Rebuilding Shattered Lives

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Objectives

• Share impact and learning from *Rebuilding Shattered Lives* campaign
• Outline how St Mungo’s Broadway are responding to homeless women’s experiences of domestic violence
• Identify challenges and opportunities posed by national and local policy in supporting homeless women who are victims of domestic violence
Homeless women in Europe

Gender distribution amongst homeless people

UK (2015)
Sweden (2011)
Spain (2012)
Portugal (2013)
Poland (2011)
Netherlands (2012)
Italy (2011)
Ireland (2014)
Hungary (2011)
Germany (2013)
France (2012)
Finland (2013)
Denmark (2013)
Czech Republic (2012)

Sources:
Different experiences of homelessness

- Evidence from across Europe suggests women are:
  - more likely to make use of informal arrangements with friends, family, acquaintances
  - Less likely to use homelessness services, may avoid them
  - More likely to be homeless due to domestic or gender-based violence

Women’s experiences of homeless services

- 30% of people using UK homelessness services are women, but only 11% have women-specific provision – a system traditionally geared towards men
- 2009 St Mungo’s research showed women were arriving at our services with more complex needs and were doing significantly worse than men in our hostels
- Reflected in ongoing feedback from sector on need for more training on women’s homelessness
- St Mungo’s Broadway response: Women’s strategy and Rebuilding Shattered Lives campaign
The lived experience

Mimi’s story
Rebuilding Shattered Lives

• Launched June 2012
• Aims:
  ➢ Raise awareness of women’s homelessness
  ➢ Showcase good practice and innovation
  ➢ Improve services and policy for the future
• Gathered evidence gathering across 9 themes
• 464 members from 3 continents
• 221 submissions from practitioners and women with experience of homelessness
• Final report March 2014
Key findings

• **Trauma and Abuse**
  – Experiences rooted in traumatic childhoods, gender based violence

• **Complex and interrelated needs**
  – Found with women across sectors/services

• **Relationships with children**
  – Loss and separation key barriers to recovery

• **Stigma and Shame**
  – Judged by societal expectations of women

• **Access to Services**
  – Missed opportunities
Trauma and abuse

Trauma definition

• DSM5 (classification of psychiatric diagnosis)
  – “exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury or sexual violation.”
  – Can be direct experience or witness
  – Causes significant distress or impairment in the individual’s social interactions, capacity to work, or other important areas of functioning.

• Trauma can be triggered by a single event, or can be enduring, ongoing (complex trauma)
Trauma and abuse

- **Sex and gender definitions**

- **Sex**: Refers to the biological differences between men and women which are universal and do not change. A person’s sex is determined through their genetic makeup and chromosomes.

- **Gender**: A socially constructed system of classification that ascribes qualities of masculinity and femininity to people. It also includes expectations held about the characteristics, roles, responsibilities and behaviours of both women and men. These attributes are learned or acquired during socialization as a member of a given community, can change over time, and vary between cultures.
Trauma and abuse

Trauma and gender

• As children, boys and girls suffer similar rates of abuse
  – Girls - sexual abuse
  – Boys - emotional neglect or physical abuse

• Adolescence
  – Young men - people who dislike or hate them
  – Young women – relationships; from the person to whom she is saying, “I love you.”

• Adulthood
  – Men - combat or being a victim of crime
  – Women – relationship; the person to whom she is saying “I love you.”

Source: Stephanie Covington, 2014
“Women’s homelessness is so often invisible. I have no contact with my family – I had a very traumatic childhood and don’t want to see them. I did a lot of sofa surfing after I left my violent partner. But then I ran out of friends and became homeless.” St Mungo’s client

“I was living with a man who was violent and so felt more safe and secure sleeping in a bin shed on my own than staying there. When you’ve got nothing, nothing matters.” St Mungo’s client
“Id lost my house ... due to not paying rent, I slept in ... bushes, garages and shop floor ways it was here that I found crack, what a 1st time buzz, then you crave it so bad and have no cash, I was begging on the streets, on trains and selling sex to men, in the end st mungos found me a persuaded me to move to a hostel, I was reluctant as it would mean I ws further away from the dealers...my health started to improve dramatically after a while I started seeing a drug worker...i have been clean for 11 years now I have a house with a garden and 3 more children that live with me...i owe my life to st mungos.”
## Rebuilding Shattered Lives

### Recommendations

**Service responses**
- Services based on principles of holistic, gender sensitive support for complex needs

**National leadership**
- Ministerial leadership and coordination
- Publish data on women’s homelessness

**Leadership in local authorities**
- Senior lead for women and homelessness
- Coordination, strategy and monitoring

**Commissioners as champions**
- Test and develop innovative approaches
- Ensure choice between women only and mixed provision

**Early intervention**
- Parenting support, perinatal interventions
- Early identification across public services
Holistic, gender sensitive support for complex needs

**SERVICE PRINCIPLES**

- Women only support and space
- Trauma informed responses
- Staff training
- Partnership working
- Building confidence and motivation
- Client involvement
- Peer support
- Supporting women with children
Chrysalis, 3 stage exiting prostitution pathway

Phase one – security, stability and intensive support
- 18 bed hostel
- Intensive support including around substance use and mental health issues.
- Specially trained psychotherapists to help the women deal with the ongoing trauma of experiences
- Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) project, which creates an emotionally safe environment. Staff reflective practice

Phase two – reflection and moving towards independence
- Semi-independent abstinent project
- Helps women develop independent living skills and engage with local services

Phase three – living in the community
- Commonweal Housing transitional flats and floating support
Rebuilding Shattered Lives: Policy impact

Created debate in UK parliament

- House of Lords debates
- Parliamentary Questions
- Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness
- APPG on Complex Needs and Dual Diagnosis
- Private meeting with Housing Minister
- Women’s Parliamentary Labour Party
- Launch event with government and opposition speakers
Continued government interest in women’s homelessness

- UK government 2015-17 capital funding programme: “Funded hostels should provide for the different needs of male and female homeless people.”
- Department for Communities and Local Government interest in taking forward work on women and homelessness
Rebuilding Shattered Lives: Impact on public awareness

• Increased public awareness through media coverage, reaching media coverage, reaching a combined potential audience of almost 8 million people.
The hidden homeless: Government urged to help vulnerable women who sleep rough

As the largest UK review of female homelessness is published, the Government is under pressure to tackle the issues affecting this group.

Heather Spurr
Friday, 21 February 2014

Poor health is not the only new phenomenon to hit the streets. Female homelessness has grown by 16% in the last year, and women are involved in drugs, prostitution, and attempts at self-harm.

The largest ever UK review of female homelessness by charity St Mungo’s, publishing Statistical Lives, exclusively to The Independent – www.independent.co.uk

Inside Housing
Tuesday, 11 March 2014

Facing up to homelessness

I became homeless because I got pregnant at 14, tried to keep the baby, I got married. My husband raised me and beat me up. So I ran to London to be away from him and have been on the streets ever since.

So says a woman interviewed as part of a large St Mungo’s report on female homelessness published yesterday. More than 10,000 women were in homeless shelter services in the UK last year, according to Homelessness Live. Homelessness affects people with vulnerabilities such as drug and alcohol addiction or mental health problems.

Women who become homeless have extremely complicated problems, such as separation from children, mental health problems, drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence. Half of the women experience a mental health problem, or drug or alcohol abuse, or domestic violence and 19 per cent had experienced abuse as a child, compared with 5 per cent and 8 per cent of men.

Community Care

Male-focused homelessness services failing women, warns charity

A report by St Mungo’s says male-focused homelessness services are not designed to offer support to women. Eighty-five per cent of people using homelessness services are men, but only 25% of people who use homelessness services are women.

Why homelessness services are failing women

Homeless services are developed by and for men, with little consideration for the problems experienced by women.

Housing Network blog

Housing Network blog

The Guardian
Building awareness internally

- New women’s psychotherapy service
- Children and Family support service
- Internal and external training courses on supporting women’s recovery
- Pan-London women’s outreach network
- Working groups on women’s health inequalities and access to training and employment
- Women’s Recovery Conference
- 250+ women receiving small grants to increase wellbeing or meet ambitions
- Women’s client involvement group
Improved outcomes for women

Outcomes Star averages for women increased in every area from 2013/14 to 2014/15, apart from substance use which remained consistent.

In 2014/15, 91% of female clients were satisfied with the service provided by St Mungo's Broadway overall, compared to 87% in 2013/14.

89% of female clients agreed that St Mungo's Broadway understands their needs compared to 87% in 2013/14.
Building awareness externally

UK
- Over 60 people working in UK homelessness services trained in Brighton, London and Manchester in partnership with Homeless Link, forthcoming session in Liverpool
- Reciprocal training with AVA, The Havens and Respect
- Joint presentations at UK conferences

Ireland
- Training on women’s recovery with Simon Community - Over 30 professionals trained in Cork, forthcoming session in Dublin
- Conference speech at Simon Community annual conference
- Interviews for Irish media – RTE
- Contributing to Irish toolkit on working with homeless women

Czech Republic
- 3 year exchange programme with Jako Doma including visits to share good practice, training - EU DAPHNE funded
# Challenges and opportunities in national and local policy

## Challenges: Demand
- Increasing homelessness
- Welfare reform
- Still a hidden and underreported group
- More women with complex needs
- More young homeless women

## Challenges: Supply
- Pressure on local budgets, cuts to services
- Supporting women with the most complex needs: whose responsibility? Who pays?
- Making the case: need for better data and evidence
- Service coordination

## Opportunities?
- Increasing political profile of tackling violence against women and girls in the UK, is this reaching women who are homeless?
- Increasing government recognition of complex needs
- Diversification of funding?
THANK YOU

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