

A RELATIONAL APPROACH TO REDUCING HOMELESSNESS: EMERGING FINDINGS FROM POSITIVE PATHWAYS

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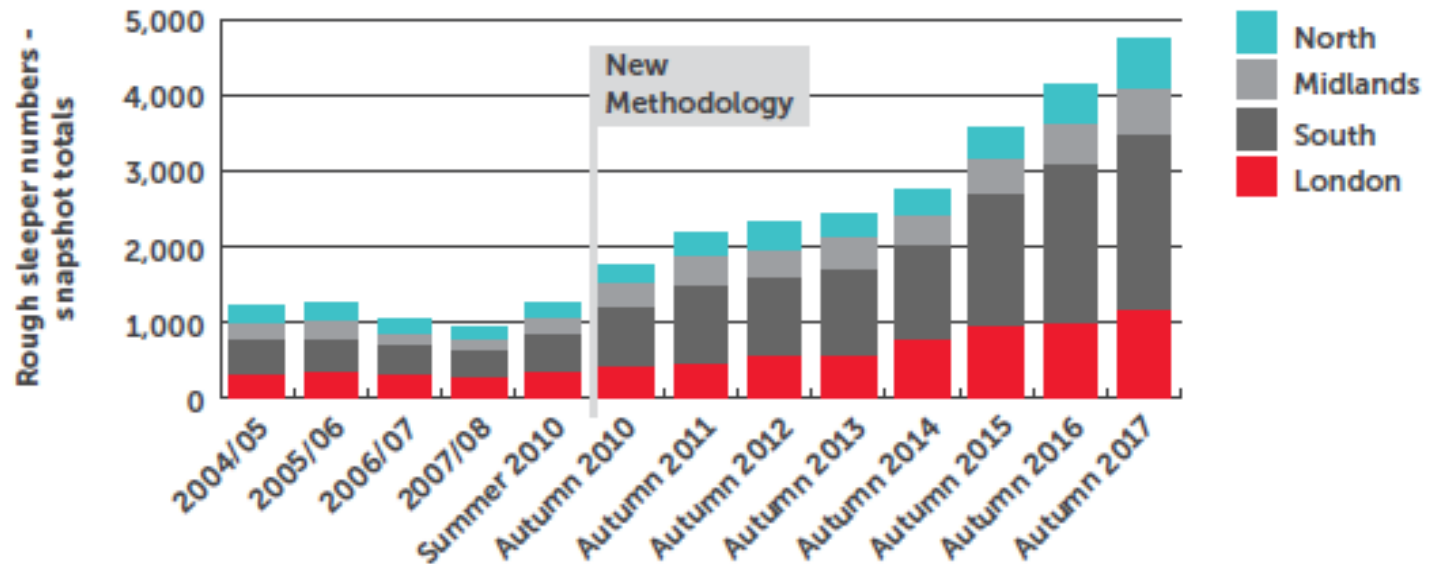


HOMELESSNESS: THE CHALLENGE

- 78,000 households and families in temporary accommodation
- Rough sleeping up by 169% since 2010

Source: Crisis. The homelessness monitor: England 2018.

Figure 4.1 Trends in local authority rough sleeper estimates by region, 2004-2017



Source: 2004/05-2007/08 – collated from Audit Commission Best Value Performance Indicators returns; Summer 2010 onwards – DCLG. Figures for the period to Summer 2010 are not strictly comparable with more recent estimates.

HOMELESSNESS: THE RESPONSE

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 gives local authorities in England a new duty to prevent and relieve homelessness for all people threatened with homelessness.

Shelter

St Mungo's

Ending homelessness
Rebuilding lives

Crisis

CUF⁺

18% of Church of England churches are responding to homelessness in some form.

Source: CofE Mission for Statistics)



- Government agencies
- Secular charities
- Churches and faith-based charities

HP CENTRE FOR HOUSING POLICY

RESEARCH CONTEXT: POSITIVE PATHWAYS

- 5-year programme delivered through CUF's Together Network and local partners
- Supporting 1440 clients at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Yorkshire
- Aiming to increase housing retention, social integration, emotional wellbeing, and participation
- Committed to providing a 'relational' approach to clients



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to take a 'relational approach' to addressing homelessness?
- What, if anything, is distinctive about a faith-based approach to relational working?



- What are the impacts and challenges on the ground of adopting a relational approach to address homelessness?
- Overall, how effective is the Positive Pathways model of 'relational working' in addressing homelessness and wider well-being?

RESEARCH METHODS

- Five year evaluation of Positive Pathways (PP):
 - Monitoring system: data on referrals, activities and outcomes
 - Interviews with staff and other agencies
 - Interviews with people using the PP projects
- Review of relational working (reporting on here):
 - Narrative literature review
 - Telephone interviews with key stakeholders, including academics, policy makers and key service providers
 - Exploratory interviews with staff and people using PP

RELATIONAL WORKING IN HOMELESSNESS

- The role of the support worker helping to build networks/ acting as a proxy social network
- The role of volunteers and mentors, including peer mentor
- Potential benefits of social media/ on-line relationships
- Focus on interdependence, rather than independence
- Partnership working

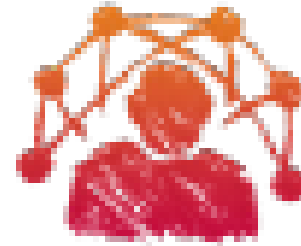
I think the question is less 'relational', as 'what kind of relationship'? (Stakeholder)



RELATIONAL WORKING IN HOMELESSNESS

Whole system/ framework approaches based on specific way of relational working

- Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE)
- Trauma Informed Care (TIC)
- Relational social work
- Housing First
- Critical Time Interventions
- Strength based approaches
- Person centred approaches
- Navigator role



‘Relational working’ reflects overall direction of travel in tackling homelessness? (Stakeholder)

FAITH BASED APPROACHES



Research suggests that similarities of FBO approaches to other NGOs are greater than differences

- Some qualitative studies highlight greater focus on time/ company/ 'presence orientated' approach (Davelaar and Kerstens, 2012)

Acknowledging role of spirituality in people's lives (Demos, 2006)

Theological underpinnings include:

- Open friendship (Duce, 2013)
- Grace and truth (Kurht and Ward, 2013)
- Caritas/ love (Caritas SAN, 2018)
- Sanctuary (Bowpitt et al, 2014)

SOME OF THE CHALLENGES...

- Managing professional boundaries/ risk of burnout
- How to/ if to mention faith
- Getting resources to support relational ways of working (intensity; length of time; over spaces - into communities)
- Balancing support and challenge
- Measurement: *'...if we are going to talk about measurement and outcomes then love is the thing against which we have to examine our conduct, rather than a theory of change'* (Stakeholder)



EARLY EXPERIENCES OF POSITIVE PATHWAYS

Staff delivering the service emphasised:

- ‘Walking alongside’ people/ a ‘professional friendship’
- Safe community spaces, as well as integration into wider community
- Time and consistency needed to build trust
- Flexible working methods and hours

People using the service emphasised:

- Somewhere safe to relax and enjoy company
- Workers offering compassion/ unconditional support
- Benefits of specific well-being initiatives
- For a minority, value of volunteering or having a mentor

IMPLICATIONS



- Long-term funding/ collaborative partnership arrangements so people do not fall between the cracks
- Need to reconsider area-based / community level approaches
- Need to track more holistic outcomes over time and capture processes of change but...
- Inherent tension in quantitatively evidencing outcomes of relational work
- Opportunity for further theological and practical reflection on strengths and limits of a specifically Christian relational approach

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

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