

# Newsletter



Welcome to EHAG's update on our activities. This time I am reporting on 3 month's activities due to the Christmas break. Activities for November to January remained busy. We had extensive media coverage both on Radio Devon, Radio Five and in the Express & Echo and Western Morning News on a wide range of housing issues. The provision of emergency accommodation for young people and the need for deposit guarantee schemes were in particular highlighted.

## **NIGHTSTOP**

We welcome Mel Argent our new Young Person Outreach Worker. She will be working in partnership with St Petrocks to deliver an education workshop to secondary schools in Devon on Homelessness and prevention strategies. In addition Mel will be working with young people that stay on Nightstop to resolve their housing crisis.

Nightstop will be expanding it's service to cover Teignbridge from April this year. We look forward to welcoming new volunteers and working closely with Teignbridge District Council.

The activities for the project were as follows;

November: 13 referrals were received concerning 10 young people. 6 bed nights were provided to 3 young people.

Referral Area - East Devon 2

- Exeter 8
- Teignbridge 2
- Outside Devon 1

December: The project was open all over Christmas but there were no young people who needed bed nights. Overall 14 referrals were received concerning 5 young people. 10 bed nights were provided to 4 young people.

Referral Area - East Devon 0

- Exeter 8
- Mid-Devon 2
- Outside Devon 3

January: There was a significant rise in the number of referrals post-Christmas. 28 referrals were received from 13 young people. 15 bed nights were provided to 6 young people.

Referral Area - Exeter 20

- Mid-Devon 4
- Teignbridge 1
- Outside Devon 3

### **SMARTMOVE**

The Western Morning News ran a feature on the Smartmove scheme operating in Devon and Cornwall and reported on their success in accommodating people in 2006. EHAG accommodated a total of 93 people in 2006 through Smartmove. Out of this total, 52 were given deposit guarantees and 41 were accommodated without the need for a bond. This is a fantastic result for Carrie and Gill, well done.

In November Smartmove received 12 referrals and accommodated 7.

December saw 15 referrals with 4 being accommodated.

January there were 25 referrals and 7 people were accommodated.

The next Landlord's forum will be on March 15<sup>th</sup> at the X Centre 7pm where Catherine Barber from Shelter who will be talking about tenancy deposit schemes. All are welcome to attend.

### **HOUSING ADVICE**

The development of the Exeter Community Advice Service (ECAS) in partnership with Exeter CAB is continuing well. We have received a fantastic response from organisations in the City who would like to have advice surgeries at their premises. It is hoped to start the Community Advice Service in April. It will offer a combination of 4 telephone helpline sessions and 3-4 outreach surgeries each week. People will be able to obtain advice and support on housing, welfare benefits, money and debt issues. It will tackle social exclusion by offering a full language interpretation service as well as sign interpretation. If you would like an information pack please contact us on 01392 430228.

Meanwhile calls to the housing advice line were as follows:

November - 36 calls

15 were new clients out of which 6 were roofless, 3 were with family, 2 were in a hostel and 3 were moving on from accommodation. The majority of callers were seeking emergency accommodation or wanted help with deposit or rent in advance.

December - 31 calls. 22 were new clients of which 4 were roofless, 8 were in temporary accommodation, 4 were under notice to quit and 5 were already accommodated.

January - 58 calls. 42 were new clients. 13 were roofless, 17 were in temporary, 7 were under notice to quit and 6 were looking for move on.

A new client evaluation matrix has been developed to measure the longer term effect of the advice service on clients in terms of resolving their housing problem as well as their health and employability.

### **MOSS**

We sadly say goodbye to Martyn and Kate who start new jobs with Carr-Gomm. The award of the generic floating support tender to Carr-Gomm has resulted in a reduced resettlement service at EHAG. We will be offering 22 hours per week of move on support for the Devon Partnership Trust and Devon & Cornwall Probation Service. We look forward to welcoming Kate Tilley as our new Resettlement Officer.

### **GENERAL**

2006 has been a positive year for Exeter Homeless Action Group with a solid period of consolidation of our core services. Over 1500 people accessed our services last year which is a very good result. 2007 will see expansion of services to a wider geographical area as well as new developments to enhance service provision for clients.

Jacqui Gale  
Director