



# **THE APRIL CENTRE**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT**

**2003**

**Held on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2004**

## **Covering the year March 03 to February 04**

### **THE APRIL CENTRE**

Annual Report

11<sup>th</sup> February 2004

The last year has been an eventful and positive one for The April Centre. The centre, its services and staff team have gone through a number of changes all of which have been embraced and adapted to.

After securing the Lottery Funding the task of recruiting new staff and the establishing of the new projects was undertaken.

The new projects and staff commenced at the beginning of May. With the initial teething problems dealt with and some adjustment within the staff team the projects began to operate and have gone from strength to strength.

We had a busy and productive summer with numbers for the day centre rising as our profile and professionalism increased. Whilst our core client group has remained largely the same, we have noticed a rise in clients who are not homeless or vulnerably housed but individuals who have heard we can offer advice and support in areas of debt management and other accommodation issues.

The winter as always is a difficult time for our clients. But with some forward thinking within the staff team and effective networking we were able to insure a constant supply of blankets and sleeping bags along with winter coats, hats, scarves and gloves. A collection of Cuppa Soups by a local school also meant we had some nourishing drinks to hand out.

Christmas was very successful in terms of donations. Without undertaking a large campaign we still received almost £600 in cash donations along with a substantial amount of gifts that we were able to hand out at the clients Christmas party.

Throughout the year we have continued to investigate other streams of funding both to enhance the services we currently offer and to also ensure the continuity of those services.

We have aimed to increase our partnership working with other agencies, we can clearly see the benefits of shared knowledge and parallel working. Good networking has also meant we now have a drug and alcohol worker from another agency available to our clients in the day centre.

The year has ended with The April Centre becoming a well recognised service in the field of homelessness and frontline working. The staff team are demonstrating their commitment and working well together. We are all looking forward to the next year and the challenges and success we hope to have.

## **2004**

Our aims for the next year include investigating the possibility of extending our opening hours. We feel the demand is there and we have the facilities and resources to meet these demands. It will mean however, that we will have to re-apply to the planning officer and meet the cost of the reapplication but believe in the long run it will benefit both The April Centre and our clients.

We hope to establish an extensive training programme to include NVQ training for April centre staff and volunteers and also look into the possibility of extending some training to include staff/volunteers from other agencies. This could also be used to bring in some additional revenue for the centre.

With consultation with clients and staff we are aiming to set up a forum. This will allow our clients more input into the services and how they are offered. It will also give the staff team more insight into how they may work more effectively.

The day centre is in need of a face lift and this will be undertaken in March with the financial and practical support of the Students Union from Essex University.

We will continue to source more funding and further establish ourselves as a strong and viable force in the field of homelessness.

## **PROJECT BREAKDOWN**

***Day Centre*** – The day centre with a new Team Leader in post is now offering a comprehensive range of services. The idea of providing a place of warmth and security from on street time is still paramount. However, the information and knowledge now provided by the day centre team means we can be on hand to step in and offer advice and support when our clients face times of crisis. The day centre is supported by a small but firm band of volunteers who provide an invaluable back up to the core staff.

***Floating support*** – With two established workers the floating support scheme continues to grow, with a case load increasing by the week. The scheme designed to support individuals renting in the private sector is proving to be a welcome service to many who believed that as predominantly single individuals that are not council tenants they had no access to advice and guidance. The

workers have been successful in preventing evictions and resolving issues around budgeting and debt management.

**Resettlement** – We have two resettlement workers, one who works from within the day centre and one attached to Colchester's' Emergency Nightshelter. Good communication between the staff team prevents any confusion when there is a crossover with clients. Both members of the resettlement team have had some positive results and with the joint working within the Nightshelter the resettlement service has proved to be a valuable addition to both The April Centre and Nightshelter.

**Outreach** – The outreach team had a period of settling in to the routine of street work. This also included an allowance for the build up of trust by the community of street homeless and the workers. A change in the team did not damage this relationship and the outreach team seems to have been accepted part of our service. The team has built up some effective contacts on the street and has also been recognised by other services available at night such as the soup run volunteers. The team have encouraged a number of individuals to visit the day centre who would not normally do so and this has enabled us to provide support when previously we have not had the opportunity to do so. The team has also successfully on two occasions secured emergency overnight accommodation for two individuals at risk of violence.

**Management Team** – Aiden Carter (Day Centre Manager) and Kristina Hearnden (Project Manager) continue to line manage the projects and staff team.

## **Statistics for the April Centre**

### **Day Centre**

Contacts from March 2003 – February 2004

Total	2214
Total female	344
Total male	1860

### **Outreach**

Contacts from May 2003 – February 2004

Total contacts	287
Total people on file	98

Contacts have gone from 3 in May 03 to 60 in Jan 04

### **Floating support**

Contacts from August 03 – February 04

Total clients	56
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### **Resettlement**

Total number of clients that we had worked with and close their cases

Total clients	153
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