

## 2014 Questionnaire – The Headlines

### The Data:

45 questionnaires completed and 7 people declined to participate.

- 26 (57%) were male
- 19 (42%) were female

There was a fairly even spread of age from late twenties to sixties, with the youngest being 21 and the oldest 80+.

- 6 (13%) come on only one day
  - 14 (31%) come to all drop-ins
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- 6 (13%) described themselves as currently homeless
  - 26 (58%) said they lived in a council property
  - 2 (4%) said they lived in a B&B
  - 6(13%) said they lived in housing association/sheltered
  - 4 (9%) said they lived in private rented
  - 2 (4%) said they owned their own home
  - 1 (2%) said they lived with friends/family
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- 30 (66%) said they have been homeless
  - 23 (51%) said they have been convicted of an offence
  - 32 (71%) said they had health problems
  - 29 (64%) said they suffer from depression or anxiety
  - 13 (29%) said they have or have had issues with drugs
  - 19 (42%) said they have or have had issues with alcohol
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- 17 (38%) have no other agencies helping them.
  - 13 (29%) were also being helped by Turning Point
  - 6 (13%) were also being helped by P3

Other agencies mentioned were Gear (2), Salvation Army (2), Guidepost, Knightstone, Pentland Trust, CAP (2), ISIS (2), Independence Trust (3), Ann Simmonds Support, Park House, CAB

## The Feedback:

There seems no doubt that marah plays a crucial preventative role in the lives of the people who use the services in terms of both their physical and mental health and preventing spiralling into crisis when they have setbacks.

The three themes that arise are:

Having a reason to get out of the house, meet people and make friends thus preventing loneliness and isolation:

- *They are my lifeline.*
- *I was lonely, I made friends and have company.*
- *Got me out of a rut when I've been in a bad state.*
- *I've got to know people. I was very lonely – living on my own and was in trouble financially.*
- *I feel better in myself and feel relaxed and know other people are in the same position*
- *I don't mope at home and relief when feeling anxious or alone.*

Having someone to talk to when things go wrong and being able to get help which prevents further crises:

- *I would be isolated and hungry at times. Helped me when bills all arrive together or unexpected expense, breakdown of fridge, cat vet bill.*
- *A big difference, especially when no money/benefits. The foodbank won't help, Marah are the only people who will help.*
- *Yes help with all aspects of life, debts, travel expenses, someone to talk to who listens and cares.*
- *Help and advice when benefits stopped*
- *Mark helped with looking for somewhere to live*

51% of people specified extra help they had received from marah. Only 11% of drop-in attendees questioned said they had not had any extra support.

Food. This was quite understated as many people just commented that they liked the food. However people also said:

- o *"I was quite weak because I wasn't eating, I was tired and down".*
- o *"Always provided food when I had nothing to eat. "*
- o *"It stops me stealing food when I'm hungry"*
- o *"When I haven't got anything to eat they're here."*
- o *"if it wasn't for them a lot of people here wouldn't have hot meals"*

People also commented:

- o *"A lot of us wouldn't be here without them".*
- o *"A lot of people would be dead if it wasn't for them."*

There are indications of clear outcomes around these themes and also some comments about no longer being homeless or drug/alcohol dependent. The following were identified as changes since their involvement with Marah:

- *I was homeless and on my own.*
- *A lot of people would be dead if it wasn't for them.*
- *I've stopped drugs, alcohol and smoking.*
- *I'm settled and housed and off drugs and alcohol. I can chill out in my life now.*
- *A lot. I'm housed.*
- *I've got my house – I haven't ever thanked anybody.*
- *I'm more settled, it's been up and down but it's a lot better.*
- *Reduced in drinking*
- *Helped me realise I don't need drink and don't need to turn to the bottle, I can just be myself.*
- *They helped me get my flat, and helped me get treatment.*
- *Have found p/t work*

People also mentioned improved confidence and social skills:

- *They have made me feel welcome and has given me the confidence to talk to strangers.*
- *Loads happier*
- *Come out of myself*
- *More confidence to talk to people*
- *I realise I can do things and learnt coping strategies. I shouldn't keep bills under my pillow.*

Something that obviously comes over clearly to drop-in users is a non-judgemental service offered without a sense of duty or superiority:

- *You can be yourself. Get help without people looking down on you. They treat you as a person who should be heard.*
- *Friendly, helpful. The people don't mind doing it, it's no issue for them.*
- *Friendly, people are pleasant and it's no trouble for them*
- *It's one of the best things Stroud has got as an outreach. The people are wonderful and it feels like a family.*
- *Given me confidence and self esteem*
- *Thank god there are people who make you feel valued*

And the final word:

- *A great difference after 5 years on the street, my health and everything.*