

# Colchester Emergency Night Shelter



[www.colchesternightshelter.org.uk](http://www.colchesternightshelter.org.uk)

## Annual report July 2014

## TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT for the year ended 31 March 2014

Registered office: Colchester Emergency Night Shelter  
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Registered Charity No: 803328

Company Registration No: 02475258

Trustees/Directors: Julie Brice – *resigned 24 September 2014*  
Marian Clegg (Secretary) – *retired 4 July 2013*  
Gordon Evans (Honorary Treasurer) – *retired 4 July 2013*  
Teresa Hall – *resigned 2 July 2014*  
Pauline Hart  
Peter Kerr (Chairman)  
Lynne McMorris – *resigned 6 March 2014*  
Sally Messenger – *appointed 20 May 2014*  
Ray Ricks – *appointed 13 March 2014*  
Julie Ward – *resigned 30 June 2014*

Co-ordinator: Pernille Petersen, MBE (*to 30 November 2013*)  
Manager Marina Woodrow (*from 1 December 2013*)

Colchester Emergency Night Shelter has received support from:

National Lottery  
Charities Board

Colchester Borough  
Council

Essex County  
Council

Lloyds TSB Foundation  
for England and Wales



## **CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION**

*Peter Kerr*

Well, here we are at the end – or is it the beginning? – of another year: and what a year it has been - a year of significant changes to just about every part of the organization.

We began with the departure of our coordinator who had held the reigns since she was closely involved in Shelter's foundation back in 1984 and had been coordinator since 1990.

Her departure led to a review of the organization and duties of various staff plus a proposed new structure with Marina taking up the new position of Manager leading a team of dedicated staff.

It has been a difficult year with no lessening of the numbers of people who knock at our door seeking respite from whatever personal situation has led to them being temporarily or, in some cases, permanently homeless. We continue in our primary aim of providing shelter and sustenance and help in getting residents back into normal living with a more secure place to live; this against a background of ever-increasing demands on local finances, both at Borough and County level (which is where our core finances come from) thus we must now rely even more on charitable donations and help from other organizations.

Marina has met the challenge with humour and fortitude and has more than justified the trust placed in her ability by the Board of Trustees. There are more changes to come, more challenges to be met in the coming year, but I and my co-Trustees have every confidence in her ability and leadership.

We have seen some other significant departures over the past twelve months, not least of which were the retirements of our Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary. Gordon and Marian have given us such an efficient and devoted level of support that it was frightening scenario to imagine a future without them! We have been lucky enough to find a replacement Treasurer – Sarah Lauwo has agreed to take up the reigns and we will formally welcome her aboard at the AGM. We still are in desperate need of an Honorary Secretary – not an unduly onerous task but necessary and a legal obligation under the Charities Acts. If anyone can help, please – PLEASE – get in touch!

Finally, we have also seen the departure of three of our Trustees: Teresa Hall, Julie Ward and Julie Brice. They have all shown themselves to be fountains of knowledge and pillars of strength and wisdom – full of ideas and providing direct hands-on help as and when needed; we shall miss all three of them very much. The Board is now reduced to just four members – just one more than the required forum for decision-making! If anybody would like to volunteer or can suggest friend/colleague/family who might be able to join us, we will be more than happy to welcome applications.

Enough from me. Welcome to all of you who have attended our AGM – please introduce yourselves to the Management team or Trustees – we will be more than happy to answer your queries.

## **MANAGER'S REPORT**

*Marina Woodrow*

What a year it has been for us all.....

It has been change all round both for me personally and for the Night Shelter. I came into post following in the footsteps of Pernille Petersen last December and it has been a challenging role to inherit. It has been difficult and rewarding in equal measure to see the Night Shelter evolve and change and make positive steps to move forward.

Towards the end of the 2013-14 financial year we started an extensive refurbishment programme which has included CCTV, UPVC windows, decorating communal areas, installing a new resident's kitchen, bathroom, shower rooms and toilets. The programme has continued into 2014-15, adding improving storage facilities, updating electrical services and renovating staff areas. This has been a

not insubstantial cost, but much of the work was necessary before renewal of our HMO licence this year.

Colchester Borough Council continue to be very supportive: Martin Hunt gave £1,750 from the Locality Budget for purchase of a new washing machine and a further award of £7,400 which has paid for some of the essential works. Also, we were selected by the Colchester Boyer Planning office as their charity of the year. To date we have received donations totalling £1,796 towards our refurbishment work, with more to come.

I would like to say a huge heartfelt thank you to staff, students and parents at Colchester High School as we were lucky enough to be selected by a majority vote to be the recipient of an enormous fund raising effort from sponsorship collected by the runners of Colchester Half Marathon. We received over £10,000, a monumental amount and without it we would have not been able to transform so many rooms of the Night Shelter. The students designed a fantastic eye catching T-shirt which the runners wore which helped raise our profile.

Funding from Colchester Borough Council has also facilitated the appointment of a new outreach worker. We are now pleased to have on board a Tenancy Sustainment Officer who will assist our residents and ensure that the transition into more independent living is a smooth and consistent one and to reduce the level of returning service users.

Looking at our figures for analysis and outcomes the figures are almost identical to last year's showing the complex and overlapping needs of our client group. Not surprising but rather worrying is the increase in the percentage of rough sleepers, by 9%, bringing us to an alarming figure of 48%. This is a reflection of the rough sleeping figures published following the count last October listing Colchester as the third highest outside of the London Boroughs.

#### RESIDENTS' RISKS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

	2013-14		2012-13	
<b>ALL RESIDENTS</b>	<b>183</b>		<b>218</b>	
Alcohol	65	36%	78	36%
Drugs	85	46%	81	37%
Mental + Emotional Health	121	66%	127	58%
Physical Health	69	38%	87	40%
Learning disabilities	40	22%	47	22%
Literacy + Numeracy	27	15%	32	15%
Offender	114	62%	138	63%
Aggression to others	46	25%	65	30%
Debts	18	10%	67	31%
Gambler	1	1%	4	2%
Rough sleeper	88	48%	83	38%
Armed forces link	13	7%	12	6%

Looking at our resettlement figures you will see an increase in the number of abandonments for long stay residents to 19% from 10% in the previous year. An increase in JSA sanctions has led to a number of abandonments due to the difficulties residents face with paying the service charges even though we do not charge residents the full cost of provision of services – these are supported by your generous donations and a welfare grant from Colchester Borough Council.

Our residents continue to be at the front of our focus and we endeavour to support them with their individual needs as best we can regardless of the difficulties and restrictions we face doing so.

**RESETTLEMENT**

*Alastair Leighton*

Despite my 4 or so years of working at the Night Shelter in various capacities stepping into the Not insignificant shoes of Marina in Dec was and in some respects continues to be a daunting prospect. Not least her seemingly encyclopaedic knowledge of welfare rights, housing law and everything else that goes into resettlement puts my limited knowledge to shame. It has and continues to be a sharp learning curve for me, but at least those 4 years have taught me to realise that nothing can be taken for granted at the Night Shelter and it’s always a challenge.

Not much has changed from last year in terms of resettlement and where Marina mentioned that 2012-13 was probably her most difficult year, austerity measures and welfare cuts have continued to bite and that trend has continued. Whilst we have not seen the sweeping changes we saw in the previous year we are still getting the knock on results from them.

RESETTLEMENT OUTCOMES	2013-14		2012-13	
	Number	percent	Number	percent
<b>All residents</b>	<b>184</b>		<b>218</b>	
Planned	84	46%	106	49%
Evicted	21	11%	33	15%
Abandoned	54	29%	55	25%
Other/unplanned	25	14%	24	11%
<b>Long stay residents 28 days+</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>42%</b>
Planned resettlement	52	63%	60	65%
Evicted	8	10%	14	15%
Abandoned	16	19%	9	10%
Excluded for safety/non engagement	4	5%	4	4%
Custody/hospital	3	4%	5	5%

Sourcing help for deposits and rent upfront is still proving to be a problem. We have had some limited success with Budgeting Loans but not nearly the numbers that once relied upon the Social Fund for Rent in Advance. For many this has meant extended stays at the Night Shelter as they wait for places to become available with supported housing providers and through the April Centre. Those that have stayed with us, been patient and engaged with resettlement have been successful eventually. Residents who were with us for 28 plus nights had a resettlement rate of 63% with a comparable figure of 65% in 2013-14.

The main foreseeable problem in the future will be the continuing contraction of the private rented sector to our client base and help available to them for advanced rent and deposits. A recent review of Colchester lettings agents gave an average deposit requirement of six weeks rent in advance, something that is simply beyond the majority of the Night Shelter clientele. The recent introduction of a new Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme (DHP) gives some hope in this regard. Managed by the Council it is however a limited fund and only runs from financial year to financial year so as the year progresses and the fund depletes it will be harder to access for a complete rent in advance.

In addition new welfare reforms regarding EEA citizens looks likely to mean that they will not be able to access our services as they will not be eligible for housing benefit as a Jobseeker.

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Sylvia Jeffock*

This is the third year of the Personal Development project and we are now looking for further funding to continue it in the future. For the past year it has been funded by the John Paul Getty Trust but this fund is now closed and we need to look elsewhere.

As ever, our residents come to us with a variety of needs. Many of them have over-lapping issues of alcohol or drug abuse, mental health issues and a history of offending as well as large gaps in their work history. Our aim continues to be to ensure that all residents are offered support to identify and address those issues and gain the social skills necessary to maintain their own tenancies once they leave the Night Shelter.

<b>Residents' Support Outcomes (All Residents)</b>		<b>2013-14</b>		<b>2012-13</b>	
		<b>Number</b>	<b>percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>percent</b>
Total number of residents:		184		218	
Residents staying more than 28 days		83	45%	92	42%
Residents with less than 7 contact days:		54	29%	64	29%
<b>SP1</b>	SUPPORTED to regain or develop skills to manage their finances, benefits or debts	179	97%	157	72%
<b>SP2</b>	ENTERED education, training or employment (including voluntary/work experience)	75	41%	110	50%
<b>SP3</b>	SUPPORTED to engage with relevant services/support networks, including community resources & facilities, peer support/self help groups	149	81%	158	72%
<b>SP4</b>	SUPPORTED to plan ahead and to manage risks as they wish/in an appropriate way	135	73%	150	69%
<b>SP5</b>	HAD/ACCESSED appropriate support to maintain or improve their physical, mental and emotional health	141	77%	130	60%

While we still signpost people to appropriate outside agencies for support we have also developed more in-house activities and training. Over the last year we have had courses run at the Night Shelter by Community Action, Signpost and Kickstart helping people to improve their health and also their work skills.

Essex County Council have kindly provided laptops for residents to use and we now have a Work Club on Friday mornings, where residents can create or update their CVs, search for jobs online, brush up on their IT skills or take advantage of some of the courses available online.

We have also encouraged residents to volunteer and get involved in community projects. We have helped to support "Colchester in Bloom" through working with Access to Nature to build planters for St Botolph's community garden and residents have also taken part in conservation work at Mersea organised by Tony Francis.

Other residents have helped with the woodwork project run at the Waiting Room by Age UK and we are looking at having an allotment which would be run by both groups. Such projects not only give residents a sense of purpose, they also help to raise the profile of the Night Shelter and its perception in the community.

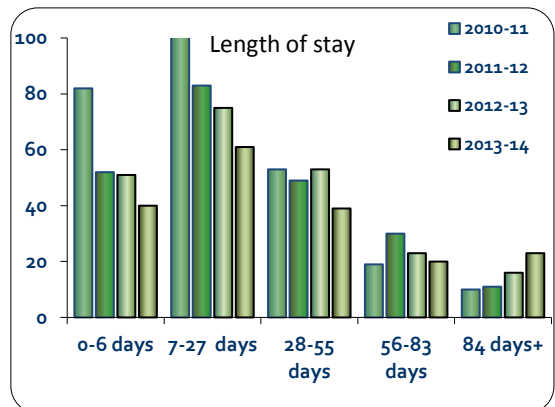
It is becoming more difficult for residents to meet the conditions for claiming Job Seekers Allowance as the government have tightened the conditions and no longer regards JSA as a long term benefit. We have worked closely with Tanya Daniels the DWP Social Justice Coach to support residents while they look for work and navigate the benefits system.

The appointment of a Tenancy Sustainment Officer gives us the opportunity to work with residents over a longer period of time. This gives us the opportunity to develop the use of the Outcome Star to track residents' progress and to introduce a 'Passport to Independence' which would give residents a series of practical steps which they could take such as registering with a doctor or obtaining suitable forms of ID as well as attending financial workshops. We also hope to take advantage of Lloyds Money for Life scheme to offer residents money management courses in-house.

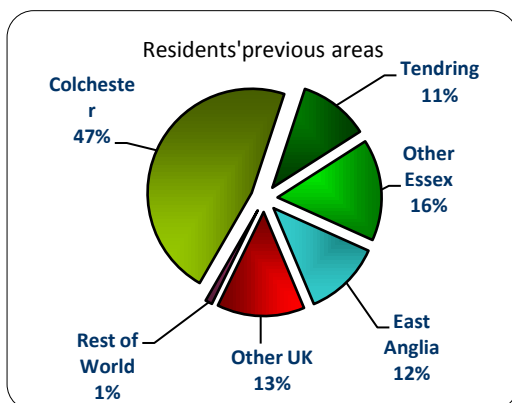
## RESIDENTS' PROFILE, 2013-14

150 male and 33 female residents were helped by the Night Shelter in 2013-14. This is considerably less than in previous years which is a reflection of how much more difficult it has become to find suitable move-on accommodation. This is the reason behind a further increase in the average length of stay for men, by 11% to 36 days. The average length of stay for women increased by a smaller amount, to 41 days, but this follows a 36% increase between 2011-12 and 2012-13.

The greatest increase was in the number of residents staying at the Night Shelter for 3 months or more. Over the past few years, this figure has fluctuated at around 6% of residents, but in 2013-14 the number staying more than 3 months increased to 23, over 12% of the total. At the other end of the spectrum, the proportion of residents leaving within a week of arrival has remained relatively stable at 22% of residents. Just under 30% of these residents were resettled in a planned way, often helped to return home or moving in with other members of their family.



Over the past three years, the number of men under the age of 25 seeking the Night Shelter's help has fallen from 71 to 31 (30% to 20% of all male residents), whilst the number young females rose from 9 to 14 (42% of all female residents).



As has become common most residents are already in Colchester or neighbouring Essex boroughs before accessing the Night Shelter but there are still generally around 15% who are referred from further afield, mainly from London or Cambridge.

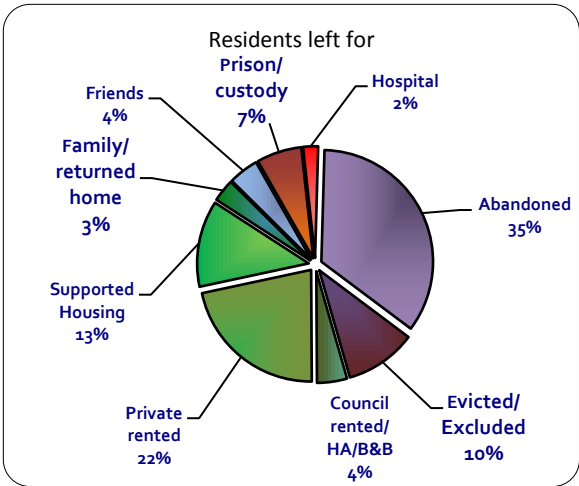
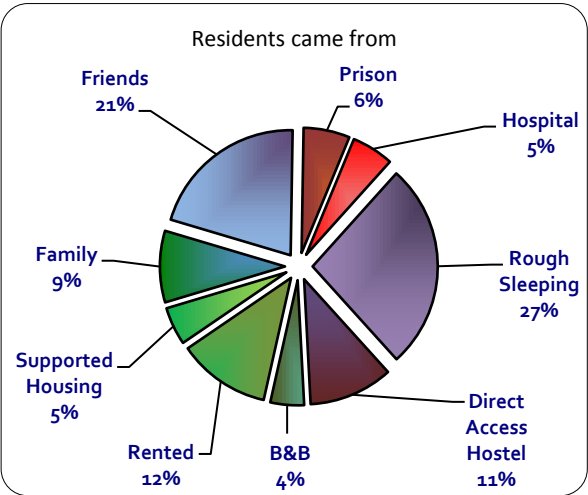
Again, there were a small but increasing number of European nationals seeking help from the Night Shelter – 18 (9%) in 2013-14 compared with 12 in the previous year.



As in previous years, just over 50% of residents self-referred. Of the rest, 22% were referred by a wide variety of voluntary organisations, 9% by hospitals or health workers and 11% by police or probation. The changing role of council housing departments can be seen in the falling level of referrals from councils – only 6% of residents, about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> from Colchester and one from each of several other Essex and Suffolk boroughs, compared to 16% 2 years ago and regularly 20% before that.

Once again, there was an increase in the number of residents being admitted directly on discharge from local hospitals or from prison because nowhere else can be found to accommodate them. Another figure for concern is that the number of residents losing private rented accommodation or leaving supported housing has increased after falling for the last few years.

There was a big drop in the percentage of residents recorded as sleeping rough before being admitted – down to 27% from 42%. – partly due to the increases noted above but also there have been increases in residents moving to the Night Shelter directly from other hostels or who have been sofa surfing and are no longer able to stay with friends. However, 48% of residents have been recorded as being rough sleepers at some time.



This year has seen a larger than usual proportion of residents abandoning the Night Shelter – ie leaving without giving any information about where they are going or not having any settled accommodation. This is partly because the numbers being successfully housed in private rented accommodation or found supported places has fallen and residents become frustrated at the length of time they are staying in temporary accommodation. That is not a reflection on the efforts of Night Shelter staff, rather in the lack of suitable available places for residents, many of whom have multiple support needs. There has also been an increase in the number being taken into custody from the Night Shelter, more than double the levels of recent years and more than the number admitted from prison. Although that isn't particularly surprising as nearly 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of residents have a history of offending.



## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEARS ENDING 31 MARCH

	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
<b>NIGHT SHELTER INCOME</b>				
Rent and Housing Benefit	£ 126,291	£ 109,735	£ 107,215	£ 102,176
Residents' Service Charges	£ 17,542	£ 17,174	£ 17,310	£ 14,906
Supporting People	£ 48,212	£ 51,607	£ 51,518	£ 52,985
Colchester Borough + Other Councils	£ 8,948	£ 5,832	£ 10,440	£ 5,606
Essex CC Drug+Alcohol Action Team	£ -	£ -	£ 18,000	£ 18,000
Lloyds TSB Foundation/JP Getty Trust	£ 22,983	£ 14,058	£ 5,458	£ -
Homeless Link (WRAP support)	£ -	£ 1,370	£ -	£ -
General Donations and Legacies	£ 19,561	£ 19,875	£ 20,197	£ 14,186
Special Donations (refurbishment)/fundraising	£ 855	£ 280	£ 18,606	£ 379
Bank interest	£ 69	£ 70	£ 64	£ 37
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 244,461</b>	<b>£ 220,001</b>	<b>£ 248,808</b>	<b>£ 208,275</b>
<b>NIGHT SHELTER EXPENDITURE</b>				
Salaries and related expenditure	£ 152,184	£ 146,502	£ 144,982	£ 133,653
Food & provisions/cleaning materials	£ 20,843	£ 22,946	£ 20,955	£ 19,234
Expenditure on residents (travel, computing, personal development activities etc)	£ 800	£ 2,053	£ 688	£ 683
Property - running costs (utilities/ replacement furniture/domestic equipment)	£ 12,010	£ 15,504	£ 14,224	£ 13,735
Property - fabric (general repairs/security)	£ 21,533	£ 22,038	£ 16,594	£ 10,179
Property - fabric+furniture (refurbishment)	£ -	£ -	£ 17,900	£ -
Insurance	£ 6,331	£ 6,207	£ 6,095	£ 6,006
Office running costs (telephones, computers, stationery etc)	£ 3,341	£ 4,863	£ 5,319	£ 4,525
Governance: Professional /Legal Fees	£ 6,025	£ 5,888	£ 10,683	£ 11,693
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 223,067</b>	<b>£ 226,001</b>	<b>£ 232,121</b>	<b>£ 195,183</b>
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT in the year</b>	<b>£ 21,394</b>	<b>-£ 6,000</b>	<b>£ 16,687</b>	<b>£ 13,092</b>
<b>RESERVES CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>£ 122,489</b>	<b>£ 101,149</b>	<b>£ 107,149</b>	<b>£ 90,462</b>
Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme: Income	£ -	£ 1,062	£ 4,892	£ 4,920
Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme: Expenditure	£ 1,060	£ 1,685	£ 2,560	£ 320
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT in the year</b>	<b>-£ 1,060</b>	<b>-£ 623</b>	<b>£ 2,332</b>	<b>£ 4,600</b>
<b>FUND AT PERIOD END</b>	<b>£ 13,112</b>	<b>£ 14,172</b>	<b>£ 14,795</b>	<b>£ 12,463</b>

The summarised accounts do not contain all the information required by law to be included in the accounts of the charity. The full accounts are filed with the Charity Commissioners and Companies House. A copy of the full accounts for the year may be obtained from the Charity Commission website or by writing to the Secretary of Colchester Emergency Night Shelter.

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