

Homelessness Awareness Week evaluation

Media Coverage

This year we had media coverage during the week from Bristol Post, BBC Radio Bristol, Bristol 24/7, BBC Points West, Made in Bristol TV, ITV Westcountry.

There was also good coverage by partner publications and websites, especially around the Cause & Complexity exhibition.

Social Media Coverage was extensive and you can get some idea of this using this link <https://twitter.com/hashtag/homelessbristol> (please note this includes posts after HAW ended).

Media coverage and social media coverage was very positive overall. There was good access to, and reporting on, the Out Reach programme and Street Link. There was more of a focus on early intervention and prevention which is not an easy message to sell to the media.

Art Exhibition

Around 325 people attended the exhibition, and during the week 27 volunteers were involved in manning it, plus 24 artists who created/exhibited/donated work.

We're particularly indebted to Roxanne Courtney & Art4Change for their initiative and enthusiasm in organising this event.

We are in agreement that art works as a medium for trying to get the message across to a wide and diverse audience. Next time it would be good to involve clients again, to help them feel part of the process.

Mirrors

We had stickers on mirrors in 3 locations the Watershed, The Galleries and Cabot Circus. There is good evidence that these were seen and noticed by a very large footfall through the week. Some of the feedback from these locations is telling :

"It was a great campaign to get behind so I'm glad we could help."

"The mirrors seem to have gone down well – every time I walked past one it seems to have someone who has stopped to read the message. I think the areas you have put them in have worked well too as they tend to be quite high footfall areas so get a lot of passing interest."

" The mirrors went down well Really happy to be part of the campaign

Landlord event

The event was held at the Bristol Energy Hub with presentations from Home Turf Lettings, Yarlinton Housing Group, Bristol City Council and Shelter followed by a question and answer session.

Feedback from attendees was that the event was very informative and something similar should be included in future homelessness awareness weeks.

Sleepout 2017

Rounding off the week, as usual, was the sponsored Sleepout at PipnJay where we had councillor Paul Smith joining the Julian Trust team and 4 green councillors and George Ferguson with The Big Issue team. Overall we estimate over £55,000 was raised by the ten teams who took part.

Partnership working

This year partner relationships were further strengthened, with key organisations working closely together. The whole week had a real collaborative feel to it, and there was a co-operative atmosphere between all agencies. Organisations involved include; Bristol City Council, Julian Trust, St Mungo's, Caring in Bristol, Shelter, CAB, Crisis Centre Ministries, Emmaus Bristol, Big Issue South West, Bristol Homeless Forum, Golden Key, Second Step, the IF Group, Keep Bristol Warm, Relate, One25, Art4Change. The week has also become the focal point for other groups who plan events to coincide with our activity.

Interesting stats

Council website : There were **427** unique visitors to the Homelessness advice web page on the Bristol City Council site. There were also **121** unique visitors to the Homelessness Awareness Week page.

StreetLink referrals : There were **100** StreetLink referrals for Bristol between Feb 18-25th and **262** for the whole of February (last year the figure for HAW was 39 and 108 for the whole month).

The average number of referrals per month in Bristol was **40** in 2015 and **124** in 2016.

Bristol Homeless Forum : During the whole of February there were **1710** views of the BristolHF website from about **800** visitors. This is twice the amount in February 2016 and many times higher than the level throughout the year.

Lessons learned

The main lesson learned seems to be that we relied heavily on a few people and organisations to make this work – both in individual time and financial support. In future events we need to look at ways to share resources better across the partnership organisations.

One idea is for an event with the Homeless Forum around September to gauge who is willing to help next year and whether this is financial or practical.

We also learned that media coverage is helped by being pro-active in providing extra access to services, being prepared to say yes; but it's also recognised that this can create extra risks to service users and caseworkers that need to be managed.