

# Colchester Emergency Night Shelter



[www.colchesternightshelter.org.uk](http://www.colchesternightshelter.org.uk)

## Annual report July 2012

### TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT for the year ended 31 March 2012

Registered office: Colchester Emergency Night Shelter  
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Registered Charity No: 803328

Company Registration No: 02475258

Trustees/Directors: Nicholas Baker  
Marian Clegg (Secretary)  
Gordon Evans (Honorary Treasurer)  
Teresa Hall  
Peter Kerr (Chairman)  
Julie Ward

Co-ordinator: Pernille Petersen, MBE

Colchester Emergency Night Shelter has received support from:

National Lottery  
Charities Board

Colchester Borough  
Council

Essex County  
Council

Lloyds TSB Foundation  
for England and Wales



## **CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION**

*Peter Kerr*

It is now about two years since I first became a Trustee – and just over a year since I became Chairman: promotion was a lot faster than it was in my working career!

I have, of course, been on a steep learning curve but it has been made easier for me by the support and help I have received from my fellow Trustees and the permanent staff working at the Shelter.

As Trustees, we meet quarterly and the purpose of these meetings is to keep us informed on what is happening with regard to the residents, particularly with regard to any requests and developments. We also discuss any new or proposed policy and/or procedure changes and matters concerning the maintenance and safety of and within the Shelter. Inevitably, a lot of our discussion centres on financial aspects and how we will cope with the latest round of Government and Council initiatives!

When I joined, there were five other Trustees and one other new Trustee besides myself has been recruited since. However, time marches on irrevocably and in the last few months we have lost two:

Mike Abbs was with us for around 15 years, providing a wise head and some technical expertise when needed; Barbara Williamson was only here for a relatively short time but we appreciated and enjoyed her contributions to our meetings. We wish them both luck.

More seriously, over the next year we are going to lose Gordon Evans (my predecessor as chairman and long-term treasurer) and Marian Clegg (Secretary and jill-of-all-trades). Both of them have provided advice, practical help and a whole catalogue of services above and beyond the call of duty, tireless and non-complaining; it is hard to see how they can possibly be replaced. We shall miss them terribly.

At which point, might I close by asking if any of you reading this would like to volunteer (or volunteer a friend/relative) to join us on the Trustees Board – we would be over the moon with happiness. As things stand, the average age of the present committee is over 70 and it would be nice to reduce this by a decade (or even two?).

Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to meeting you again through the coming year.

## **CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT**

*Pernille Petersen MBE*

In the past 12 months we have had a very busy and, occasionally, challenging time. The Welfare Reform Bill has been passed with few amendments that will reduce the difficulties many residents will experience in finding and maintaining housing as well as very simply making ends meet. The single room rent will now be applicable to everyone under 35 where it was previously 25. Many are already struggling to pay the additional top-up rent from their benefits and others have had to leave their self-contained accommodation because they cannot afford the top-up.

Furthermore, the way current legislation is administered has become very much more restrictive. In particular, Crisis Loans for Rent in Advance, which has helped many of our residents to access private rented accommodation, mainly through the April Centre, have been refused on a regular and not always sound basis. Though appeals are put through this is time consuming and they are not always successful.

In addition to these political changes, funding is generally harder to source. This relates not only to statutory funding, but also larger trust funds and remedial government funding which are focusing on rough sleeping outreach rather than supporting projects such as Colchester Night Shelter which rough sleepers can use to make a new beginning.

Against this background we have nonetheless managed to complete our bedroom renewal project and also made improvements to the communal lounges. We have strengthened some of our funding base and we are actively exploring structural ways in which we can secure and enhance our front line services to homeless people by working more closely with other organisations and re-defining our own legal status.

In the face of all these issues, staff have coped with the uncertainties and challenges with fortitude and patience. Without their resilience, positive attitude, and wonderful sense of humour the services we provide and the way we provide them would not have enabled so many of our most vulnerable residents to move on and rebuild their lives.

We have had enthusiastic volunteers to help with new projects, and relief workers to help us carry on when short staffed. CSV placements continue to play an important part in our work and the CSV organisation has been very supportive when problems needed to be resolved.

Active participation from Trustees continues and remains a vital part of the running of the Night Shelter. The insight, expertise and commitment shown is invaluable not just for the project. Without their support, trust and the flexibility they offer me, I could not function. My heartfelt thanks goes out to them.

## RESIDENT LIAISON

*Kevin Shepherd*

Following a personal experience of homelessness resulting in a period of time as a resident at the Night Shelter, I wanted to give something back as my way of showing my appreciation for all the help and support I received during my stay, after successfully moving on into secure accommodation and getting on my feet, I was given the opportunity and I now volunteer to do resident liaison work.

The role consists of going into the shelter a couple of nights a month to speak to residents about all manner of things relating to their experiences during their stay, and finding out if they have any suggestions or experiences which might result in improving the services provided. I also attend monthly staff meetings where I can discuss my visits with both management and staff in a constructive way.

I have found that the residents welcome the chance to talk to someone who is not "establishment" and I always make it clear that anything they tell me will be treated as confidential, and when attending meetings I will not use names when relaying residents requests or suggestions, this helps me to get them to open up and engage with me a lot more.

Since starting the voluntary position (over a year ago) I have been able to bring a different perspective to staff meetings and I know that the residents feel empowered by knowing that there is someone who they can talk to who will take their suggestions to the staff.

Success stories which have come directly from residents include a wide variety of things from menu changes right up to Night Shelter policies which in consultation with management have resulted in minor alterations which have proved to make a positive difference to both residents and staff.

I thoroughly enjoy the challenge of my role and I am extremely grateful to the staff and management at the Night Shelter for not only embracing the role, but accepting me as one of the team and for constantly being receptive to discussing requests and suggestions which may enhance the Night Shelter experience for residents.

## A RESIDENT'S VIEW

After a particularly turbulent period of my life I found myself homeless, I used what little money I had to find bed and breakfast accommodation but when that money ran out I was facing the prospect of sleeping rough on the streets, as a female you can appreciate how frightening and daunting that was.

I was referred to the night shelter by another agency and not knowing what to face I was an emotional mess when I arrived, I was scared and anxious but was made to feel welcome by the staff and although the fear and nerves were still present, I felt safe.

At first I was withdrawn but with endless support and help from the staff I have gradually began to open up and although it took some time I now feel a lot more confident and able to face the future. I have managed to secure some voluntary work in a local charity shop after some help from Sylvia (who is the personal development worker at the night shelter) which I really enjoy and it is helping me to make new friends and meet people.

Getting my own place is now my priority and I am happy with all the work being done on my behalf in trying to find me somewhere, they keep me informed of all the things that are being done and that is helpful.

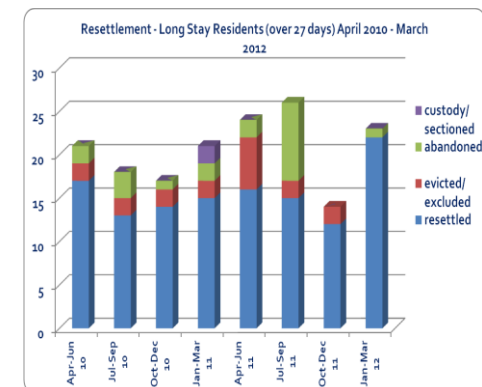
I feel a lot more confident about the future and I have made a lot of progress on a personal level which has been helped enormously by the feelings of safety and security I get from the night shelter.

## RESETTLEMENT

*Marina Woodrow and Mike Croke*

The last year's resettlement work has been challenging and rewarding in equal measure. We have always aimed to move our residents on within the 28 night period but with the increasing difficulty in finding suitable accommodation, Trustees have agreed an extension for residents who are actively engaging in our resettlement programme: 40% of residents were granted an extension over the past year. We work hard with all residents to find suitable accommodation but inevitably, the resettlement rate for those residents given an extension is higher than those who leave after a short time.

Last year, the resettlement rate for those given an extension was 75%, much the same level as in the previous year but it is worth noting that in the final quarter of the year positive resettlement for long-stay residents was 95%. For residents who were with us for 1-4 weeks the resettlement rate was 50% and for those staying less than 1 week we still managed to find suitable accommodation for 33%, up from 20% in the previous year.



You will see from the statistical profile at the end of this report that the majority of residents had significant secondary issues in addition to their primary need of secure accommodation. Our aim, as always, has been the support of vulnerable people to enable them to gain the social skills necessary for them to maintain their own tenancy once they leave the Night Shelter.

The resettlement workers conduct a full interview with residents in order to gain an understanding of their past housing history and to ascertain the reasons why they have failed to maintain accommodation in the past. This paints a picture for how we are able to assist the resident and to agree an action plan with the resident which includes step by step time-bound objectives in order for them to reach their goal. This will include assessing whether outside agencies are needed in order for the resident to sustain tenancies in which case we will make a referral to "One Support" prior to a resident moving on to ensure continuity in their support. We offer guidance and assistance with contacting and liaising with other agencies such as Social Services, GP's, DWP, Probation, Community Mental Health Team and Drug and Alcohol agencies. The Resettlement workers also identify training and educational needs and refer residents to our new Personal Development Support Worker for further assistance and advice.

We have cultivated relationships with many of the support services ranging from local agencies to those further afield. One of those is Genesis Housing who have housed several of our residents in their supported project in Braintree.

We continue to work closely with the April Centre who house the majority of our residents in private rented accommodation either by obtaining "Rent in Advance" via the DWP Social Fund or via the RDGS and with Emmaus Colchester who continue to house and support our residents. Emmaus also offer volunteering possibilities for those service users wishing to spend their time more productively and give back to the community in some way. Some companions have returned to us at the shelter to volunteer in the evening and cook for other residents and give advice on how Emmaus communities can change people's lives for the better.

All in all regardless of all the benefit changes and the obstacles that are placed in our paths the resettlement team continue to dedicate themselves to helping homeless people into secure and safe accommodation and ensuring that everyone is given a fair chance to engage and work with the CENS team to get re-housed.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

*Sylvia Jeffock*

I was appointed to the post of Personal Development worker in October 2011. The project, which is funded by the TSB Foundation for two years, is to strengthen support given to residents. The project aims to develop skills that will enable residents to function better at the Shelter and improve their chances of maintaining their accommodation when they have successfully resettled.

Initially I see newcomers for a brief contact where we concentrate on those issues which have been identified at the admission and first move-on interviews. Once this brief contact has been made, we can start to organise appropriate support. The next step is to look at their needs more comprehensively through the Outcomes Star. This charts a wider range of needs such as motivation and responsibility, self care, money management, social networking, substance misuse physical and mental health, offending, managing time and managing tenancy. The Outcome Star helps the residents to chart their progress as they become more competent in a particular area of concern or indeed acknowledging that they have a problem in the first place.

I cannot give the support needed in all these areas myself and so we rely on the many positive contacts we already have with projects such as the April Centre that offer both meaningful use of time, education, and welfare and benefits advice as well as counselling. When a resident needs health support we work with Beacon House and with Open Road and NEEDAS when health issues are related to substance misuse.

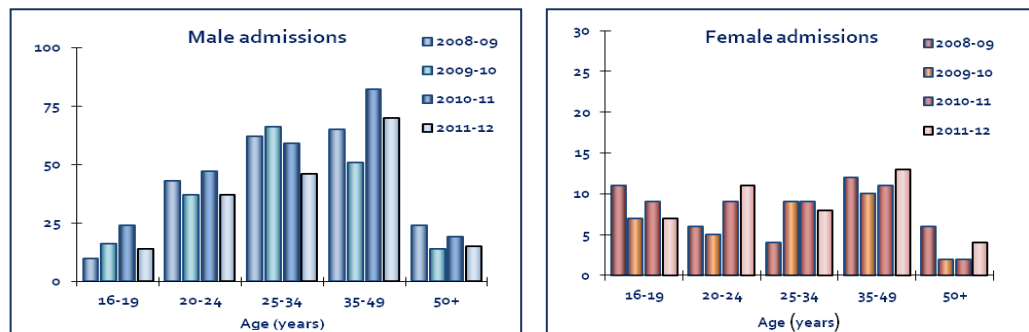
I have facilitated new contacts, for example with voluntary project Recycle who have welcomed our residents and helped them develop new skills. Emmaus offers not only accommodation but also the opportunity for our residents to volunteer. Within the Night Shelter, the Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre come in and teach people to cook and residents are referred to both the Co-ordinator and Assistant Co-ordinator for help with budgeting.

There are times when my conversations with residents help bring out problems that I can listen to and advise on, and it sometimes becomes clear that I need to escort people to appointments to make sure they get there on the right day and at the right time.

All in all it has been an exciting time and I wish I could do more but with only 12 hours a week, it is difficult to accomplish all that residents need to really progress. But with the help of our colleagues from the projects mentioned above I am hopeful that my work puts people on the right track towards greater self fulfilment and contributing to the community.

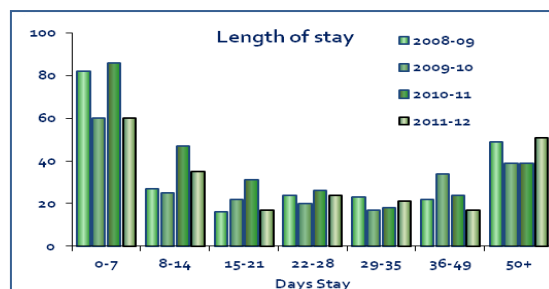
## RESIDENTS' PROFILE, 2011-12

During the last year 43 female and 182 male residents were admitted. This was an increase in the proportion of female residents, which has been in around 15% for several years, to 19%. Overall, bednights were at 94% capacity with an additional 32 beds provided by the Winter Reserve Accommodation Project (WRAP) between January and March.

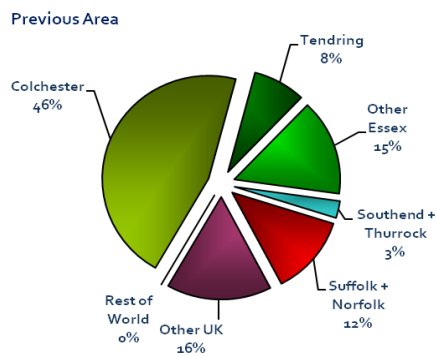


Looking at the changes in housing benefits referred to in the Co-ordinator's Report, these will affect more than half our residents: in round terms 30% of our residents are under 25 and a further 25%, who are already affected by the new rules on Shared Accommodation Rates, are between 25 and 35.

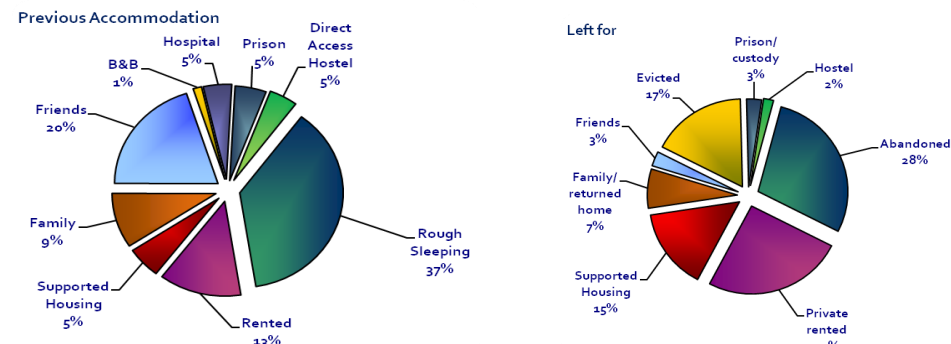
The overall average stay for all residents was 31 days. It is much harder to find suitable accommodation for the youngest age group, who stay with us, on average, 5 days longer than those over 25. Females under 25 stayed longest, with an average stay of 39 days.



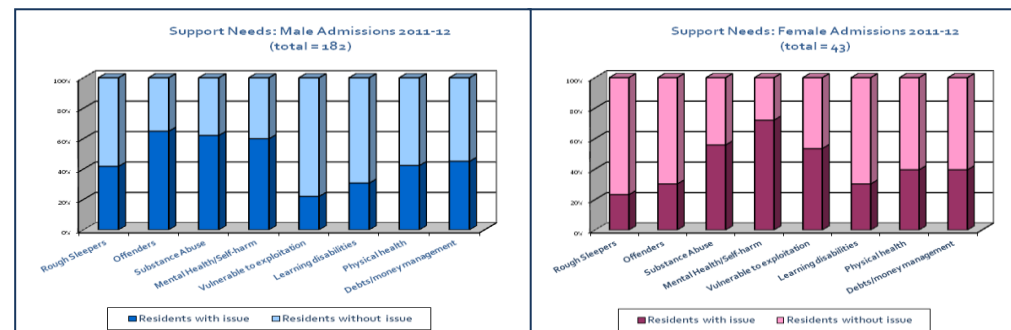
The majority of residents are local – almost three quarters came from Colchester, other parts of Essex and the unitary authorities of Southend and Thurrock. A further 12% came from near neighbours Suffolk and Norfolk, many of the latter referred by local outreach teams. Only 16% were resident in other parts of the United Kingdom, mainly Cambridge and London, before being admitted to the Night Shelter and none came directly from other countries.



Only just over a quarter of residents came to Colchester Emergency Night Shelter directly from permanent accommodation: 9% living with family, parents or a partner, 18% in rented or supported housing. The majority had been rough sleeping (37%) or "sofa surfing" with friends (20%) with 5% coming directly from each of prison, hospital and another direct access hostel. A positive aspect of the resettlement work described above is that only 3% left to live with friends, generally as a permanent relationship, 7% returned to their previous home or went to live with family and a further 40% were found permanent accommodation.



The final charts illustrate the wide ranging nature of the problems and issues exhibited by residents. Very few residents come only needing support to find accommodation: the proportion of residents admitting to and displaying no underlying support needs was only 7%. The remainder have at least one, sometimes several, of the issues below. Key areas where women are predominant are mental health, where nearly three-quarters of female residents have problems against 60% of men, and in vulnerability to exploitation and harm. Men are more likely to have a history of offending (65% against only 30% of female residents) and to be rough sleepers. There are no major differences in age-related needs apart from greater physical health problems in older residents, which is to be expected as a larger proportion are rough sleepers. The other small difference to note is that substance abuse is slightly less in the youngest age group (18-24 years old) than in those over 25 and that women are slightly less likely to be substance abusers than men.



## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS 2009-2012 + BUDGET 2012-13

	<i>BUDGET</i>	<i>ESTIMATE</i>	<i>AUDITED</i>	<i>AUDITED</i>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Housing Benefit	£ 111,000	£ 110,700	£ 102,176	£ 80,604
Residents' fees	£ 17,000	£ 17,200	£ 14,906	£ 10,798
Supporting People	£ 51,400	£ 51,400	£ 52,985	£ 57,061
Colchester Borough + Other Councils	£ 6,000	£ 7,900	£ 5,606	£ 5,523
Essex CC Drug+Alcohol Action Team	£ -	£ 18,000	£ 18,000	£ 17,350
Lloyds TSB Trust	£ 13,000	£ 5,500	£ -	
General Donations	£ 17,500	£ 18,000	£ 14,186	£ 14,056
Special Donations/fundraising (refurbishment)	£ 13,300	£ 15,000	£ 379	£ 26,708
Bank interest	£ -	£ 50	£ 37	£ 61
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 229,200</b>	<b>£ 243,750</b>	<b>£ 208,275</b>	<b>£ 212,161</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Salaries and related expenditure	£ 158,700	£ 145,400	£ 133,653	£ 126,629
Food & provisions/cleaning materials	£ 22,300	£ 20,900	£ 19,234	£ 18,625
Expenditure on residents (travel, computing, personal development activities etc)	£ 2,500	£ 1,000	£ 683	£ 1,068
Property - running costs (utilities/ replacement furniture/domestic equipment)	£ 13,300	£ 12,500	£ 13,735	£ 11,748
Property - fabric (general repairs/security)	£ 19,600	£ 11,500	£ 10,179	£ 13,905
Property - fabric+furniture (refurbishment)	£ 8,300	£ 22,200	£ -	£ 22,476
Insurance	£ 6,200	£ 6,100	£ 6,006	£ 5,622
Office and professional costs	£ 13,000	£ 12,800	£ 11,693	£ 12,579
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 243,900</b>	<b>£ 232,400</b>	<b>£ 195,183</b>	<b>£ 212,652</b>
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT in the year</b>	<b>-£14,700</b>	<b>£ 11,350</b>	<b>£ 13,092</b>	<b>-£491</b>
<i>RESERVES CARRIED FORWARD</i>	<i>£ 87,112</i>	<i>£ 101,812</i>	<i>£ 90,462</i>	<i>£ 77,370</i>
Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme: Income	£ 1,600	£ 4,445	£ 4,920	£ 3
Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme: Expenditure	£ 2,000	£ 2,560	£ 320	£ 2,785
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT in the year</b>	<b>-£400</b>	<b>£ 1,885</b>	<b>£ 4,600</b>	<b>-£2,782</b>
<b>FUND AT PERIOD END</b>	<b>£ 13,950</b>	<b>£ 14,350</b>	<b>£ 12,465</b>	<b>£ 9,683</b>

The summarised accounts do not contain all the information required by law to be included in the accounts of the charity. The full accounts are filed with the Charity Commissioners and Companies House. A copy of the full accounts for the year may be obtained from the Charity Commission website or by writing to the Secretary of Colchester Emergency Night Shelter.