

Marah

2019 Marah Survey - The Headline Data

57 questionnaires were completed and 7 people declined to participate.

- 46 (81%) were male
- 11 (19%) were female

Ages were spread from late twenties to sixties with youngest being 25 and oldest 72.

- 11 (19%) say they come once a week
 - 45 (79%) said they attend all drop in sessions
 - 8 (14%) describe themselves as currently homeless
 - 27(47%) said they live in a council property
 - 2 (3.5%) said they live in a B&B
 - 11 (19%) in housing association
 - 9 (16%) said they live in privately rented housing
 - 3(5%) said they live with friends and family
 - 1(1.5%) said they sofa surf
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- 37(65%) said they have been homeless at some point
 - 18 (32%) said they have a conviction for a criminal offence
 - 33 (58%) indicated they have physical health problems
 - 39 (68%) said they suffer from depression/anxiety and other mental health issues
 - 15 (26%) said they have or have had issues with drug addiction
 - 12 (21%) said they have or have had issues with alcohol
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- 19 (33%) indicate they are receiving no assistance from other agencies
 - 4 (7%) were being assisted by Weavers Croft (mental health services)
 - 11 (19%) were being assisted by P3
 - 2 (3.5%) were being assisted by Gem Project

How people find out about Marah

- 38(67%) heard of Marah via word-of-mouth
- 6 (11%) heard of Marah from other agencies (e.g. P3, Stroud District Council, CGL)
- 3 (5%) stated "other" (e.g. internet) and 10 (17%) didn't respond to question

Other notable findings and client suggestions include:

- The most commonly used term to describe the respondent's state of mind is "depression". This is used in 17 replies, and is implied in many others.
- Many respondents indicated they would like to see an expansion of the Drop-In to an everyday basis and a few suggested some evenings.
- Food parcels could be better monitored (to prevent wastage).
- One respondent mentioned that inclusion of a few board games or some music might benefit the clients during their visits to the Drop-in.

The common issue derived from the survey is that Marah is an essential resource in the lives of the respondents. These are quotes taken from a few of the client responses that illustrate this...

"I like the access to outreach teams. It's very nice to be welcomed by volunteers and to have conversations. Eating lovely food with company can elevate my sense of well-being. I feel safe at Marah and I feel valued as a person."

"I think Marah ... would be desperately missed by many if it didn't exist. They help with all sorts of things, not just food and clothes. I hope all the volunteers that run it are verbally told that they are genuinely appreciated. ... I'm very very grateful."

"Marah has been a life-saver for me, stopping me believing I would have to break the law just to eat. I came to Marah in a suicidal state, desperate. Marah passed me to P3 who worked endlessly to find me shelter. It's been an eye-opener these last 2 years. The Marah brings a bit of light back when the darkness hits you. So, thank you to all the staff who give their time and energy. It's a pleasure to know you don't have to be alone."

Forward

The survey was carried out by Marah as part of an ongoing program of collecting information on the Drop-in. Sampling was carried out during August and September 2019 during lunchtime session on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The purpose of the survey was to gather information from guest facing services to support future strategy and planning for the Trustees.

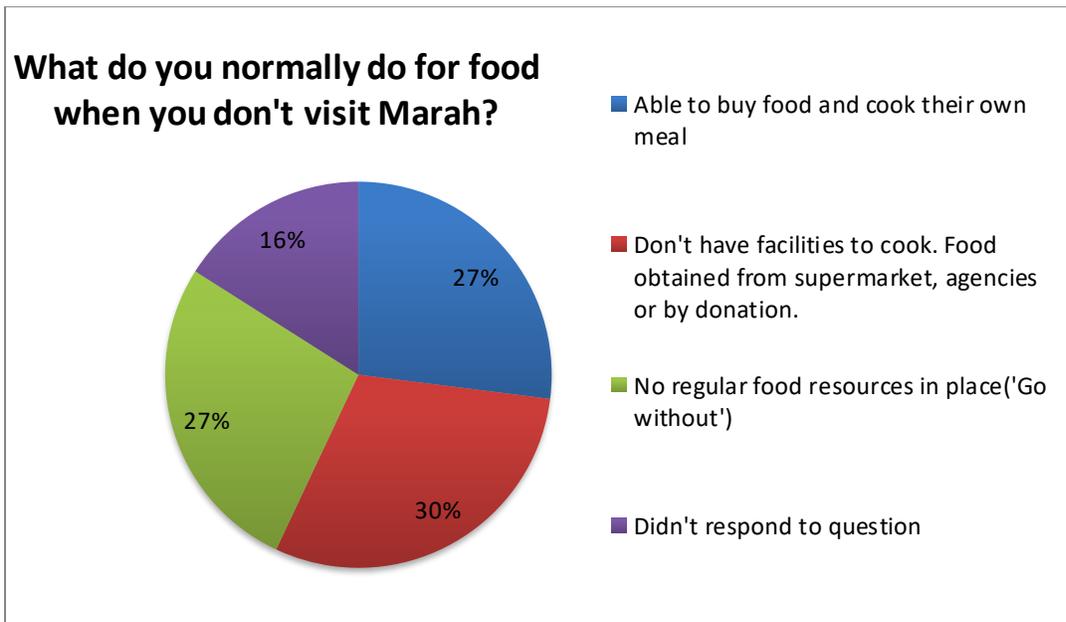
The questionnaire was based on a previous survey carried out in 2014 and further questions were added to help gain some additional insights from guest responses.

Method

The survey was printed on 4 x A4 sheets, pens were provided and 1:1 assistance was available if required. Guests were approached by members of the Marah team and asked if they would assist in completing a short questionnaire. It was explained that the aim of the survey was to help gain insight into how Marah can improve its services for guests and that it might also prove helpful for fundraising.

Most guests were able to work through the form on their own without too much assistance. There were also a number who needed help through the whole process. Generally the forms were completed and returned within 10-15 minutes. A few guests were not comfortable with the survey and declined to participate and a number agreed to participate, but then failed to start or fully complete the survey. It is also likely that due to the transient nature of some guests visiting patterns, several clients and regulars will have been missed. Despite this, the survey was successful in obtaining responses from 57 respondents (11 female, 46 male) and following is an analysis of the findings.

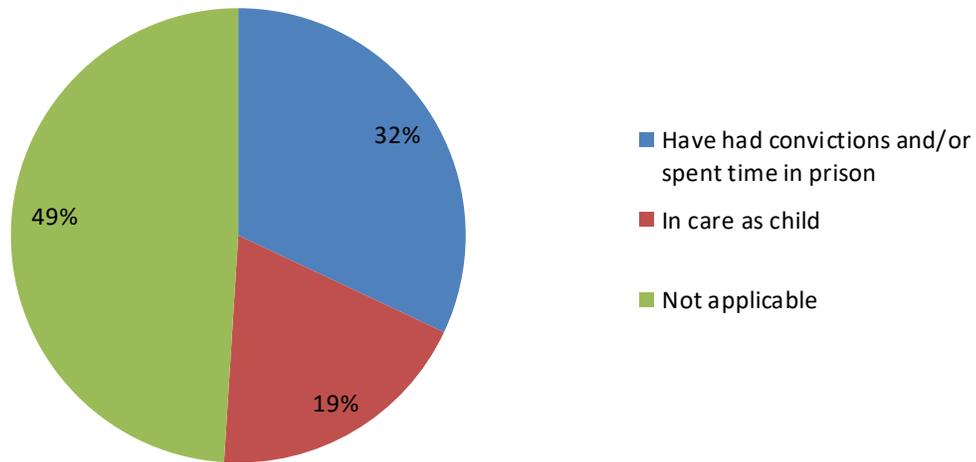
Summary findings



30% of respondents indicated they don't have regular access to cooked food and that these guests tend to rely on supermarkets and donations outside of their visits to the Drop-In. A significant number of respondents (27%) indicated that there is little or no regular or structured provision in place for food access outside of Marah. A large number of respondents indicated they don't have regular access to cooked food and these clients tend to rely on supermarkets (usually cheap end-of-day offers) and donations outside of their visits to the Drop-In (e.g. food vouchers via P3 or other support). The data suggests that close to a third of all respondents are completely dependent on Marah and the Drop-In as their primary source of food.

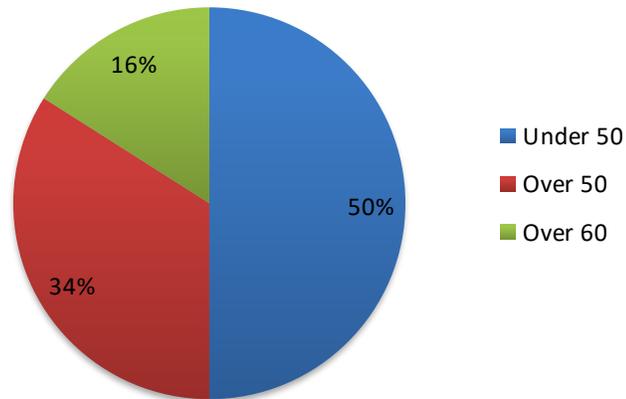
Questions regarding access to food resources outside of visits to the Drop-In at Marah show close to a third of all respondents are completely dependent on Marah and the Drop-In as their primary source of food.

Institutional experience



A large proportion of guests reported that they had either spent time in prison or had been in care as a child. This figure is significantly higher than the general population and indicates a strong link between their institutional experience and their onward social and personal needs.

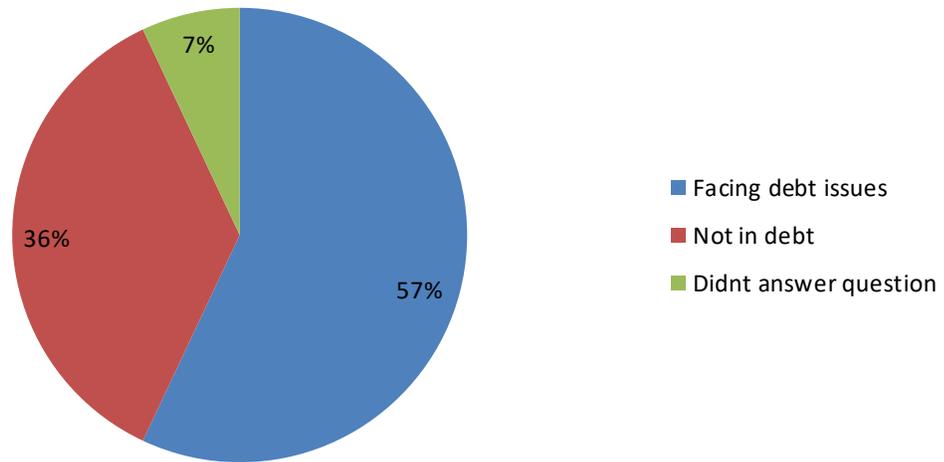
Age



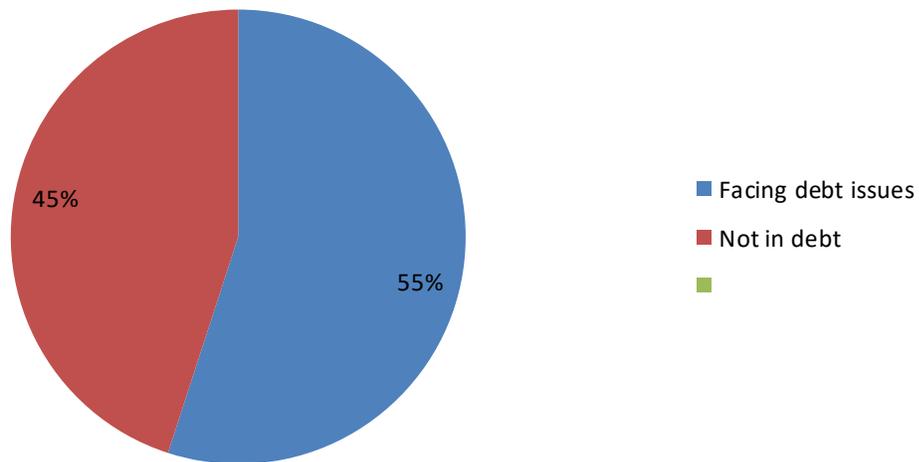
Age can be assumed to play a significant role in some responses. 26 of the respondents are over 50 (and 9 of these are over 60). This means that they may be vulnerable and becoming increasingly anxious about their future. The following extract gives an idea of a state of mind that can be found amongst those in this category:

“Sadly, my future seems less and less likely to keep up with my past and I feel it's only a matter of time before I am unable to continue in a viable fashion. This is what really terrifies me, the prospect of having to engage with the benefit system... Scared witless.”

Debt (Male clients)



Debt (Female clients)



It's easy to see that debt is a big feature in both men and women guests. Levels exceed 50% in both categories and common causes of reasons for debt include rent arrears, late payment of benefits and poor self-management.

Some conclusions

- The survey shows that Marah and the Drop-In service plays an essential role in the maintenance and support of a core of guests. Many guests report that the Drip In provides a lifeline service and is crucial in maintaining their health and wellbeing. The data suggests there is a measurable demand for an extension to the food provision for guests during non-Drop-In service hours. Suggestions were made that this could include adding additional days to the current 3 day weekly schedule and possible evening sessions.
- There could be an opportunity to further promote access of emergency food packs to those attendees who may have a need for these out of normal Marah hours.
- Aim on building up a larger stock of hand out items, (especially shoes).
- Try to engage more support and better profiling of Marah through social media channels to promote Marah and assist in fundraising.

Some recommendations for improvements on follow up surveys.....

1. Many guests found the forms hard to complete due to lack of concentration and writing impairments. In future surveys it may be beneficial to include more multiple-choice type questions to assist with these issues.
2. Spend more time monitoring guests more closely during the time they are completing the forms to ensure all questions are completed fully.
3. Add some more detailed questions about access to food and also explore more about how guests are maintaining hydration levels. This line of question might also focus on more detailed analysis such as:
 - What are your biggest barriers to obtaining food? ie Money, transport to shops, help to do shopping?
 - Do you have access to water or other drinks in between meals?
 - Do you take hot takeaway meals from the Drop-in? If so when would you normally consume that food? Immediately, a few hours later, next day, ++?

Adam Green, October 2019

Survey, findings and report conducted and completed by Adam Green,

Marah Trust are very grateful to Adam for all his hard work and support on the survey. The giving of his time and skills to help our charity was very kind and much appreciated.