



Frontline agencies in partnership

Older people & care services in the Survey of Needs and Provision

Survey of Needs and Provision

The Survey of Needs and Provision (SNAP), conducted by Homeless Link and Resource Information Service (RIS), and funded by the CLG and CRASH¹, brings together and makes publicly available data on single homeless people and couples in England. The research focused on day centres and accommodation based services for single homeless people and couples, including both direct access/emergency hostels² and second stage supported accommodation³. The research consisted of three main elements:

- Analysis of data about hostels and supported accommodation from the Supporting People (SP) provider database⁴ and basic analysis of SP client records.
- Analysis of data about day centres, direct access hostels and second stage supported accommodation from Homeless UK.
- A telephone survey of a sample of 151 day centres, hostels and second stage supported accommodation providers on Homeless UK, to gather more detailed information about clients served and their needs, services provided, standards of buildings and sources of funding.

This briefing summarises the findings in SNAP relating to older people and care services.

Summary of findings

The UK Coalition on Older Homelessness⁵ defines older homeless people as those over the age of fifty to reflect the fact that homeless people are likely to age prematurely and experience the same frailties and vulnerabilities of the rest of the older population at a younger age. In our survey we therefore specifically asked about the prevalence of this group. Older people are present in most services, although they tend to be a minority group. Among the types

¹ CRASH is the property and construction industry charity for the homeless. www.crash.org.uk

² Direct access hostels are short stay emergency services aimed at rough sleepers or those in need of immediate accommodation that usually have 24 hour staffing, frequent vacancies, no or limited waiting lists and can often accept self referrals.

³ Second stage supported accommodation projects provide longer-term accommodation for homeless people, often to those moving on from "first stage" direct access hostels. These projects usually have waiting lists, less frequent vacancies than direct access hostels, and are less likely to accept self referrals.

⁴ Supporting People data covers England.

⁵ <http://www.olderhomelessness.org.uk/>

of projects with more specialist provision for young people, e.g. specialist second stage accommodation such as foyers, they appear to be less prevalent, but it must also be borne in mind that better data is often available on young people's services. Further analysis at the local level is needed to understand the accommodation needs of older homeless people in services. Homeless Link has developed a needs audit tool to aid this analysis and further details can be found on our website⁶.

Day centres

- There are 187 day centres in England for homeless people without dependants in England. Most day centres (160 or 86%) are for adults of all age groups. One centre in Birmingham is only for clients aged 45 and over.
- Out of the 138 day centres where the average age of clients is known it is between 50-59 in 3 day centres (2%) and above 60 in one (1%)
- Most day centres (147 or 79%) have no maximum age for clients.
- In the telephone survey only four day centres (10%) reported that they had no clients over the age of 50.

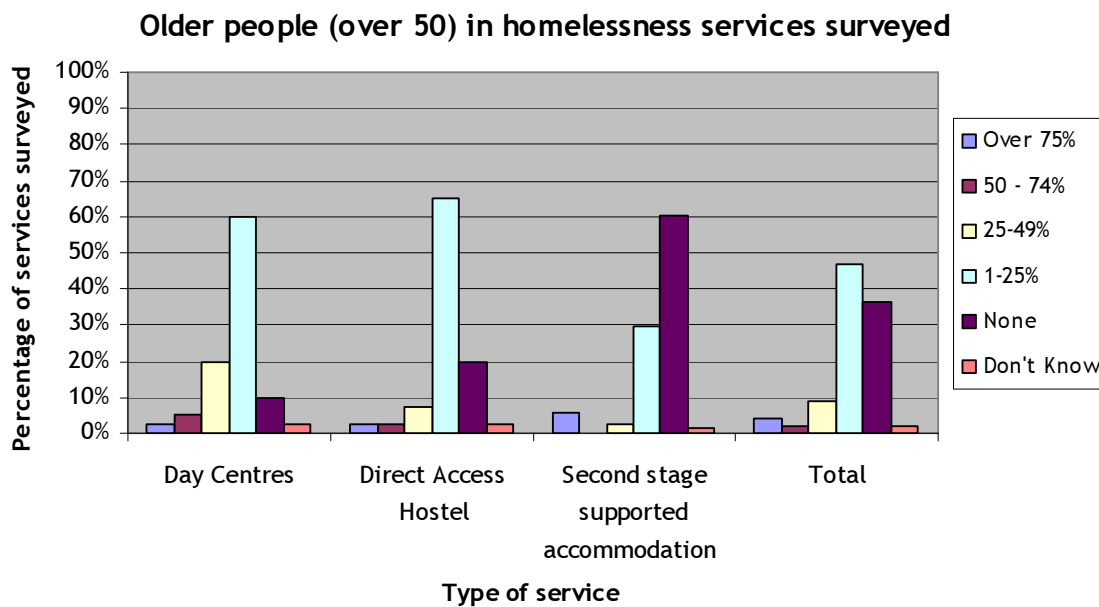
Direct access hostels

- The telephone survey found that few direct access hostels see high numbers of older people (aged over 50), but 78% (31 hostels) do see at least some older people.

Second stage accommodation projects

- Only four (6%) of second stage accommodation projects reported that half or more of clients are aged over 50, and 43 (61%) second stage providers have no clients over 50 - compared with 4 (10%) of day centres and 8 (20%) of direct access hostels. However, this data may have been skewed by the type of projects that are currently covered on the Homeless UK database, which was used to derive the sample for the survey. There is better coverage of services such as foyers, which are aimed at young people.
- Two of the four projects surveyed where older people were in a majority (over 50%) did have a specialist worker or services targeted at this group.

⁶ http://www.homeless.org.uk/policyandinfo/issues/older/index_html



Support and care services

In our survey we asked projects about whether they could access a range of support services for their clients and 'care services' were among these. Anecdotally, our members report difficulties in getting community care assessments. We were, however, unable to look at this issue in detail in this survey. The data therefore gives a basic picture about the availability of care services to clients in homelessness projects, but further research into how projects link in with care providers would be beneficial.

- Overall 29 of the 151 projects (19%) surveyed stated that they had care services (e.g. domiciliary care) available to them.
 - Three (2%) had in-house care services delivered by their own staff;
 - Four (3%) had in-house support by an external agency and;
 - 23 (15%) stated that they had a referral system to an external service delivering care services.
- Two of the six accommodation providers, where over 50% of clients are older people, have care services available.
- In total in the survey 9 out of 151 projects (6%) stated that they had specialist services or members of staff targeted at older people including:
 - Two day centres
 - Five direct access hostels
 - Two second stage accommodation projects