

Change can happen

Susie's story

Susie was born in the mid 80s. Brought up in care, she came to London in 2004. Despite much contact with services, and already addicted to drugs and with poor mental health, Susie became caught up in a cycle of dependency, crime and homelessness. Her chronic dependency made it hard for her to quit the streets and she was identified as one of the 205 group. An extended stay in an emergency shelter was finally agreed. Susie incrementally got used to being in doors and trusting people, and when a suitable move-on project was identified, Susie eventually moved into this and has now been living there for eight months and is making huge progress. Without the flexibility and availability of the emergency shelter service it is impossible to have imagined Susie making this change.

Recommendations

- Low key but personal and effective support as provided at The Lodge can enable some of the most committed rough sleepers to leave the streets and take first steps in their recovery. This model should be replicated
- A more personalised and time intensive approach, rooted in Recovery, is vital for intensive street outreach to build relationships and trust with long term rough sleepers, an essential first step to persuading them to come indoors.



St Mungo's opens doors for homeless people. Mainly based in London and the South, we provide over 100 accommodation and support projects day in, day out.

We run **emergency services** – including street outreach and emergency shelters. We support homeless people in their **recovery** – opening the door to health care, and getting more homeless people into lasting new homes and training and work than any other charity. And we **prevent** homelessness through our high support housing and support teams for people at real risk.

By opening our doors, and our support services, we enable thousands of homeless and vulnerable people to change their lives for good every year.

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St Mungo's, Griffin House,
161 Hammersmith Road, London W6 8BS
Tel: 020 8762 5500
Fax: 020 8762 5501
www.mungos.org
Charity exempt from registration
I&P Society No. 20598R Housing Association No. LH0279

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LONG TERM ROUGH SLEEPERS - INNOVATION AND RECOVERY

February 2011

St Mungo's work with 'entrenched' rough sleepers

Introduction

St Mungo's challenges the idea that long term rough sleepers can't be helped. We believe they can be enabled if the right help is offered in the right way, giving long term rough sleepers the confidence to see a better future for themselves.



- In 2009-10 St Mungo's emergency shelters programme enabled 499 people to move from the streets
- Since opening in March 2010, St Mungo's innovative project The Lodge, with the City of London Corporation, has successfully housed 56 long term rough sleepers, aged 45 and above
- Mental health is a key issue when it comes to supporting most long term rough sleepers. It is best addressed through an intensive and personalised approach to street outreach, and with a recovery oriented approach.

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The Lodge at St Ursula's - a new solution

The Lodge at St Ursula's is a unique 40 bed B&B style accommodation project specifically aimed at helping older long term rough sleepers.

Supported by the CLG, Places of Change Programme and the Fresh Hope Trust, the City of London and St Mungo's have developed an alternative hotel model that allows guests more independence over their lives than a traditional hostel. It offers a warm welcoming but low key service model helping long term rough sleepers settle, and find move on options tailored to their individual needs.

- Since opening in March 2010, The Lodge has successfully housed 56 older rough sleepers, with some already moving on to more long term accommodation
- Between them, these guests previously spent a combined total of 471 years on the streets
- 30 of these rough sleepers were on the Rough Sleepers '205' initiative list, the target group of entrenched rough sleepers who have been out the longest.

Frank's story

Originally from Liverpool and a Welsh Guard in the army, when Frank's wife passed away, his life fell apart. Unable to cope, he moved to London staying briefly in B&Bs before bedding down on the streets.

Frank was in regular contact with St Mungo's outreach workers while sleeping rough. *"I was mostly on my own those days. I did a lot of walking, down by the river. I like being out in open spaces."*

He was reluctant to go into hostel accommodation, saying he didn't feel comfortable with the mix of people who might be living there, especially if some were tackling drug or alcohol problems.



Frank was offered a place in The Lodge and moved in. *"It's like paradise. I can get on with my own life but then come back here and it's quiet in my room. You can't hear a sound at night. What I want is my own place again eventually but for now, this really suits me."*

Emergency shelters - still a vital service

The availability of 'free at the point of access' accommodation for homeless people is key to helping rough sleepers, including long term, off the streets.

St Mungo's provides London with year round emergency shelters. We currently operate two shelters in north and south London that accept referrals on a 24/7 basis. Outreach teams get people indoors quickly, their basic needs are met and we help with assessment and preparation for permanent housing options.

The 205s: Success for our work with London's most entrenched rough sleepers

Within London, St Mungo's and our strategic partner Crisis have called for redoubled efforts to help the most 'entrenched' rough sleepers in London off the streets.

The Rough Sleepers '205' initiative was created in May 2009 by the Mayor's London Delivery Board as part of the work being done to end rough sleeping in the capital by the end of 2012. The project identified 205 rough sleepers who were considered a priority because they had been sleeping rough the longest.

The London Delivery Board has committed to ending rough sleeping in the capital by 2012. After a year of operation, just 45 of the 205 people initially identified as being the most long term rough sleepers remain on London's streets.

Crisis and St Mungo's, both voluntary members of the London Delivery Board, joined together to complete new research, Still Left Out?, looking at the circumstances of the 45 most entrenched rough sleepers who were still on the streets in April 2010. The research highlights how the initiative has been a success but recommends that we now need to go further with:

- New creative housing solutions that provide a wide range of support to all entrenched rough sleepers
- A better, more personalised approach to outreach across London if we are to deliver the services needed by those who remain out on the streets.

