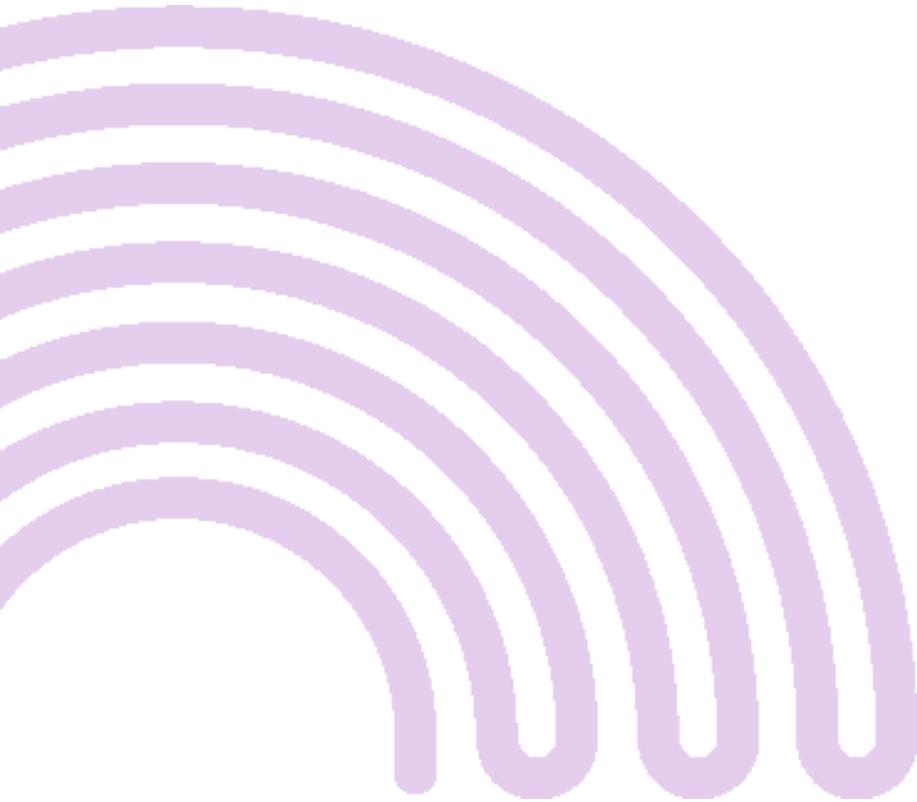




Bethany
Christian
Trust



INVERNESS SHELTER PILOT REPORT

Monday 2nd February – Monday 16th February 2009

1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past 12 years Bethany Christian Trust's Winter Care Shelter has offered an immediate response to the needs of vulnerable men and women on the streets of Edinburgh throughout the winter.

During the winter of 2007-2008 the Shelter was operated by Bethany Christian Trust and supported by groups representing 74 different churches from Edinburgh and the Lothians.

In 2008, representatives from various churches and community groups in Inverness with the support of Highland Council approached Bethany Christian Trust to discuss the possibility of running a temporary (pilot) night shelter based on the Edinburgh model for two weeks during the winter to help assess the needs of rough sleepers in Inverness.

The purpose of this report is to give an account of the work carried out during the two week pilot and, by considering some of the findings, recognise trends, patterns of use and need within the city.

While work has been done offering solutions which seek to eradicate rough sleeping in Inverness and its surrounding area, the level of uptake the pilot Care Shelter service serves to highlight the fact that the problem of rough sleeping remains a real and persistent social issue in the city.

During the two weeks of 2nd February to 16th February 2009, the pilot Care Shelter provided a welcoming, safe and secure alternative for men and women who would otherwise be sleeping rough on the streets of Inverness.

2 AIM

The Care Shelter aimed to provide safe and secure overnight accommodation and a hot meal for anyone who might otherwise be rough sleeping, whilst using the opportunity that this created to encourage each individual to explore how they might be able to move into more permanent accommodation.

3 CONTEXT

The Care Shelter service model operates, in many instances, for those who have found themselves excluded from other more secure temporary accommodation options within Inverness. Consequently, many individuals using the service often presented with higher levels of challenging behaviour than that which would be deemed acceptable in many other similar "direct access" type of homelessness services.

Unlike in the vast majority of other services for homeless people, individuals using the Shelter did not need to disclose personal information in order to make use of the service. The obligations placed on service users were minimal and were implemented solely for the safety of those making use of the service. Though there were a number of rules governing the running of the shelter, they can be summed up under the following three headings:

- No alcohol or drugs to be consumed on the premises
- No illegal conduct tolerated by staff in or around the premises

- Service users must refrain from forms of behaviour which threaten or undermine the safety and well-being of others using the service i.e. bullying, intimidation or violence or other forms of threatening behaviour

In ensuring these rules were adhered to, staff ensured that those using the Shelter were accommodated in a safe and secure environment where they were not routinely exposed to risk or threatening behaviour.

4 METHOD

The Care Shelter began on the evening of Monday 2nd February 2009 and operated for 2 weeks until the morning of Monday 16th February 2009.

Transport was provided to the Shelter each evening as the location of the Shelter changed most nights according to the availability of the different church venues. Seven different venues were used. The provision of transport at 21h15 & 21h30 each evening from the side of the Homeless Day Centre at the end of Academy Street minimised the risk of service users missing out on this service through not being able to locate the venue.

Total churches involved:	23
Total catering teams:	8
Total overnight volunteers provided by churches:	13
Total venues used:	7

Volunteer teams from 10 church groups from the Inverness and surrounding area assisted 4 full-time project workers employed by Bethany Christian Trust. The Project Workers supervised the Shelter during the course of the night, welcoming service users, ensuring that everyone was able to settle in and maintained a “hands-on” presence throughout. They were ably assisted by a group of enthusiastic volunteers from the 10 churches represented in providing the venues and catering teams. Consequently, they were able to develop constructive working relationships with many of the men and women who used the service, making it possible to begin exploring some of the issues behind their current circumstances which had resulted in their needing to access The Shelter. In considering some of these issues, opportunities were provided whereby staff and service users could identify individual needs whilst considering the practicalities around how these needs might be best met.

A meal was served at 21h30, which consisted of two courses, usually a main course and a dessert; though on some occasions soup was served instead of dessert. After the meal had been served tea and coffee were available, and the lights switched off at around 23h00. The following day would begin at 06h15 when service users were given a wake up call and offered transport to the Homeless Day Centre where a breakfast club provided hot filled rolls and hot drinks. Many service users would return to the city centre to use other homelessness services that were then opening up for the day.

At a basic level the Care Shelter kept people alive during a time of extreme crisis, which for many is a relatively short period. Seeking support and secure accommodation is not always a priority for service users. The Care Shelter pilot provided low responsibility (verging on no responsibility) accommodation that could be accessed by all. One of the main challenges for staff working with this particular service user group is to maximise the often minimal levels of motivation with which

service users present. It is not unusual for this desire for change to be demonstrated at a time when it is difficult to refer to or access other services, either early in the morning or late at night. For this reason an agreement was reached with various agencies such as Highland Council Homeless day Centre and Highland Homeless Trust who made referrals to shelter and received referrals in return from shelter staff when they were open. Many of these agencies offer services which are available during the day and works with the same service user group, with the hope that a consistent, co-operative approach across services would assist individuals to make positive choices. This made it possible, with the individual's permission, for these other agencies to follow up any request for assistance.

In addition to this, staff were also able to liaise with Inverness Police, and with the Street Pastors in order to facilitate service users make contact with services specifically geared up to enable and assist individuals to move into longer term, secure accommodation.

4.1 Monitoring

The monitoring form was designed to be a tool that would make it possible to open up and develop a constructive working relationship with each service user. The questions were designed not to be invasive, but yet sufficiently comprehensive to give an initial impression of which issues were being faced by the individual, leaving the opportunity for follow-up if appropriate. It was agreed at the outset that no obligation would be placed upon any individual to participate in the monitoring exercise and 98% chose to participate in giving all or at least some information.

It is very encouraging that those using the service were so cooperative, and is perhaps an indication of their appreciation of the service and desire to see a more established opportunity in the city for rough sleepers. Some of the information required was not given in full and a number of service users were perhaps suspicious of and unwilling to engage with 'the system'. A general observation over different shelters operated by Bethany has shown that a proportion of men and women use the Care Shelters because, in contrast to most other services, they are not under obligation to give personal details or make any kind of commitment to address underlying issues or precipitating factors which contribute to their being homeless. The Care Shelter allows a person to remain anonymous and retain the feeling that they are still out-with 'the system' whilst actually encouraging them to begin to engage with workers.

There were a number of individuals accessing the Care Shelter who were under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs thus often making it more difficult to complete the monitoring forms. In a few instances staff found that they were prevented from facilitating the full completion of monitoring forms due to their being taken up with immediate management of the environment and dealing with safety concerns and conflict resolution/de-escalation scenarios.

Another factor worth noting is that 53% of those accessing the service stayed no longer than 2 nights in total, thus making it difficult for staff to build up trusting relationships which are a key element in eliciting a positive response regarding monitoring forms. It should also be noted that only 19% of those accessing the service did so for more than one week.

The statistics recorded are based on answers given by service users and not on staff perceptions. Collated figures did not always amount to 100% as not all the questions

were answered by all service users, and sometimes multiple answers were given when the service user felt that this better represented their situation.

Comments made in this report are based upon the information gathered and will influence decisions to be made about the future direction of this service. They illustrate a level of need that exists within the city that would not be provided for if the Shelter was not in operation.

4.2 Service User Profile

The percentages in the majority of these results relate to the number of people who responded to the monitoring exercise.

- **53 different people used the shelter during the two weeks.**
- **Evidence showed that 52 out of 53 people who used the service gave answers to all or part of the questions raised in the monitoring forms and statistics represented hereafter are of the 52 (98%) who responded.**

During the two week period, there were 203 people who attended for meal only which averages out at between 14 and 15 people per night and 74 bed spaces were provided which averages out at least 5 people per night.

This shows us that just over 64% attended for the meal only and 36% of those attending for meal actually stayed over also.

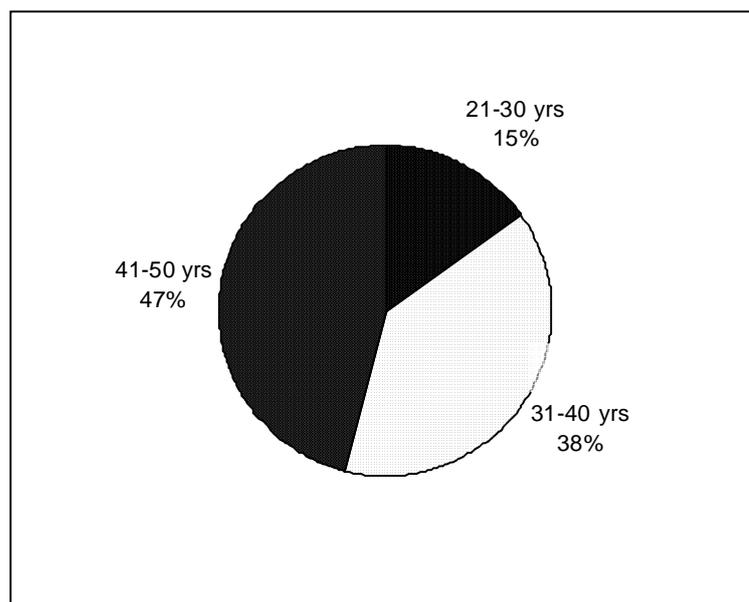
4.3 Gender

Of the 52 who responded, 9 (17.3%) who chose to fill in all or part of the monitoring forms were women and 43 (82.7%) were men

4.4 Age

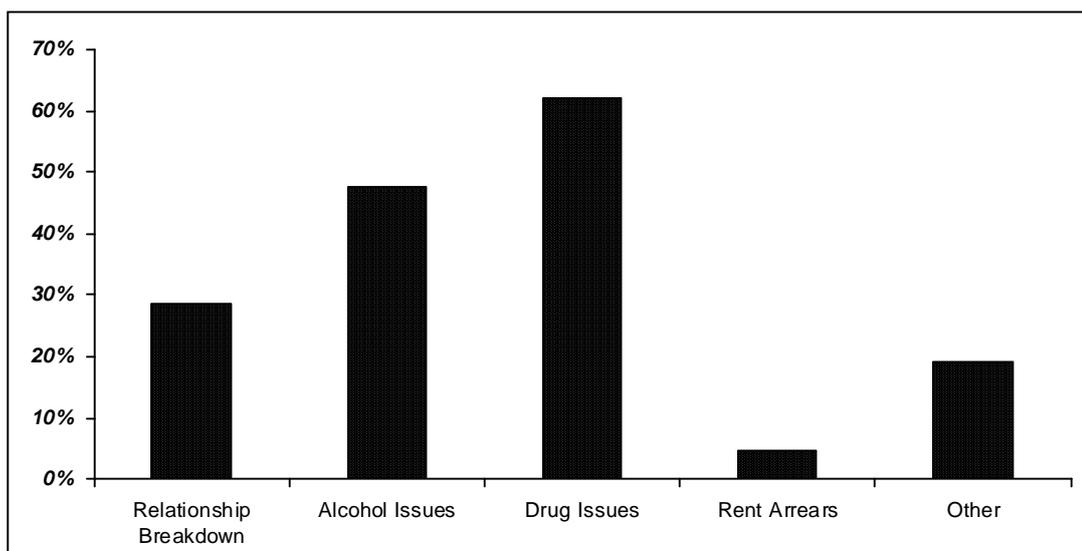
Only 13 out of the 52 people who responded, gave their age, which equates to 25%. The table below relates to the 13 who gave their age. The youngest age represented here was 21 or older and the oldest was 50 years or younger.

Average age of service users: 38 years old



4.5 Reason for Homelessness

21 out of 52 people (40.4%) chose to give feedback in this area. The table reflects the 21 people who gave answers. It should be noted that a number of service users indicated more than one reason for being homeless, and some clients presented as having multiple complex needs.



It was noted that Drug related issues accounted for over 60% of those who had found themselves in difficulty, with just under 50% with alcohol related issues, and over 28% citing relationship breakdown. Alcohol and drug use as a reason is considerably higher than that in the larger Bethany Care Shelter projects in Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Rent arrears as a reason is similar to Edinburgh but considerably less than Aberdeen.

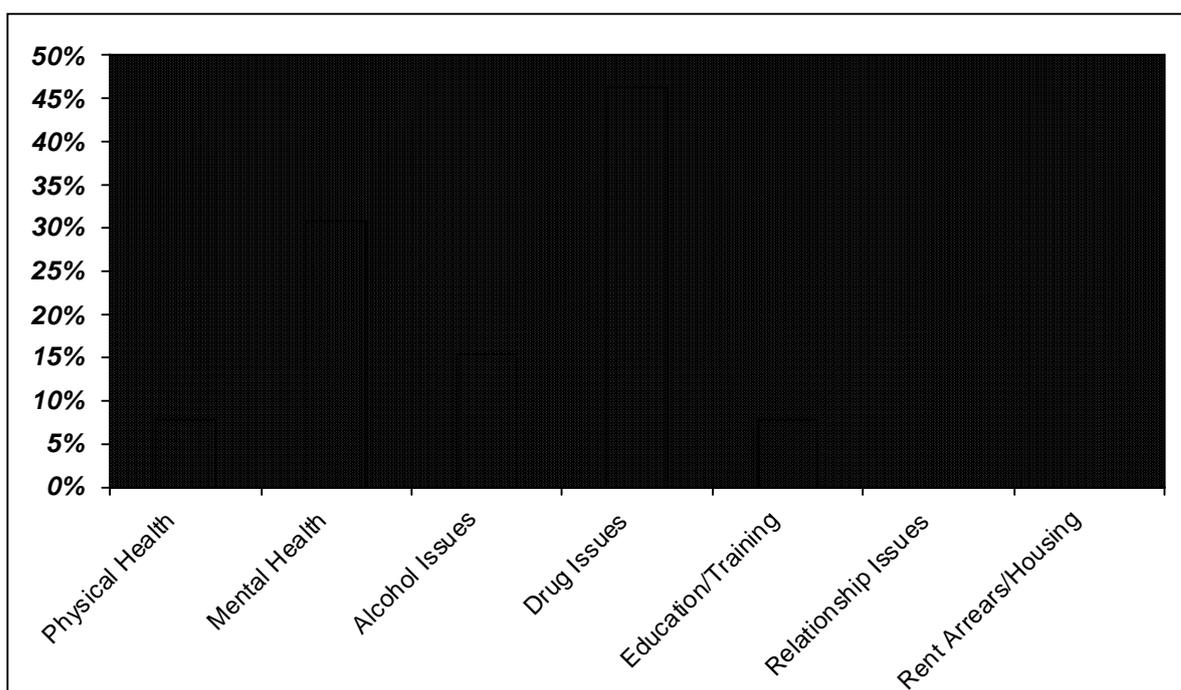
During the pilot shelter, staff observed a number of individuals who could be described as being economic migrants. These service users were mostly of Eastern European origin – predominantly Polish - and who were hoping to find employment around Inverness. They were without the means of supporting themselves and were unable to access services or benefits. A number of individuals for whom this appeared to be the case were reluctant to disclose much information about their circumstances.

The true number of service users originating from Eastern Europe is currently unknown as no monitoring of ethnic origin or national identity is carried out. However, it is thought that approximately 7% of those using the pilot shelter were of Eastern European origin, around four people. This figure is similar to Aberdeen, however it is far less than the 25 – 30% of Eastern Europeans who use the larger shelter in Edinburgh.

4.6 Requests for help

13 (25%) out of 52 who chose to give answers for this area. For “rough sleepers” the requirement for basic shelter and food generally becomes the main priority and understandably takes precedence over other identified needs. Only once these basic needs have been met, can other support be delivered. While the Care Shelter can offer a degree of stability it is often insufficient to allow an individual to feel suitably secure and ready to begin looking at these “secondary” issues.

One of the aims of the Care Shelter is to encourage men and women to access more appropriate longer term accommodation from where they can go on to address the underlying issues which have contributed to their homelessness or inability to sustain a tenancy. For some, until certain aspects of these other often complex needs have been addressed certain accommodation options remain unavailable. The challenge for the Shelter team during this two week pilot with some service users, was making this possibility of achieving accommodation appear realistic and achievable, as indeed it is.

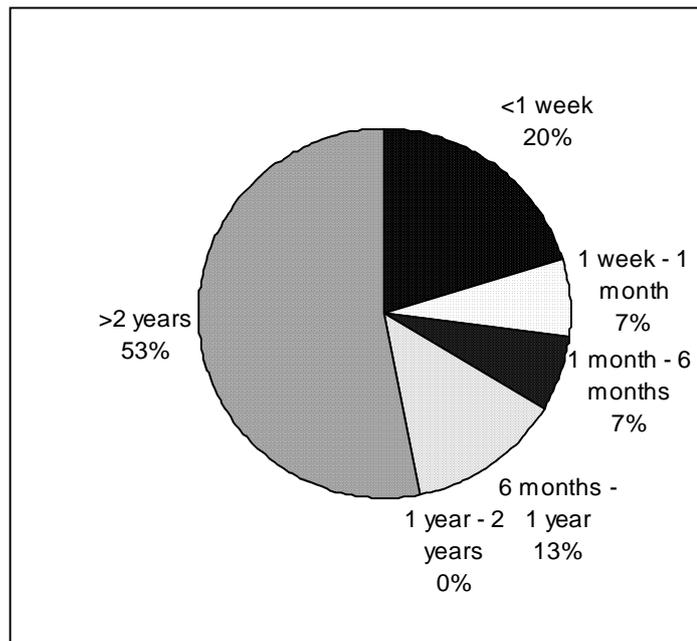


Throughout the period of the project there were many requests for help in finding accommodation. The Staff were able to advise service users of the emergency out of hours number for the homelessness section of Inverness City Council and signpost them to where the Council offices were. In the main, most service users were aware of the homeless section of the council and Homeless Day Centre and knew who to contact. Service users were made aware of the main services available within the city, however vacancies within the main services within the city centre were seldom available and there was no direct access facilities available. Staff particularly tried to identify those made “newly” homeless and source accommodation for them as soon as possible so they could move forward.

In relation to this particular practice it should be noted that management emphasise to staff during the Shelter induction training week the practice of paying particular attention to individuals who are “newly” homeless in order that they may be moved up the ladder more quickly as they are often more vulnerable in that they are ill-acquainted with and unaccustomed to life on the streets and are consequently at greater risk than many other service users

4.7 Period of homelessness

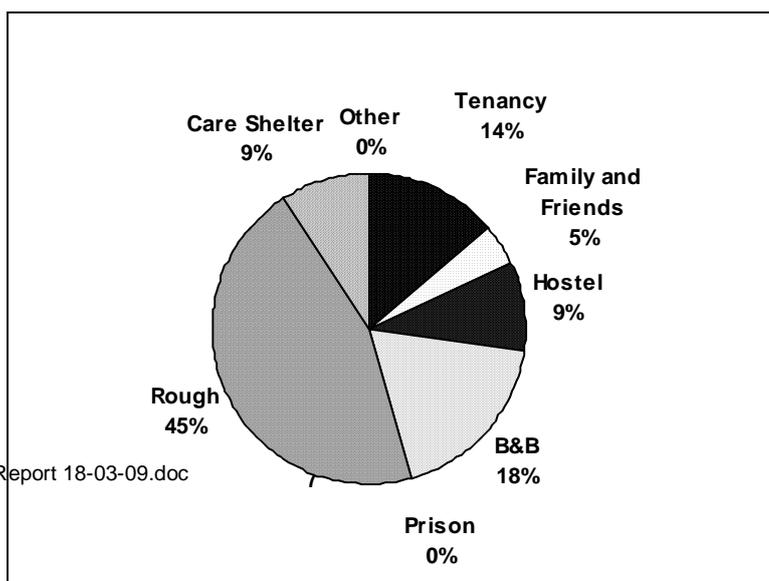
There were 15 out of 52 people who gave answers to this area which equates to around 29%. Evidence shows that 80% of respondents who used the Shelter had been homeless for more than 7 days and could reasonably be expected to be aware of and had an opportunity to have engaged with at least one of the different services available throughout the city. Despite the provision of services available, men and women were accessing the Shelter requiring crisis intervention and maintaining that they had no other options.



What is often described as the revolving door of homelessness occurs as individuals return again and again to the streets; often exhausting the services previously made available to them so that options become increasingly limited.

Around 53% (which equates to eight people for this section) of service users had been homeless for more than 2 years. Although most (80%) who participated in the monitoring process for this section claimed to have been homeless for more than 7 days, almost 54% only used the shelter for 1 or 2 nights.

4.8 Most recent accommodation



22 out of 52 people gave answers in this area which equates to 42%. The most notable trend emerging from the above statistics is without doubt the fact that 45% of those using the service (10 people for this section) were rough sleeping prior to accessing the pilot shelter, with 55% (12 people from this section) of those using the service having used alternative most recent accommodation. Family and friends accounted for 5%, hostel accommodation 9%, tenancy 14% and Care Shelter (Aberdeen) 9% as being the most recent type of accommodation.

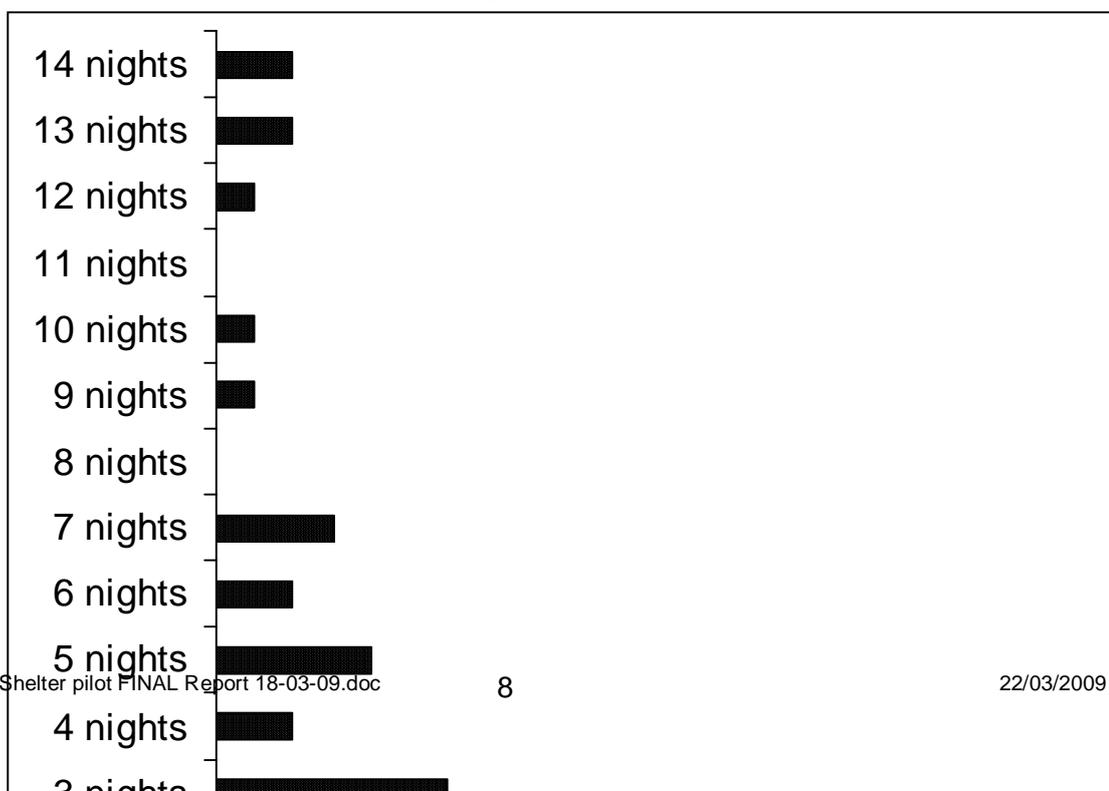
As stated earlier in this report, many cited that of the temporary accommodation available in the city, none of it was emergency direct access, and of the approximately bed spaces available in the main city centre homeless services, the availability of beds was very low. Bed and breakfast accommodation accounted for 18%.

4.9 Number of nights spent in Care Shelter

As can be seen from the chart below, the vast majority of service users were accommodated within the Care Shelter for seven nights or less (86.5%).

32.7% of service users stayed for only one night, while only 13.3% stayed for more than 7 nights.

Two people used the shelter for 14 nights (3.8%).



5 SHELTER ACCOMMODATION AND STAFFING

There was no cost to the Shelter for the use of any of the 7 venues. The volunteer teams from 10 different churches covered all catering costs. A two-course meal was served each evening; a continental breakfast was available each morning. Overall 23 different churches were involved in the Care Shelter.

Churches and Groups making up Catering teams

1. Crown Church
2. Kingsview Christian Centre
3. Kinmylies Church of Scotland
4. Croy Church of Scotland
5. Old High St Stephen's Church
6. Culloden Barn Church
7. St Mary's Catholic Church
8. Black Isle Volunteers

Overnight Volunteers

Angela Murdoch
Mrs Pat Jones
Rev Reg Campbell
Sister Brygida Jalowa
Scott Polworth
Ian Polworth
Kenny Robertson
Elspeth MacQueen
Frank Roden
Margaret Saunders
Faith Ougham
Chris Ougham
Vivian Roden

5.1 Venues

1. Crown Church, Midmills Road
2. Kingsview Christian Centre, Balnafettack Road
3. Kinmylies Church of Scotland, Off Kinmylies Way
4. Salvation Army Hall, Tomnahurich Street

5. St Mary's Church, 32 Huntly Street
6. Old High St Stephen's Church, Church Street
7. Free North Church (Madras St Hall), Bank Street

The ability to rotate the service around seven different venues was essential in avoiding the 'nimby' factor and our grateful thanks go to all the churches who provided venues, catering teams and overnight volunteers.

5.2 Full-time Staff

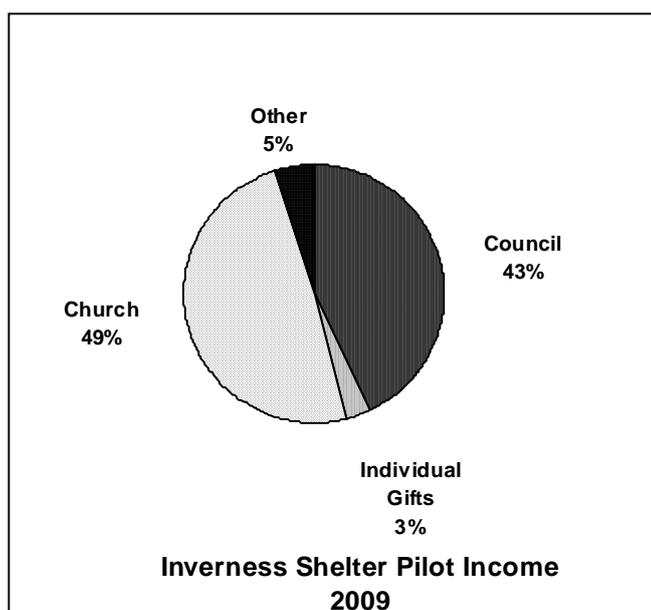
Bethany Christian Trust employed Paul Oliver (team leader) for week one assisted by Jenny Malcolm (project worker) and Norrie Webb (team leader) for week two assisted by Ross Cooper (project worker). Vivian Roden, Convenor of the Church of Scotland Presbytery of Inverness Church & Community Committee played a vital role in helping to coordinate and draw this pilot project together.

5.3 Finance

The most significant part of the budget was staff costs. Running costs were kept to a minimum through the very generous voluntary and financial contributions which were made by a large number of church groups, Trusts and private individuals. Inverness city council Common Good Fund agreed to pledge £6000 towards the costs of running the service. As can be seen from the following table which provides an overall picture of the different sources of funding for the Shelter, which amounted to £13,829.54. The overall cost to Bethany Christian Trust was £11,000 which leaves a surplus of £2,829.54 to be used by the steering group for other services in Inverness.

Name	Gift Date	Gift Amount
Culloden Baptist Church	05/01/2009	£700.00
Kinmylies Church Inverness	05/01/2009	£431.33
Inverness East Church	16/12/2008	£250.00
Strathdearn Community Coffee Morning	05/01/2009	£180.00
Individual donor	05/01/2009	£20.00
Individual donor	05/01/2009	£50.00
Individual donor	05/01/2009	£10.00
Individual donor	10/12/2008	£50.00
St Ninian's Roman Catholic Church	07/01/2009	£650.00
St Ninian's Roman Catholic Church	17/12/2008	£150.00
APC Church, Inverness	20/11/2008	£112.00
Hilton Parish Church	23/01/2009	£450.00
Inverness Community Church	07/01/2009	£200.00
Individual donor	05/01/2009	£174.00
Parish of Moy Dalarossie and Tomatin Church	09/01/2009	£220.00
Parish of Moy Dalarossie and Tomatin Church	24/12/2008	£100.53
The Margaret Douglas Trust per South Forrest	26/01/2009	£500.00
Daviot and Dunlichity Church	05/01/2009	£287.53
Daviot and Dunlichity Church	12/01/2009	£9.90
Individual donor	05/01/2009	£10.00
Prebytery of Inverness	11/12/2008	£500.00
Individual donor	26/01/2009	£50.00
Ardersier Parish Church	06/01/2009	£100.00

Salvation Army	05/01/2009	£170.00	
The Highland Council	12/01/2009	£6,000.00	(PLEDGE)
Trinity Church	05/01/2009	£216.00	
Kilmorack and Erchless Parish Church	07/01/2009	£222.25	
Ness Bank Church, Inverness	25/01/2009	£1,166.00	
Old High St Stephen's Church	11/03/2009	£850.00	
TOTAL		£13,829.54	



6 FEEDBACK

The overwhelming feedback from service users has been one of grateful thanks. In the main, service users were respectful and cooperative throughout the duration of the service. There were a few minor issues which staff were able to deal with. There was a sense of frustration amongst some using the service, citing there was a lack of appropriate support for those presenting with Drug/alcohol related issues. It is apparent that this feeling of helplessness is typical of many of the service users using the pilot shelter.

Feedback from everyone involved at the time of operating appeared to be very positive, which included feedback from HHT staff, church volunteers and Inverness Police. Feedback from Highland Council officials has been encouraging too as they sought support to ascertain the true extent of rough sleeping within the city. Feedback from the churches has been very encouraging indeed and all appear to be very happy at the way the service was managed and run and pleased to be involved in such a vital service.

7 CONCLUSION

The Shelter has proved an important and necessary resource for homeless men and women within Inverness over the two week period. Particularly as the service was in operation during two of the coldest weeks of the winter.

The Shelter's provision this winter is as much evidence of the commitment of the wider church community as it is of Highland Council and Bethany Christian Trust. It is the churches who provided the venues over the 2 weeks of the Shelter's operation. It is they who provided the volunteer teams to cater – 4 to 7 individuals on any given night – who provided hospitality and warm food, enabling the regular staff to concentrate on managing the environment and dealing with situations that arose.

As well as this 13 different volunteers stayed overnight with Bethany staff. In this they ensured the project worked and that homeless men and women who would otherwise have slept rough were provided with accommodation. Though Bethany Christian Trust invested a large amount of time, hard work and organisation to enable this project to succeed, the project's success is equally dependent on the wider Inverness church community who generously volunteered their services, as well as Highland Council and the Highland Homeless Trust.

Unlike most other homelessness services, which require a degree of motivation on the part of the service user either in providing personal information or in engaging with service providers to address the underlying causes of their being homeless, the Shelter places service users under no such obligation and this remains unique among homeless direct access emergency accommodation services.

It may be worth noting that in relation to the number of households in the city, Inverness has a higher proportionate number of rough sleepers compared to Aberdeen and Edinburgh.

City	Average no. Rough sleepers	Number of Households (2001 Census)	Ratio of Rough sleepers to Households
Inverness	5.5	18,231	1:3314 H/Holds
Edinburgh	27	197,413	1:7311 H/Holds
Aberdeen	13	86,382	1:6644 H/Holds

It is apparent that there will always be a significant proportion of those accessing homelessness services who, for a variety of reasons, are not at a stage in their lives where they are willing or able to engage with services to address underlying issues or root causes. For this group the Shelter provides a no-obligation service which offers a place of safety until such times as individuals are willing to take the necessary steps to "move up the ladder". In this, the Winter Shelter pilot provided an invaluable and potentially life saving service.

John Rodgers
 Director of Residential Support Services

