



Dear Friend

Medway Cyrenians – budget cuts and supporting local homeless people from Medway

Medway Cyrenians is a small local charity that has been working in the Medway Towns for over forty years. We provide accommodation and support to single, homeless people who find themselves without a roof over their heads. All of humanity comes through our doors, every day of the year and experience tells us that homelessness can happen to absolutely anyone. Our thirty three beds are always full and we are unable to ever meet the demand placed upon us.

Medway Council have consistently recognised our work and made a financial contribution to the work we do in the local community over many years. Our quiet, hard work has been recognised through Pride in Medway awards in the last two consecutive years. The Medway Council Supporting People Strategy 2010-2013 states that “In reality the Supporting People Programme has made a very positive difference to more than 60 per cent of people who use short stay services. Even these figures, however are likely to be an underestimation the total move to greater independence is likely to have been much higher.” The success stories of Medway Cyrenians clients are also cited in the document. We are fearful that the situation may be about to change and are seeking your support to help keep our current services intact and continue our work in the local area.

The press announcements in respect of the latest Medway Council budget cuts indicate the potential for a substantial adverse effect on the charity’s income, the clients we support and local community we serve. In a cabinet report published on 7 Feb 2012, the council indicated that the fund which supports our work is to be slashed by over fifty per cent in the coming year and that the remainder will be redirected away from services to local homeless people. National research states that for every £1 spent on Supporting People funding at least £2.12 is saved on other public services.

Cuts to our funding over the previous two years have already led to staff redundancies and restricted our ways of working with this group. If we are subject to further cuts it is inevitable that the positive, life-enhancing work we do with vulnerable and often very young homeless people of Medway will suffer. The value of our work to the wider community in terms of reduced unemployment, greater crime prevention and less antisocial behaviour will also be greatly affected.

I invite you to help us protect our vital services by using your influence to reverse Medway Council’s proposal, due for decision on 23rd February 2012. No-one is immune from relationship breakdown or unemployment, especially in the current UK climate, and these are the major factors that result in someone becoming homeless. The reverse of this letter outlines some recent client’s stories. Every local voice will count, so please use yours to help ensure that Medway Cyrenians can continue our vital work in the local community. For more about our work, please visit our website - www.medwaycyrenians.org.uk or contact the CEO or a Director for more details.

If you also would like to make a donation to Medway Cyrenians, we would also be pleased to hear from you. A contribution of 85p from everyone in Medway would cover our support costs for a whole year!

Yours sincerely

Karen Hurley
(Chief Executive)

Jenny Dvorak (Chair)
Jo Murdoch-Goodwin (Director)

Jim Gilbourne (Treasurer)
Ross White (Director)

Lisa Townend (Secretary)
John Norley (Director)

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Registered in England at the above address. Registered Charity Number 1037970. Company Number 02897827

RECENT MEDWAY CYRENIANS CASE STUDIES

- 52 year old white grandmother, school worker, victim of a hit and run driver (who was never caught), resulting in head and other long-term injuries. Series of events relating to the accident led to family breakdown and to her eventual rough sleeping in a derelict caravan in local woods, with no support in respect of her disabilities. Medway Cyrenians accommodated this lady, has slowly rebuilt her confidence, (she was too frightened to leave the building again at first) and ensured she receives help from occupational health services. She has renewed her family relationships, has things in place to help with her short-term memory problems and is well on the way to recovery.
- 54 year old quiet, white British male, previously working full time in a low waged manual job. Could not read and write, so had avoided dealing with letters requesting information relating to his housing benefits. This led to his eviction, as considerable debts had built up without his knowledge – this eventually brought him to our door. The gentleman was also suffering considerable mental health issues brought on by his father's concurrent terminal illness. Medway Cyrenians staff developed his confidence to address his debt issues, which he has paid off without fail, supported him when his father eventually passed away and helped him attend classes to deal with his literacy problems. This gentleman is now able to read and write, enjoying IT lessons, managing his mental health better and working again.
- Very pleasant 17/18 year old white female, social services involvement as a child (due to parental neglect and drug/alcohol abuse). Had been living with close relatives but house severely overcrowded which was impacting on her younger siblings. To ensure her siblings well-being, she came to us to help her sort out some independent housing and full-time work. We were able to help with teaching her how to write a CV, get a job and manage a tight budget. This young lady saved small amounts every week until she was able to move to a flat of her own. She continues to work and help her grandparents care for her younger siblings. She has developed a social network of positive friends who have helped her regain the confidence lost in her childhood. We do not expect to see her again.
- 24 year old black British male, living on the street, following release from prison for a violent offence and drug dealing. His family had understandably disowned him because of his criminal lifestyle. He was homeless, penniless, workless and had no stable relationships or support. He said what he wanted most was to 'be like everyone else again and start being a decent father to his baby son'. He was given intensive, non-judgmental support by Medway Cyrenians staff, which built up his confidence to take one step at a time in the right direction. As his confidence grew, he began to take up training opportunities, passed his driving test and eventually becoming a City and Guilds qualified plumber. He is now living back in the community, working, being a good role model to his son who he supports financially and is leading a crime-free life. We do not expect to see him again.
- 19 year old female, very troubled childhood and difficult adolescence, referred to us by a youth charity. Family relationship completely broken down, sleeping on friends floors having experienced several evictions. A very angry and isolated young lady with an eating disorder that was seriously impacting on her health. She took up training at college whilst with us, gained control of her eating disorder and became less agitated generally. After leaving college she gained employment locally and is now a retail manager with her own flat and a good career ahead of her. Her relationship with her father is back on track and she has a long-term boyfriend.



THE COST OF HOMELESSNESS TO THE STATE

As well as the social, psychological and physical toll that homelessness has on people, there are a range of financial costs; failed tenancies; health and substance misuse problems and increased contact with A&E departments; involvement with the police and criminal justice system (homeless people are often at more risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system and being victims of crime); prolonged unemployment and costs of welfare benefits and economic inactivity.

There are a number of reports which calculate the cost to the state of homeless individuals:

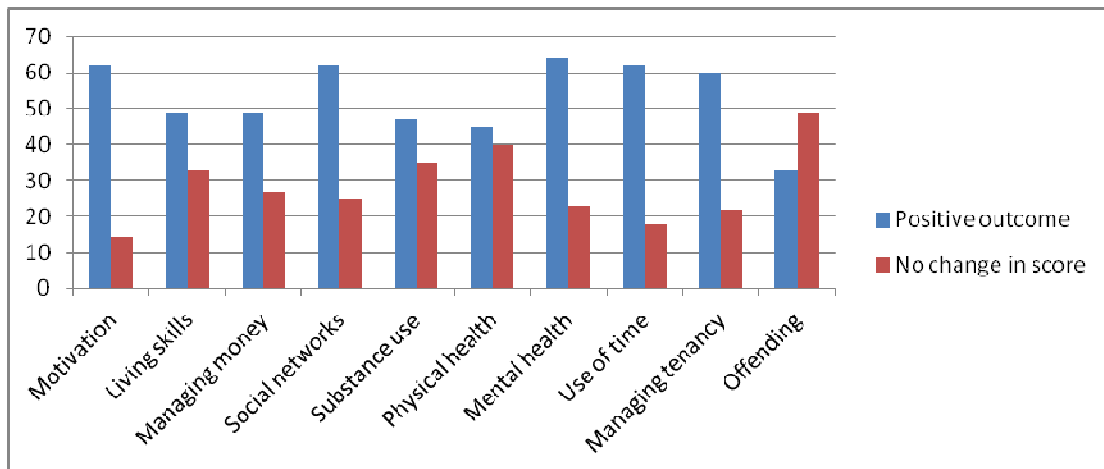
New Economics Foundation (2008) indicated an annual cost to the state of **£26,000** for each homeless person. This figure included the cost of benefits, hostel accommodation, and care of children.

The MEAM Manifesto (2009) contains sample costs of support for a male rough sleeper as **£24,350** (hospital costs £150; drug treatment £3,000; medication £400; day centre services £1,800; and accommodation and support £19,000).



A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY FEB '11 – FEB '12

We use an independent nationally recognised tool, called Outcome STAR, to measure the impact of our support services on the individuals who live with us. The chart below shows how clients have moved towards independent living during their stay. This may be in respect of managing their money better, addressing their misuse of drugs or alcohol, improving their general physical and mental health, becoming better tenants and/or keeping away from criminal behaviour. All issues which have a social and financial impact on the wider local community.



MEDWAY CYRENIANS FINANCES

There is absolutely no unnecessary indirect expenditure at Medway Cyrenians. The charity employs 14 local people. Eleven employees work directly with clients – see the charts for our outstanding results. The whole charity is run by a full-time CEO and two part-time workers from a small office in Rainham. Medway Cyrenians has also successfully set up two apprenticeships this year for two previously unemployed local young people. Every penny we receive is spent wisely – check out our finances at Charity Commission website Reg'd Charity No. 1037970

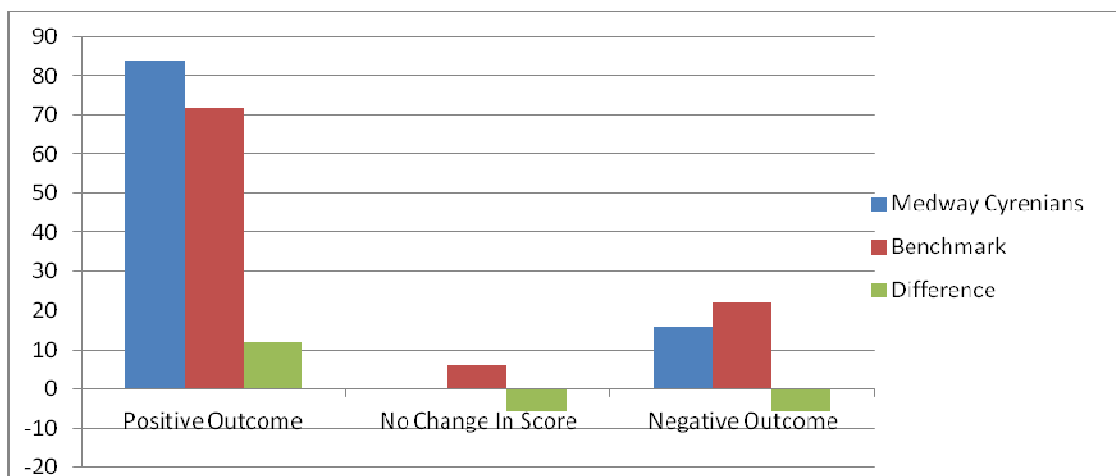


HOW WE WORK WITH SINGLE, HOMELESS PEOPLE

Medway Cyrenians uniquely uses a 'pathways' services model across four residential projects, with clients progressing through them according to support needs. They can 'try out' increasing levels of independence with the option to return to higher support projects if they find themselves struggling. This model has proved that it can reduced incidents of repeat homelessness as clients who return to higher levels of support are not deemed to have 'failed' but to have helped themselves avoid a further period homelessness brought on by eviction or abandonment. Clients who have succeeded through our services rarely return to the streets for a further period of homelessness, instead becoming active and engaged local citizens making a contribution to the Medway community.



COMPARE US INDEPENDENTLY TO OTHER SIMILAR UK SERVICES FEB'11 – FEB'12



The Outcome STAR independently benchmarks Medway Cyrenians against other organisations, some much larger, for the impact of our support work. The benchmark above used records from 12011 single, homeless people across the country. Medway Cyrenians works with a maximum of 48 clients at any one time. Our results are consistently this impressive!

Medway Cyrenians

- achieved 12% higher than national average positive outcomes
- 6% fewer negative outcomes
- 6% more 'stable' outcomes (meaning people haven't slipped back into negative behaviours).

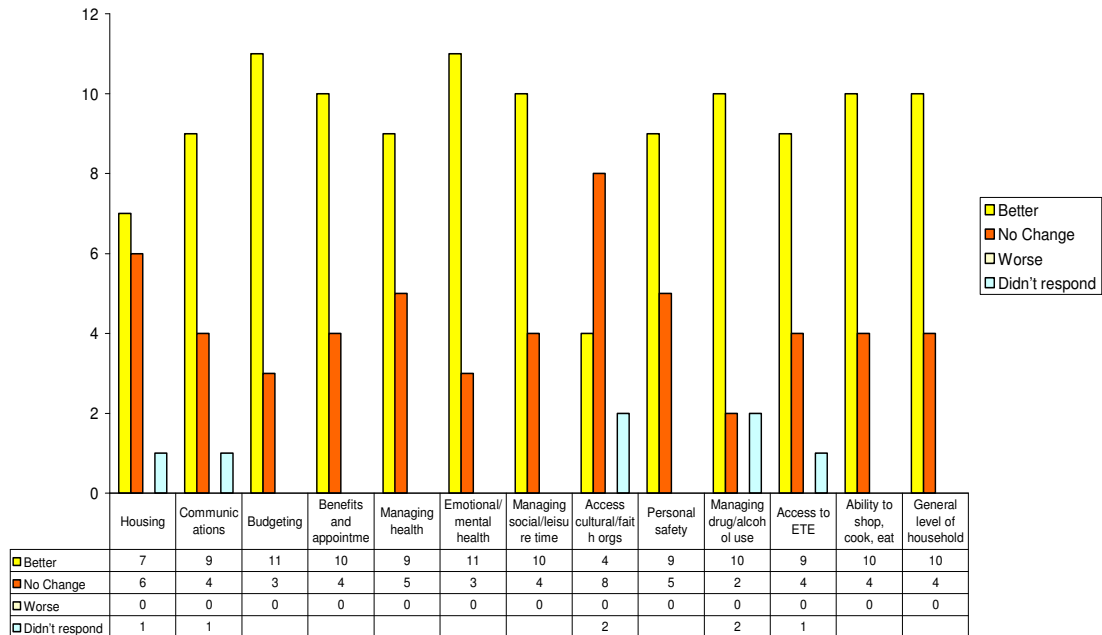


MEDWAY CYRENIANS
HELPING MEDWAY HOMELESSNESS PEOPLE
EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR FOR OVER FORTY YEARS



WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE FROM US

Impact of Support



WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE OF LIVING AT A MEDWAY CYRENIANS SERVICE

“I feel safe surrounded by friendly people. Getting help with problems and helping me get ready to be dependant and get my own flat soon”

“The best thing is just having a roof over my head with staff who are very helpful”

“I think staff are very welcoming and very friendly”

“My key worker has helped me get past a hard time - she is a great help”

“They’ve helped me get my life back together”

“The best thing is having an address so I can work”

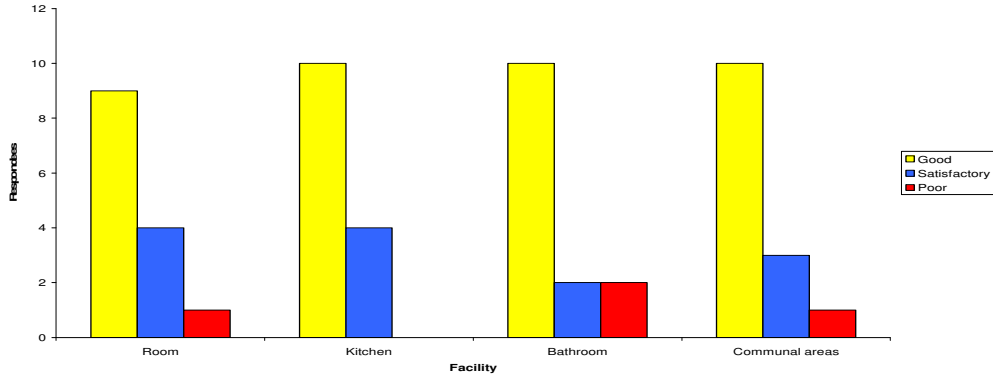


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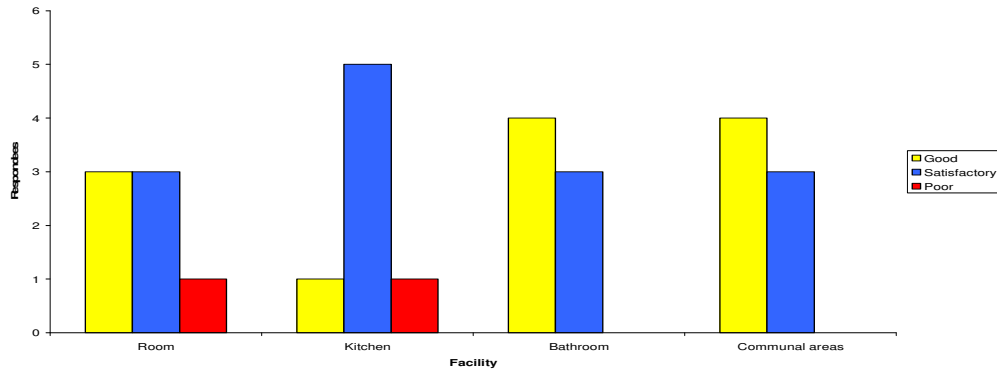


WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY ABOUT THE STANDARD OF ACCOMMODATION

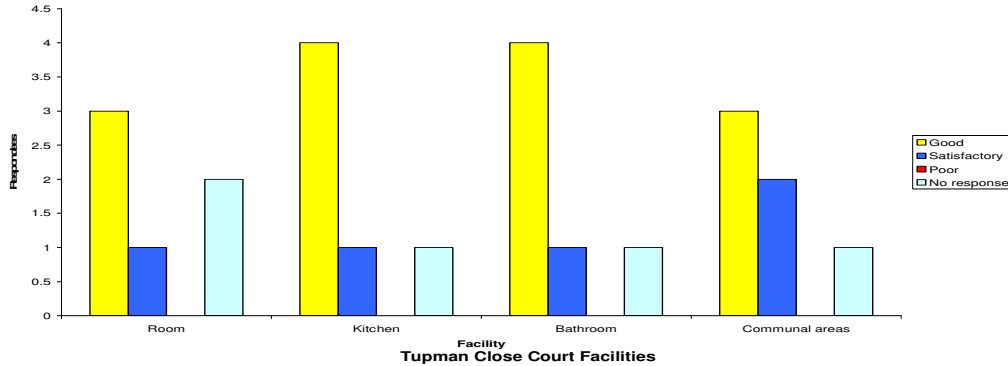
Pier Road Facilities



Hamond House Facilities



Mount View Court Facilities



Tupman Close Court Facilities

