

October 2011

Dear supporter

Homeless people in Wales need your support this Christmas

In December Huggard holds a sleepout in Cardiff to raise money for our work with homeless and vulnerable people. We are extremely grateful for the support that has been offered in previous years by individuals, businesses, schools, universities, colleges and Church groups.

We invite you to join us this year on Friday 2nd December.

In the last year we have been working to redevelop our facilities into homelessness services that are second to none across the UK. During this time we have been relocated in Custom House but our doors have remained open to those who need our services the most in Cardiff. Many have travelled from across Wales and further afield to be in this Capital City. We see over 18,500 visits a year to our centre. 40% of those accessing our services are under the age of 25.

In the last year we have seen a 50% rise in the number of people accessing our emergency overnight shelter who would otherwise be forced to sleep rough on the streets of Cardiff.

Although we see an increasing number of young people accessing our services, our clients do not fit into a clear stereotype as each has their own background and story. Some have suffered abuse; some have experienced relationship breakdown or the death of a loved one; some have severe physical or mental health problems; some have alcohol or drug dependencies; some have been drawn into street crime and prostitution as a means to survive. Whatever their story, all Huggard clients are vulnerable and suffer from extreme social exclusion.

We know that this is often a difficult cycle to break. We see our role as being there to welcome, engage, support, nurture and develop people out of homelessness. We provide a range of services, development opportunities and accommodation to help people to achieve this.

Perhaps the ethos of our work is best expressed by Darren T Atkins, one of Huggard's service users who writes;

"Being homeless does not need to stop you from doing what you want in life. Look at me, I am homeless but that don't stop me from writing short stories about being homeless. If you want a new skill, go and learn it, 'coz being homeless don't stop you from learning that skill. I want to be a writer. I'm homeless, I have the time to put pen to paper. Being homeless has meant that I have made friends with a lot of people and I got support that I would never have got before. I have respect and my pride now. There's people who pull themselves down 'coz they've lost everything, their home, family and job. But you can have that again if you want it. You don't need to stay homeless forever."

A few hours of your time can help us ensure that our facilities continue to be available to help people like Darren. Why not be a part of our annual sleepout and give homeless and vulnerable people the support they need?

For those who are able to do so, we meet behind Marks and Spencer in Cathedral Walk about 9pm. Soup and hot drinks will be provided. If you are not able to join us there, you could also take part by organising your own 'sleepout' in your school or community hall, or you can simply make a donation for the privilege of sleeping that night in the comfort of your own bed.

We will very much appreciate any level of involvement in this event that you are able to undertake or organise.

Should you wish to take part, or if you would like someone from our centre to come and talk to a group, please let me know. I would be very pleased to answer any questions that you may have.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Richard Edwards
Chief Executive