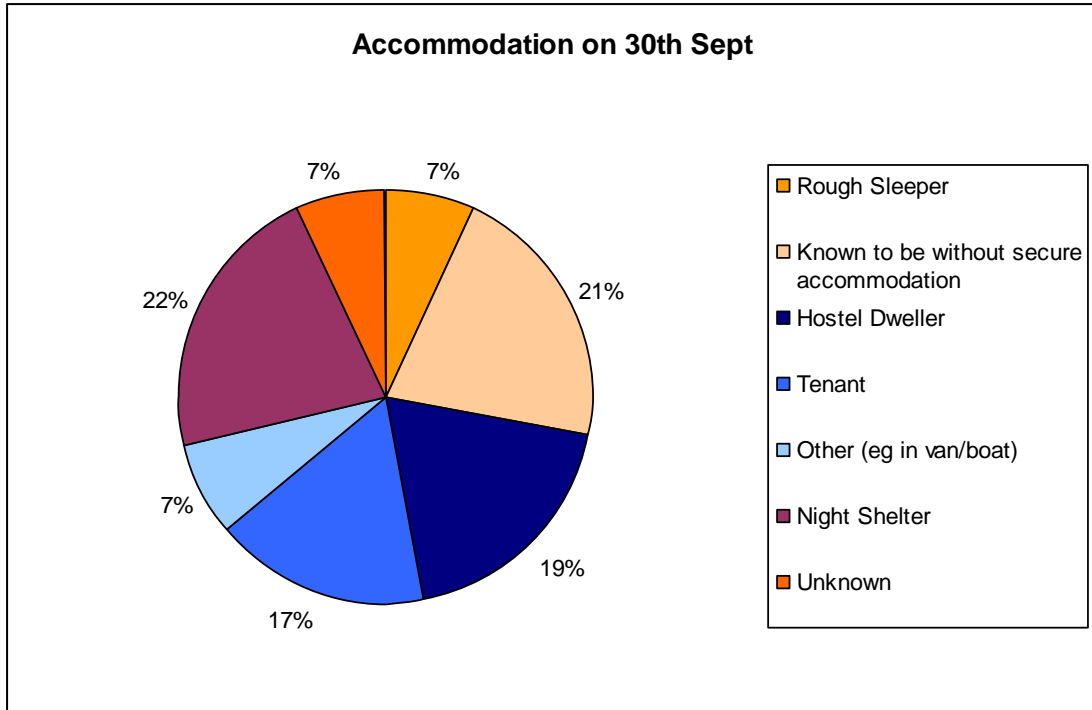


It is often suggested that Bath attracts in homeless people. Street Audit results show that at least 69% of those seen have either a local connection to B&NES or no established local connection anywhere. It can be reasonably assumed that some of those where connection is not known will also have legitimate connection to this authority. The presumption that B&NES has an inward flow of homeless people is not substantiated by the data gathered. Of the 13% of those audited who have a connection to another authority a third of them are from authorities adjacent to B&NES.

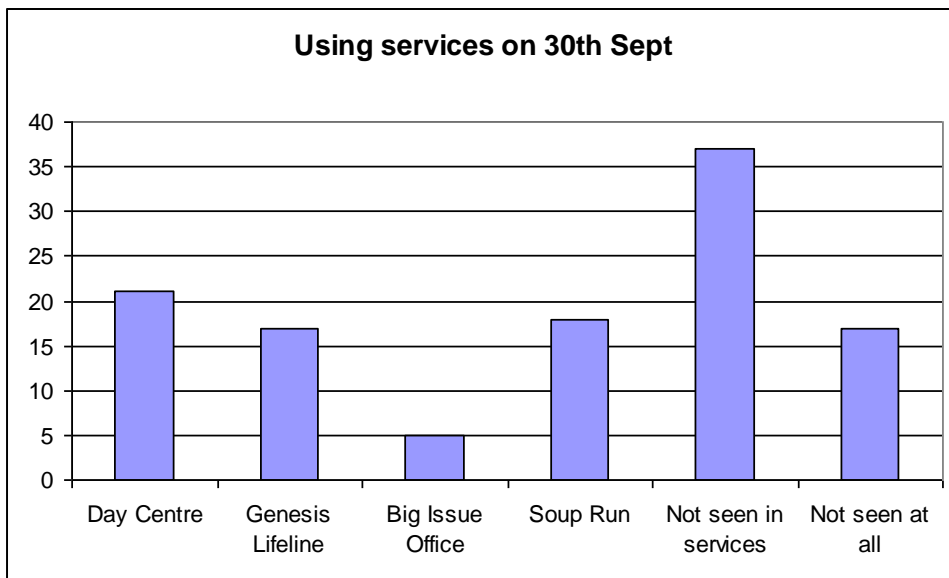


Clearly a key factor in the establishment or continuation of street based lifestyle will be security of accommodation. We are certainly aware that some people in secure tenancies and supported accommodation will still chose to engage socially in the milieu of street homelessness. For people with no accommodation and for those in Night Shelters, or who have unsecured accommodation (friend’s floor, living in their car etc.) there is little choice but to live large parts of each day on the streets.

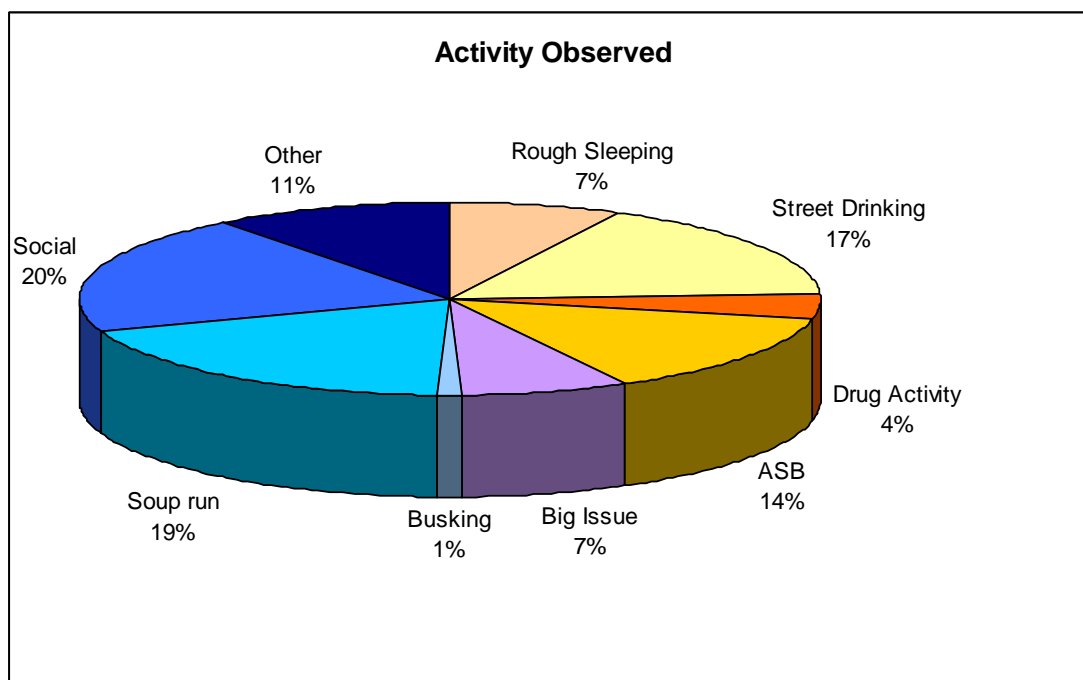
More than 50% of the data set are people who have no right or access to a permanent home or secure temporary accommodation. During the week Julian House Day Centre is open from 09:30-12:30 and Genesis Lifeline Centre is open from 14:00-16:00. If someone is staying at the night shelter the available Drop In service open to them represents only 40% of the day, leaving a further 6.5 hours to be lived on the streets.



Many of those seen do make use of day services and other support services and it is certainly born out that some clients utilise multiple services to get them through the day. However of the audited group 54% did not use the services listed on 30th September. In some cases this will be an entirely appropriate choice as they are perhaps already engaging in more focussed activity through specialist drug and alcohol services or meaningful occupation. Some of those not using services are people who actively avoid engagement or feel unable to use services due to their own anxiety, fear or anger towards services.



A key focus within the audit was to establish what it was people were doing on the street as well as where they were doing it. The table below is taken exclusively from the audit forms completed. Of note is that no one was observed begging during the entire audit or at least begging was not recorded as an activity by auditors.



In respect of location for street based activity, it was imagined that “hotspots” would be clearly visible from the collated auditors reports. In reality only four areas were seen as “hotspots” (defined by four or more people gathered) the Widcombe Lock during the early afternoon, Soup Run, Victoria Park for drinkers between 18:00-19:00 and outside of the Night Shelter.

It was expected based on Police intelligence that Memorial Gardens would have a large number of drinkers. On 30th September there were no recorded service users in Memorial Gardens in either the morning or afternoon however those who we had expected to find there were present at Widcombe Lock.

Most people seen during the audit were on their own or in pairs and were engaged in a range of activity from Big Issue vending through to drug related anti-social behaviour.

Where possible those who were seen street drinking as well as those who answered yes to the question of whether they regularly street drink, were

asked about their attitudes to a “safe drinking space”. Of the 20 people asked this question 55% said that they would not use such a facility.

The information on prevalence of drug use amongst those encountered through audit was exceptionally low (16%, this figure should be viewed with some doubt and will need to be re-examined through further investigative work.

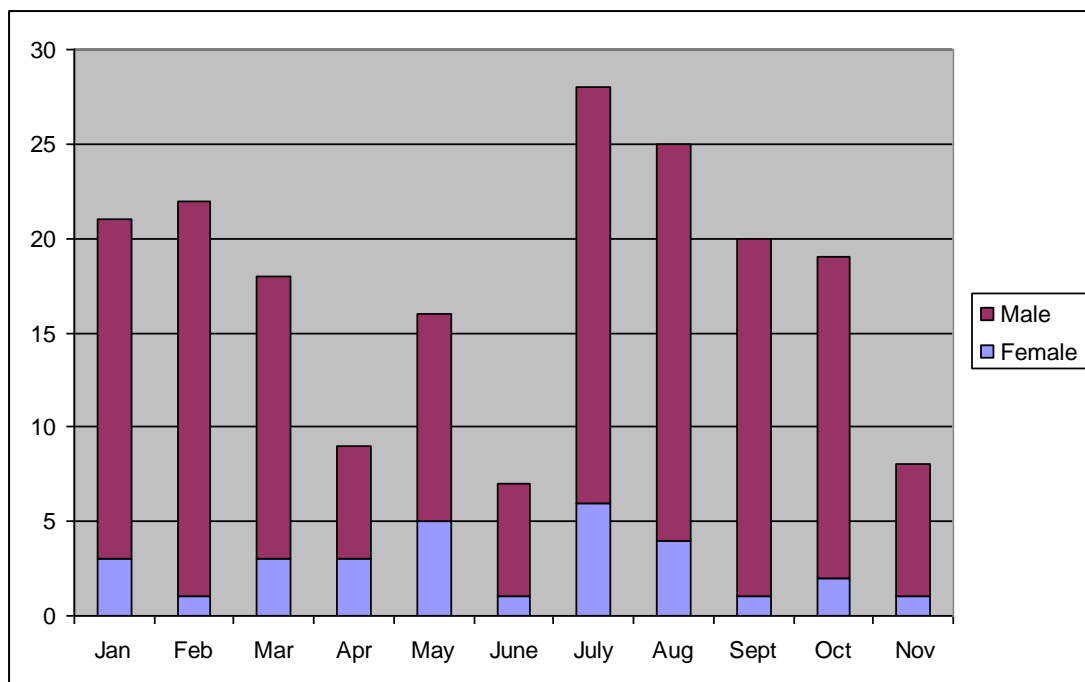
There are 49% of the data set who have slept rough during 2009, of these 36 have used the night shelter during this year as well, leaving 13 (29%) of rough sleepers who have not used night shelters to avoid rough sleeping. Of the 52 audited people who have used the night shelter during 2009, 35 have not had a history of rough sleeping in B&NES in the last year.

Disappointingly few comments were entered onto the audit forms, with only 16% recording any feedback at all. Feedback ranged from “I enjoy homeless lifestyle” and “I’m not homeless I live in a truck” to “I can’t get a place (to live) because I’ve got a dog” and “drug use stops me from getting accommodation”. Other people told auditors that they “like to travel around” and “prefer to drink with others”. Some people did complain that there was “no detox or rehab available” and that “I need more support” or that “unemployment is the biggest problem”.

17 people seen through audit were living in hostels but to one degree or another had not moved away from street based lifestyle, in part this may have been due to drugs or alcohol dependency. Given that many people were seen in the company of others it is apparent that continuing social contact and sense of belonging are key to lifestyle choices.

Outreach Data Jan-Nov

As has been seen above, there are at least 49 people currently in Bath who have rough slept at some point during 2009 and in most cases these people still have no access to sustainable and secure accommodation. In 65% of cases they continue to rough sleep on a regular basis. In order to give an overview to this picture I include here detail derived from collated month by month Julian House Outreach Service monitoring for January –November 2009.



It should be understood that these figures relate solely to contact with those who were seen rough sleeping during early morning and evening outreach sessions. Outreach collected data and caseload management information indicates a higher level of at least intermittent rough sleeping, as is also evidenced through the displayed Street Audit data above.

Street Count 19th November 2009

A formal Street Count was undertaken in Bath on the night of Thursday 19th November. This was instigated by CLG and co-ordinated by B&NES with support from Julian House.

It was anticipated that the count would be low based on outreach sessions over the last two months. Although we are aware that there are large numbers of people without access to secure and permanent accommodation, fewer than four rough sleepers are seen on most sessions. On the night of 19th October three rough sleepers were seen by those counting. Two of the rough sleepers are known to services and the third individual found is thought not to be a rough sleeper and is believed to have been someone who had chosen

to lie down in Manvers St car park whilst returning home late at night and quite possibly intoxicated.

On the night of the count, 20 people (17 men & 3 women), were accommodated at Julian House Night Shelter, with one client having been excluded and given blankets by staff at the shelter. He was not amongst the three people found rough sleeping during the count.

There were two current clients excluded from Julian House (including the man detailed above) in the period covering the Street Count. None of the people identified through the count were excluded clients from the Night Shelter.

Conclusions

The audit has shown that a problem which may be largely perceived to be about rough sleepers and street drinkers is actually far broader than this, encompassing anti social behaviour, drug misuse and at the more positive end strong social bonds and meaningful activity such as Big issue vending.

The outreach statistics, given above, show a decline in individuals seen rough sleeping set against levels in previous years. However what has not changed is that rough sleeping is both a physical activity and a state of mind of those who have to do it. Rough sleepers find it very difficult to fully break out of the lifestyle without considerable support and opportunity being made available to them to do so. That nearly half of those seen through street audit have a history of rough sleeping in B&NES during 2009 is very disappointing. That such a number of people who have slept rough are still without access to secure accommodation is just unacceptable. Where commissioned services and B&NES have worked together to address issues such as temporary accommodation this is as yet having limited impact on the most excluded people in the city.

Large numbers of people, some excluded from the audit for lack of information, were seen to be using the Soup Run. Amongst those using this service were people in tenancies, hostels, the night shelter and rough sleepers. It is difficult to argue against the need that is being met by the provision of hot food to people who have difficulty in managing budgets or who are homeless, but it would also appear that there is an element of dependency culture present. This dependency is evidenced through attendance of Night

Shelter users who go to the Soup Run even though they will be provided with a main evening meal at the shelter.

The audit was a major undertaking and has revealed in detail much of what had previously been guessed at but not clearly evidenced. Where the audit has succeeded is in mapping need, this has been in respect of giving proportion and scale to needs we were already aware of. Sadly where the audit has not achieved as well as hoped for is in identifying the client sense of unmet need and gaps in service. Further enquiry within the identified group of those with street based lives will need to be conducted to round off and complete this missing aspect.

Next Steps & Recommendations

The Street Audit has revealed that a far greater number of people than might have been expected have now been identified to have street based lifestyles. The audit has brought together a mass of general and specific data, but still lacks some of the essential information which it was envisaged that it would elicit. As an example, we had envisaged that there would be greater observation of street drinking and a more full investigation of the reasons why clients chose certain spaces to drink in rather than others. It was also hoped that the audit would provide more feedback on service user views of the proposed "safe drinking space". The value added to local understanding of the scale and breadth of the current situation, which has been gained through the audit exercise should not be lost. However, there is a need to follow up this wide ranging and in some sense incomplete approach with a clear and directed piece of work which can add to the data already gathered. It is important that more work on exploring the attitudes and perceptions of those encountered through audit is undertaken as a rapid follow up task.

As a next step the longer assessment form used through the audit has been further expanded (Appendix 3) and a plan to conduct focussed one to one interviews with those named through audit has been devised. Julian House, working in partnership with Social Work students from Wiltshire College, Trowbridge have now started this work, with the intention of interviewing at

least 60% of people identified through the audit. The work is time limited and needs to be completed in early February 2010. It is hoped that the additional detail gained and then analysed through this process will give a greater understanding of what value service users attach to services which they use and additionally where they perceive the gaps in, or barriers to provision to be. Completion of this task in early 2010 will lead to a comprehensive report which will be made available to the T&T Group and to a wider audience.

In advance of the extended report in February Julian House Day Centre will be identifying clients from the audit list who are not currently using the service or do not meet access criteria with a view to offering additional support on a case by case basis. This will be done with view to enhancing the level of engagement of the individual and will need to be conducted in partnership with other agencies where appropriate. The offer to an individual of additional support will be time limited and focussed.

The audit has provided a breadth of information which can be utilised through outreach in terms of continuing to track identified individuals who are potentially at risk of disengagement from services with the consequent risks to lifestyle and health. More formalised arrangements between police, community safety and outreach services should be considered both in regard to joint working and greater sharing of information. There is a key outreach role in liaising with agencies about individual client lifestyles which may be addressed through greater agency engagement, adjustment of focus in the support provided and by stronger multi agency partnership working arrangements.

It is my view that the Street Audit was a success but lessons have and will continue to be learnt as we reflect on the processes and outcomes. Through reflection on elements of the overall task completion which were less successful than others we can develop a more complete and coherent approach for subsequent Street Audits. I would recommend that the Street Audit is repeated on an annual basis. In the same way that Street Count gives a partial indication of trend in a Local Authority area, then Street Audit repeated annually can help give the more global picture of need that further informs the Street Count and other locally undertaken (snapshot) surveys. The annual audit would also give the opportunity to conduct detailed enquiry into attitude, perception and reaction to topical local issues as was intended by questions related to the "safe drinking space" in this years audit.

As part of this recommendation, it would be necessary to increase the number of auditors and to emphasise to all of them the need to be more direct in approach in order to achieve greater level of detail in completion of full assessments. To achieve this, the shortened assessment form should be dispensed with and a more detailed extended briefing given to all those taking part in the audit. As this year, the co-ordination of the audit could be undertaken by the T&T Group.

Acknowledgements

I would like to pass on my thanks to the following individuals and agencies who gave support and time to support the Street Audit. Many of those involved gave up there own free time, in addition to there working day.

Thanks to the auditors: - Jenny Stringer, Penny Walster, Cllr Will Sandry, Megan Lebaschi, Jane Andrew, PCSO Andy Rush, Mel Furey, Gary Clail, Kirsten Melbourne, Leanne Thomas, Sam Battle, Jodie Smith, Heidi Jones, Nik Browne, Rex Long, Liz James Ed Richardson, Kev Edwards, Cllr Eleanor Jackson, Kerry Headon, Nick Lee, Ellie Foster, PCSO Brian Harris, Matt Hanna and Jamie Tutton

Additional thanks to Sue Wordsworth for support in planning the Audit and to the following individuals and agencies represented within the Task and Targeting Group who helped to make it happen: DHI, BADAS, Big Issue, B&NES Supporting People Team, B&NES Housing Options, Cllr Vic Prichard, CDAS, Inspector Steve Mildren, Genesis Lifeline and Bath Abbey.

Street Snapshot Full Assessment Form

Assessor Name

Time Date

Location

First Names

Surname

Other Names

DOB Place of Birth

Address if any

Type of accommodation eg council, hostel, private rented

Clothing / Physical Description

Services Used

Service		Service	
Julian House Day Centre		Homeless Health Care	
SPACE2		Genesis Lifeline	
Job Centre Plus		Genesis Wood Works	
Mental Health (which/where)		Social Services	
Julian House Night Shelter		Soup Run	
Probation		BANES Housing Advice	
DHI		Swan Advice Centre	
BADAS		Connexions	
Big Issue		Off The Record	
CDAS		Soup Run	
CAB		Genesis Trust Lunchbox/Sunday Centre	
AA/NA/GA		Other	

Activities When Encountered

Approached whilst Participating In	
Bedded Down	
Begging	
Street Drinking	
Selling Big Issue	
Mixing with peer group/friends	
Drug related activities	
Sex Work	
Busking	
Engaged in behaviour likely to cause a nuisance	
Engaged in behaviour likely to intimidate general public	
Sitting alone	
Other....	

Part 2 (for long term rough sleepers)

Could you tell me what led to you becoming Homeless?

What are the Barriers preventing you from being accommodated?

Why are you in Bath?

Where was your local authority?

Do you ever street drink?

If Yes to above –Where?

If yes to above – Would you use an wet area “tolerated drinking zone” if it was available?

Is there anything you would like to feed back to us?

Street Snapshot Brief Assessment Form

Assessor Name

Time Date

Location

First Names

Surname

Other Names

Clothing / Physical Description

Activities When Encountered

Approached whilst Participating In	
Bedded Down	
Begging	
Street Drinking	
Selling Big Issue	
Mixing with peer group/friends	
Drug related activities	
Sex Work	
Busking	
Engaged in behaviour likely to cause a nuisance	
Engaged in behaviour likely to intimidate general public	
Sitting alone	
Other.....	