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“We believe that everyone needs a little help sometimes and with trust, respect and honesty people can make incredible changes.” SMART CJS Values

This report has been produced by SMART CJS. For more information visit www.smartcjs.org.uk
Foreword from the Chair of Trustees

The Board of Trustees of SMART CJS manages the assets that have been set aside for the benefit of others in the communities we work, live and feel connected to in England. We have been making an impact and helping others since 1997, mainly in Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire. We lead the oversight of the charity and decide how it is best run. Being a trustee means making decisions that impact on people’s lives and the ability to support them through difficult periods. Those decisions also have an impact on the towns and cities we operate in and the work we offer, as well as skills we are looking for from employees and volunteers. Along with the staff of SMART, we are making a huge difference to local communities and to society as a whole. Our main areas of specialism are Homelessness and Substance Misuse, and to a lesser extent, Domestic Abuse.

Funded by donations and grants from Local Authorities, SMART is pleased to have made a difference to the numbers of rough sleepers in Bedfordshire in 2018. This has been achieved, working in collaboration with Borough Councils, other agencies and voluntary organisations. Our day facility, The Prebend Centre, Bedford, for those needing support (food, shelter, clothing, showers and medical/housing/benefits advice) is entirely funded by donations from individuals and corporates, which means we live on a knife edge of uncertainty as this source of income is solely down to the support and goodwill of people.

Supporting the national drugs and alcohol crisis, our residential detox service in Oxford (Howard House) continues to go from strength to strength, with the latest CQC report from November 2018 demonstrating this with a “Good” rating applied across all five categories of assessment. Our Wokingham day support service is amongst the best in its category in the country, as rated by Public Health England, and has a proven track record.

This report documents the success we have had this year and the impact on people’s lives through statistics and case studies. I commend it to you and I am extremely pleased by the results achieved in the last year. Thank you to everyone who has played a part in this: we are making a difference!

Dave Rawcliffe
Chair of the Board

“We are making a difference”
Introduction from our CEO

“The purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better.” Robert F. Kennedy

The purpose of SMART CJS is to make things better for others: To Help People to Help Themselves and I am proud to be its CEO.

The organisation has been through many iterations and changes since its inception in 1997. And today it is a vibrant and responsive charity, focusing on the big issues of our time: substance misuse and homelessness. As the Chair of Trustees notes, the damage and heartbreak caused by these continue to be present in our cities and towns and therefore is still an urgent focus for our efforts and resources.

Through telling people’s personal stories and providing statistics, I hope that this brings alive the importance of the work that we do and the real need for Local Authority, Corporate and individual citizens supporting our services through funding and donations.

In the league table of rough sleeping, Bedford comes seventh in England in terms of the severity of the problem*. We are fortunate to have excellent relationships in the community, with the Borough Council and with other voluntary organisations working in the space, like Kings Arms and Emmaus. Rough sleeper counts revealed the impact that SMART (along with other agencies) had made amounted to a reduction of a third** year on year. A fantastic result and a tangible demonstration of real progress with this issue.

*Source: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-46181001

**Source https://www.bedfordtoday.co.uk/news/rough-sleeping-in-bedford-the-work-continues-to-support-those-in-need-1-8796081
Our approach to drugs and alcohol support is endorsed by the regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), with inspections and feedback placing our residential service in Oxford, SMART Howard House, as “Good” across all its measures in 2018. This external endorsement is repeated at SMART Wokingham with the Public Health England (PHE) rating us 6th in alcohol treatment summary rank (2016/17) and 2nd in the drug treatment summary rank. We are delivering quality services which are highly rated and valued by service users and meeting (or exceeding) standards set by inspectors in England. We are blessed with supportive and proactive commissioners in Oxford and Wokingham who hold us to account, but also recognise the pressures and realities of operating in a difficult environment with some of the most challenging casework.

The focus for SMART in 2019 and beyond is one of consolidation and continued change. We, like other charities, are affected by external influences like changes to the benefits system and the increasing cost of certain prescribed medications used in the treatment of addiction. In our quest for sustainability and a level income stream, we run a mixed economy of commissioned and fund raised services. Cuts to public funding and changes to the propensity to donate are factors which will affect our trajectory going forward. We are going into the future with eyes wide open, with a renewed vigour and intent to support and help as many people as we can in the areas we work.

Thank you to staff, volunteers and Trustees for all their dedication and hard work in delivering the breadth and quality of work that we do. Thanks to our individual and corporate sponsors who provide essential funds and supplies to keep our services running.

You make SMART what it is: a successful organisation looking forward to its next 20 years of making things better.

Anita McCallum, CEO of SMART CJS.

“We are going into the future with eyes wide open, with a renewed vigour and intent to support and help as many people as we can in the areas we work.”
Our **vision** is to transform our communities so that every person has the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential, participate in and contribute to all aspects of life.

Our **mission** is to provide safe spaces to work with vulnerable people within our communities, empowering them to make positive changes and take control of their lives.
“helping people to help themselves”
A snapshot of 2018

We helped more than 2900 people across Wokingham, Oxford, Bedford and Milton Keynes with issues of substance misuse, homelessness and domestic abuse.

34 Full-time employees
18 Part-time employees
42 regular volunteers
>100 one-off volunteers
17 fundraisers

565 Referrals into services
1877 Young people helped
1023 Adults helped
3653 Interventions delivered
980 structured groups held

3 new services opened
Successfully re-tendered 2 contracts
Integrated housing management into residential detoxification service
5 major fundraising events
Online support

Our website contains advice, tools and resources for professionals and members of the public.

155,144 website views during 2018.

For the second year ‘screening and assessment tools for professionals’ was the most viewed page, seen 28,330 times.

Help for families and friends – 5,412 views.

Help for professionals – 2,506.

Get help to cut down safely – 2,212.

Help with my alcohol use – 2,105.

Get Support – 1,903.

Where to get support – 1,732.

Tools and information – 1,697.

Stats from Goggle Analytics

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<thead>
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<td>20. Tools &amp; Information - SMART.</td>
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0118 977 2022
“Reading about how to get help was the first step to calling SMART” Janice, SMART Wokingham Client 2018

779 documents were downloaded
SMART works within a legal framework to ensure it is governed safely and appropriately. We are registered with the Charities Commission; find out more by visiting the Charity Commission website.

**Clinical governance** is at the heart of high quality service provision. We benchmark our practice against industry standards such as NICE Guidelines and Public Health England recommendations. Our clinical governance framework is supported by our Clinical Governance committee through a system of standards and audits assured by our Medical Director.

Our **Human Resources** (HR) policies are audited by external HR consultants, ensuring they are compliant with legislation. Our Performance and Development processes enable us to monitor staff development and ensure all staff are working toward the correct standards as agreed at induction and annually. We regularly audit our workforce using our own organisational audit tools.

In order to maintain a safe environment for staff and our service users, each Department has a qualified **Health and Safety** representative. Our Health and Safety Policies and Procedures are audited annually by a designated ‘Competent Person’.

We have **robust accounting systems**, controlled internally, with strict procedures in place. Our accounts and systems are audited annually by an independent accountant.

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**Governance & Quality**

SMART's Quality Manager and CEO monitor compliance with industry standards by ongoing review and organisational audits. We are committed to improving quality throughout the charity.
Our Trustees

Our Trustees ensure oversight of the charity within our Board of Trustees that meets every quarter. They are volunteers who give of their time and energy to provide scrutiny and support for the charity, without whom we could not operate.

Current board members include* Dave Rawcliffe (Chair), Shahin Bekhradnia, Fergus Crombie, Ralph Dennison, Richard Thomas and Chantal Thomas.

Chantal Thomas is one of SMART’s most recent recruits to the Board of Trustees, joining in 2018. She brings with her deep experience of Property Law and is currently a Legal Counsel at Belron International, which trades in the UK as Autoglass®, where she specialises in commercial property and employment matters. Chantal is also a Non-Executive Director at Sharnbrook Academy Federation MAT. With this and her role at SMART, she is very committed to supporting the community in which she lives and works, and relishes the variety that this brings her.

*Correct February 2019.
Our People

Our employees and volunteers offer an enormous range of disciplines to vulnerable clients, many of whom have multiple needs.

“I feel privileged to have my role as Residential Keyworker at SMART Howard House for many reasons. I know myself just how hard it is to go through treatment and that it is impossible to do without the right support.

The team I have joined are amazing, and not only do they all care about the residents but also each other. The project isn’t just about providing a detox but is also a stable therapeutic environment for residents to start addressing the real issues. It’s fantastic to be a part of something that I know becomes the beginning of a new life for some.

I personally benefit from working here as I often leave, positively reflective and grateful, something that most people don’t have when leaving the workplace.

The work done at SHH can be challenging for residents and staff but there is a consistent drive to help people in positive ways.”


“I first encountered SMART as a client back in 2009. After successful treatment I was encouraged to become a volunteer. I completed lots of training and was lucky to be mentored by some amazing people.

I was supported to become a Drugs Intervention Worker and progressed to SMART’s Harm Reduction Lead, then Sex Worker Lead and Care Co-ordinator and in 2018 I became the Deputy Manager of SMART Wokingham.

I have always felt a close connection to SMART because of the support I received as a client. I love working with my team and am passionate about helping others.”

Tina Hayday, SMART Wokingham Deputy Manager.
Drug & Alcohol Services

Over 20 years of delivering innovative and client centred drug and alcohol services to meet the needs of our communities.

“Despite an ever-changing landscape within the sector we continue to deliver safe and effective services. We must remain flexible and adaptive in our approach, however.”

Dr Alastair Reid, Medical Director, SMART CJS.
In 2016/17, illicit drug use in the last 12 months among adults in England & Wales amounted to around 1 in 12; it’s a lower level than 10 years ago when the figure was one in ten, but still a significant problem as over 2,500 deaths in England and Wales were related to drug misuse. This is an increase of 5 per cent on 2015 and 58% higher than in 2006. The stark reality is that deaths related to drug misuse are at their highest level since comparable records began in 1993*. This means a huge drain and demand on the NHS as well as lives wasted, families and relationships wrecked, often without reaching their full potential.

According to data from February 2018, 31% of men and 16% of women drank at a level indicating increased or higher risk of harm (more than 14 units per week), with those aged 55-64 the most likely to be drinking at higher or increasing risk levels**. Thus, there are many people living with alcohol addiction issues, some managing to hold down employment and keep relationships intact, and others not.


SMART Howard House

SMART Howard House is a unique, publically funded, 10 bed residential drug and alcohol detoxification service for residents of Oxfordshire. The project opened in 2010 and is named after our long standing Trustee, Mike Howard.

Residents stay for up to 14 weeks to complete a medically supported detoxification, during which time they receive support, motivation and guidance from dedicated workers, therapists, and medical professionals.

In addition to intensive and specialist one-to-one support, residents participate in a broad range of evidence based interactive groups to achieve abstinence from the substances which had led them to the house. The programme also helps residents to set goals to improve living skills, health and wellbeing, self-esteem and confidence.

The team have excellent relationships with local community partners offering referral clinics in local treatment hubs and working closely with the community treatment partner, to increase referrals into the project, to reduce fears and dispel myths about detox and residential treatment.

With the support of professional partners, all residents are able to explore volunteering and employment opportunities post discharge. Once treatment is complete many residents are prepared for longer term residential rehabilitation, to address the underlying issues of addiction, whilst others move on to supported community housing with the assistance of our local authority funded housing partner.
“I came here a broken person, mentally unstable, physically weak, emotionally bankrupt and dead inside. It had been 20 years since I had been free of addiction to drugs and I could not see a way out of the madness I was living in. SMART Howard House was a small ray of light from where I was shown a way out of the hell I was living in.

I was given hope that there was help for someone like me, by people like me. I have had a lot of problems to deal with whilst here (more than most) and I have had unconditional support and guidance. I couldn’t have asked for more.” John, SMART Howard House resident 2018.

John stayed at SMART Howard House for 12 weeks and successfully completed detox. He participated in a variety of psychosocial groups and one-to-one activities, including motivation for change, anxiety awareness, mindfulness, yoga and art.
"Staff at SMART Howard House have been unwavering in their support to me and my peers during my time here. They are unbelievably committed to doing a job and working with people who are vulnerable, chaotic and challenging. I can’t believe how they do it! I have felt so included – not something I expected. I have been nurtured and cared for in a way no gratitude or ‘thank you’ will ever be able to express – but THANK YOU!" Denise, SMART Howard House Resident 2018.

Resident 2018
63% were male with an average age of 40yrs
37% were female with an average age of 41yrs

Primary Drug
53% heroin
42% alcohol
13% diazepam
3% cocaine
+ 89% used a secondary drug, 69% used a tertiary drug

Age Profile
3% aged 18–25
29% aged 26–35
45% aged 36–45
21% aged 46+

"I have felt so included"
SMART Howard House Outcomes 2018

72% of residents successfully completed treatment

61% reintegrated to the community

39% went on to Residential Treatment

“Aspire has worked successfully in partnership with Howard House for some years now. There have been many success stories... One resident started off volunteering with us and eventually moved into paid employment, he is now a Team Leader on our social enterprises.” Christine Rolls - Project Manager for Through the Gate Service, Aspire, Oxford.
SMART Howard House

260 structured groups were held during 2018 covering topics for building motivation, developing life skills and preventing further substance misuse.

More than structured treatment

- 42 art therapy groups
- 42 yoga classes
- 44 mindfulness sessions
- 24 relaxation classes
- 23 complimentary therapies sessions held onsite for residents
- 42 visits to gym & pool
- 40 recreational activities included Laser Quest, cinema and local walks
- 39 residents sought support with giving up smoking
- 28 smoking cessation sessions held
- 4 residents gave up smoking
SMART Howard House achieved an overall rating of good after an independent inspection by the health and adult social care inspectors, CQC. In their report the CQC said “SMART Howard House was clean and welcoming. All clients had comprehensive, holistic recovery plans in place and there were clear policies and procedures in place to ensure that treatment was delivered safely. The service had strong links with community services to help ensure that clients were well prepared before starting treatment and that they would be supported once they were discharged. Staff morale was high and staff were well supported by their managers. Clients gave very positive feedback about the support they received from staff. Staff treated clients with kindness, dignity and respect.” Care Quality Commission, 2018.

“Clients gave very positive feedback”
SMART Wokingham

SMART Wokingham is a commissioned community treatment service helping adults and young people of Wokingham who are affected by drug and alcohol use.

Adults are able to access a broad range of evidenced based interventions including one-to-one psychosocial support, counselling, group sessions and clinical services to reduce alcohol and opiate dependency and problematic substance use.

Referrals are received from the NHS and partner services, with the highest number of referrals being made by individuals themselves. 61% of all referrals during 2018 were self-referrals.

346 adult referrals in 2018

- 55% used alcohol as a primary drug
- 24% used opiates as a primary drug
- 21% used other drugs

“We strive to make the service a community whereby those who attend are at the centre of everything we do. We help people to make positive changes in a safe and welcoming space, with respect, empathy and a non-judgemental approach to their problems.”  
Jacqui Fitzgerald – SMART Wokingham Service Manager.
A Brief Intervention for Mark

“I had always been a social drinker. Following the death of my wife, I found that I was using alcohol as a crutch to cope. My alcohol consumption increased until I was drinking several cans of beer every day. My daughters became increasingly worried about me and suggested I come to SMART.”

Mark completed a six week course of extended brief interventions. We helped him to learn how to cope without using alcohol. He has been abstinent from alcohol since. He found that replacing drinking with hobbies was really beneficial to his mental health and now attends the gym several times a week. He also finds it very helpful to plan his week ahead of time – a relapse prevention strategy championed by SMART. Mark still has an active social life, and finds that drinking 0% ABV beer when he goes out is an effective substitute for alcohol. Mark stated that “SMART worked marvellously” and the strategies he learned “worked out really well”.

“Over the past month, when finally cleaning out my wife’s possessions, I felt vulnerable to relapse. I phoned SMART and was offered support promptly as a client. My Recovery Worker is currently working with me on relapse prevention strategies and is supporting me with resources to explore bereavement counselling.” Mark, SMART Wokingham client, 2018-2019.
During 2018 SMART Wokingham supported 370 adults

- 65% were male
- 35% were female

- 48% asked for support to reduce or cease problematic alcohol use
- 34% needed help with opiate dependency
- 10% wanted support to reduce or stop using cocaine
- 8% accessed support for other drugs

SMART Recovery Workers delivered:

- 1701 evidence based one-to-one interventions
- 1053 clinical interventions
- 236 interactive groups
- 130 drop-ins for members of the public to get help
Reducing harm and saving lives

SMART Wokingham offers a needle exchange, Naloxone and substitute prescribing, alongside interventions and practices to reduce the harm associated with the use of psychoactive drugs.

The needle exchange provides clients access to clean needles and safe disposal of used needles, reducing the transmission of blood-borne viruses. Clients can receive advice on safer injecting, condoms and discuss ways to get help to stop using drugs or switch to non-injecting methods. SMART workers and nurses are also able to supply Naloxone and offer sexual and general health advice.

On average, thirty eight people die every week in England and Wales from opioid overdose.* Naloxone, available at SMART Wokingham, is a medication which can be used to save lives by reversing the effects of an opiate overdose.

“The primary purpose of a needle and syringe exchange program is to reduce the overall prevalence of blood-borne viruses (primarily HIV and Hepatitis C) in a community. Because rates of these diseases are highest among IV drug users, controlling spread among this population helps prevent overall increase in the community. Source www.yfhnpartners.org

Source https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/deathsrelatedtodrugpoisoningbyselectedsubstances
Clinical support to overcome addiction

SMART Wokingham’s nurse and doctors offer a range of services to assist clients to reduce and cease drug and alcohol use. These include community-based alcohol detoxification, health and wellbeing groups, substitute opiate prescribing and liaising with other healthcare providers and agencies.

“All new clients receive a health and well-being check where we discuss their physical, mental and sexual health. I am able to test for Hepatitis B and C, and HIV and work closely with local doctors and professional partners to ensure each person gets the support they need.” Frances Bensley SMART, Wokingham Substance Misuse Nurse.

129 substitute opiate prescribing clinics were held during 2018, where specialist doctors and SMART workers offered more than 1500 appointments.

“Substitute prescribing provides an opportunity for service users to access medical support in the community to overcome opiate addiction. Weekly clinics allow our doctors to monitor the health and wellbeing of the individual and to evaluate the success of treatment. These sessions also afford SMART workers the time to provide vital psychosocial interventions to help people to reduce and stop opiate use.” Dr Ward, Specialist Prescribing Doctor at SMART Wokingham.
In 2018 Public Health England (PHE) ranked drug and alcohol treatment services across similar Local Authorities and nationally. SMART Wokingham scored very highly.

The rating is based on 4 areas of performance, all with equal weighting:

- Successful Completions
- Waiting Times
- Deaths in Treatment
- Proportion of opiate users not in treatment – unmet need

Source: https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/topic/public-health-dashboard
WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO SMART WOKINGHAM?
Referral from Royal Berkshires Hospital and my GP because of my health.

WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE BEFORE YOU CAME?
I was very unhappy. Drinking 3 bottles wine a day at its peak and feeling totally out of control.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES DURING YOUR TIME AT SMART?
At first things were not improving as I was stuck in an addictive cycle. But, working with SMART helped me change my thinking and slowly I have recovered.

WHAT HAS CHANGED?
I have now been completely sober for 6 months and I will not drink again. SMART has helped me change my relationship with alcohol and I understand it will never help me, it will only affect my health and my personal life.

WHAT IS LIFE LIKE NOW?
100% better. I still feel anxious from time to time, with some guilt about how I was before but I am much more sociable. I can go out more with family and friends, not drink and know they trust me which feels great.

HOW DID SMART HELP YOU?
SMART has been excellent in helping me with my recovery. I have had an excellent relationship with SMART and my Recovery Support Worker. Everyone has been so very understanding and supportive.
Pat

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO SMART WOKINGHAM?
My GP recommended SMART to me.

WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE BEFORE YOU CAME?
I was a vodka drinker, 35 units of alcohol a day. Life was very awful, chaotic. I felt very lonely, and isolated. Paranoid with negative thoughts. Going round and round in circles.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES DURING YOUR TIME AT SMART?
All the way through recovery – trying to stop drinking but I went to SMART and they supported me.

WHAT HAS CHANGED?
I am now sober and see things very differently. I do not drink anymore, I do not need to and that makes a huge difference.

WHAT IS LIFE LIKE NOW?
A lot better. I can look forward to my daughters upcoming wedding. I am also a grandmother now and the fact I no longer drink has regained some trust with my family.

HOW DID SMART HELP YOU?
SMART has helped in every possible way. I have embraced everything SMART has to offer: Alcohol Group; Mindfulness; Relapse Prevention; Anxiety Group and 1:1’s. It has changed my whole outlook on life.
The most recently published NHS research (2016), reported 24 percent of pupils stated they had ever taken drugs. This compares to 15 percent in 2014. The likelihood of having ever taken drugs increased with age, from 11 percent of 11 year olds to 37 percent of 15 year olds*.

SMART Wokingham’s Young Persons Service has evolved significantly during 2018. Young people who have problems with drugs and alcohol, or are affected by the substance use of another person are supported by a dedicated worker who offers one-to-one advice and guidance. SMART Wokingham also educates young people and parents by delivering workshops at local schools and attending parents evenings to share information regarding local drug trends and provide interventions that parents can use at home. These interactive sessions also offer a discrete referral pathway into the service.

“Prevention, early intervention and harm reduction are key in helping young people to develop healthier thinking and behaviours regarding substance use and sexual health.” Kendall Gilmore, SMART Wokingham Young Persons Worker.

43 young people were referred in 2018 – (18 years and under)

39 young people were supported one-to-one during 2018

1838 students were reached at school

“We work to provide each student with an understanding of how drugs affect both health and wellbeing, the law and how it could impact upon the students ability to go to University, find employment or travel abroad. We also help build resilience and self-esteem in a meaningful way.” Kelly-Mae Pitcher, SMART Wokingham Young Persons Worker.

The students always learn so much during SMART workshops. Knowing the facts about drugs and alcohol helps to keep our young adults safe. Jo Bhadye, Head of Year 8, Maiden Erleigh School.

SMART have been instrumental in the success of the new 6 week Positive Pathways project. They have provided students the opportunity to learn, in a 45 minute workshop, about the physical and mental effects of substance misuse of the human body and all the students have engaged excellently with the workshop that has been delivered. The SMART workers have made the workshops fun for the students to take part in and the students have had access to equipment such as the beer goggles. It is clear from the students intervention packs that they have taken a lot of information from the workshops. Paul Brown, Premier League Kicks Coordinator, Reading Football Club.
Supporting Substance Affected Families Everyday (SSAFE)

Sadly, there are young people who struggle every day, both academically and in their own family lives, because a parent is misusing alcohol and/ or other drugs.

SMART Wokingham received 30+ SSAFE referrals from social services, the Families team and schools over the last 12 months where a young person (the youngest was 5 years old and the average is 11) has been affected and needed targeted support from SSAFE. This number continues to rise as the service gains traction with other professionals.

"Using a wide variety of age appropriate resources such as drawing/colouring, Play Doh and simple images to gauge feelings we identify what makes them happy, what frightens them and where they feel the most safe. SSAFE also helps the young person see that it is not their behaviour causing the problems they face. We work closely with the family and professional services to build a safety plan for the young person so they can live in a more stable environment.” Kendall Gilmore, SMART Wokingham Young Persons Worker

16 young people engaged in the SSAFE programme during 2018
At least 320,000 people are homeless in Britain, according to research by the housing charity, Shelter. This amounts to a year-on-year increase (2017/18) of 13,000, a 4% rise, despite pledges to tackle the problem. The estimate suggests that nationally one in 200 people are homeless.

The national charity for homeless people in the UK, Crisis, said the true number of those sleeping rough in England was far greater than official figures, placing the number sleeping rough in England at over 8,000.
Through a strong relationship with Bedford Borough Council and successful partnership working, SMART’s Bedford Services have grown significantly throughout 2018. Currently comprising of a Homeless Day Centre, an Outreach Team and a Winter Night Shelter.
SMART CJS, as part of a multi-agency approach, has played a crucial role in improving the provision for homeless people in Bedford. Their innovative and inclusive partnership working is making a significant impact across the Borough. Dave Hodgeson, Mayor of Bedford.
Rough sleepers in Bedford have decreased by 33% between Autumn 2017 to Autumn 2018.

Bedford has achieved the 8th biggest reduction in rough sleeping across the country & has moved out of the top 10 for highest number of Rough sleepers for the first time in over 5 years.

The SMART Prebend Centre, Bedford, is open from 9am – 12noon, 365 days of the year offering homeless adults a safe space to access the basics that we all take for granted, such as hot meals, phones, internet, medical advice and showers. SMART workers assist users of the service to make plans to tackle their current problems by working alongside professional partners and other charitable services. The centre is not funded by government and relies entirely on kind donations and grants.

“The SMART Prebend Centre and Rough Sleeper Outreach Team work together; to relieve rough sleeping and to prevent further homelessness.”
Lisa Harrison, SMART Area Manager.
“The SMART Prebend Centre provides a vital and excellent service for the community in Bedford. The compassionate team support some of our most vulnerable people who would otherwise be truly lost. Whenever I visit I always find the service to be well organised and very friendly – like a family. Luigi Reale, Bedford Borough Councillor, Castle Ward.”
494 unique individuals attended the SMART Prebend Centre 10,981 times and took 2024 showers.

81% were male, 19% were female.

60% of Service Users were White British, aged 36 – 45 yrs, 18% Eastern European and 22% other ethnicities.

900 one-to-one interventions were delivered including benefits advice, signposting to housing, drug and alcohol advice, mental health support, sexual health guidance and housing advice.

On average 26 assessments were completed each month so that service users can receive the best support and care.

3000 items of clothing were provided.

More than 200 emergency food packs issued.

Served 11,894 lunches.

More than 9000 breakfasts eaten.

Service Users had access to a registered nurse 2 times a week and regular access to a mental health professional on site.
Since SMART moved into the Prebend Day Centre in 2017 there has been a major increase in Partnership and community engagement between the staff, service users and wider community. The team have worked hard to build trust with the local community, who are now starting to see the centre as part of the solution to local antisocial behaviour, where in the past it had been viewed as part of the problem. Sarah Stevens, Specialist Community Safety Officer, Bedford Borough Council.
“I returned to Bedford to help care for a sick family member, who I was staying with whilst I was here. Unfortunately, my family member passed away and I found myself homeless.

I was rough sleeping in Bedford for about two weeks before going to the local night shelter. During this time, I started to go to the SMART Prebend Centre for support.

My support worker nominated me for a BPHA property that had become available and this was successful – I was offered the property.

Unintentionally, I was housed in the same part of the town in which I grew up, which was difficult for me. With the help of my key worker I moved in a few days later; my worker helped me to make all the necessary arrangements and assisted me in completing all of the paperwork. This support is ongoing and helps me to sustain the property.

I have been in my new home for six weeks now and I have started volunteering with the night shelter doing some light ground work in their garden. I feel like I am rebuilding my life.”
“When I started working as a volunteer at the Day Centre, I was immediately struck by a prevailing impression of companionship, and this remains as my abiding take on this remarkable place: There is a feeling of unity and fellowship that exists not only within the community of service users but extends to the team of professionals and volunteers that work there every single day of the year, come rain or shine.

“It is great that the wide range of services offered at the Day Centre, including a hot lunch, advice on how to fill in forms and the opportunity to talk to a qualified nurse or simply take a hot shower, are not taken for granted by our clients. In return, service users are treated with respect and dignity and are encouraged to do all that they can to help themselves on their road to a better life.

“I have worked from home as a self-employed antiques valuer for nearly twenty years. I love my job, but I missed the comradery that comes from working with other people, so it’s good to be part of a team again.

“If you are also interested in doing some voluntary work, you might like to consider joining that team as well!”

David Fletcher, SMART Prebend Centre Volunteer.
“Through my involvement with the Rotary Club of Bedford Castle I was introduced to the work carried out at the Prebend Day Centre. This is such a vital asset to our town and the services provided on a daily basis at the centre together with the longer term guidance and support are so important to Bedford.

When president of the club, SMART were one of my chosen charities for the year and I continue to support them through the club and on a personal basis.”

Charles Codrington, President of The Rotary Club of Bedford Castle during 2018.
The Bedford Initiatives Team (BIT) help those who are rough sleeping in Bedford to tackle the problems that led to their homelessness and create plans for a brighter future. The multidisciplinary outreach team work closely with rough sleepers forming supportive relationships with people who have otherwise lost trust, and have often been excluded from other services.

The BIT works in partnership with local professional partners and housing providers in Bedford, but in particular with Bedford Borough Council (BBC), The Kings Arms Project, The Salvation Army and bpha (Housing Association).

The service is funded by the recent successful award to Bedford from the MHCLG (Ministry of Housing) to Bedford Borough Council to support the Government’s commitment to ending homelessness by 2027.

BIT provides verification of all rough sleeper reports in Bedford.
Clear goals for BIT to support rough sleepers in Bedford

1. Work with those currently rough sleeping to relieve their homelessness, by finding them support for the complexity of issues they face and assist them into accommodation.

2. Work longer term with those housed via the outreach services in Bedford to provide tenancy sustainment and prevent further rough sleeping and homelessness in the future.

3. During the winter months of Nov 2018-March 2019 provide 20 dormitory style bed spaces for any rough sleeper engaged with the outreach services in Bedford.
More than sourcing accommodation for rough sleepers

Since Bedford Initiatives began in September 2019, **12 people have been housed** through our team’s partnership work with bpha and continue to be supported to maintain their accommodation.

“Bedford Initiatives was brought into existence as a new project in Bedford, as a result of Bedford Borough Council’s successful bid in applying for Central Government Funds (released as a result of the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018). The plan, set out by the government, aims to reduce, and eventually **eradicate homelessness entirely**. Much work is already in place in Bedford across other agencies, however this new funding placed more emphasis on the continuing support offered beyond the point of accommodation being obtained, enabling the person to sustain their tenancy more effectively.

“Our team of 6 caseworkers in Bedford, work with people who are rough sleeping, or at risk of rough sleeping. For those already rough sleeping, support is offered to **improve the wellbeing of the person**, and help them access and engage with other complex needs support as needed.

“Common Issues include, but are not limited to: financial issues, mental health, substance misuse, physical health & mobility, social isolation and exploitation. Our caseworker’s will work with the individual, on their goals and at their own pace, with the hope and aim of supporting them into **suitable accommodation**.

“Once in accommodation, the caseworker’s continue to support the individual to set the property up as a home, alongside continuing to support the person accessing other agencies. Tenancy sustainment work continues thereafter for as long as is required to help the individual have all they need to move into a more stable and healthier lifestyle, including maintaining the accommodation, finances, future volunteering and/or work prospects.”

**Jen Robus, SMART Bedford Services Manager**
Winter night beds

In Autumn 2018, SMART were successful in gaining not only Bedford Initiatives, but also in providing a winter night provision that extended beyond the normal Severe Emergency Weather Protocol (SWEP). The project runs from 1st November 2018 – 31st March 2019.

The night provision began by offering 10 beds each night for those sleeping rough, therefore improving their safety and wellbeing over the cold winter period. Referrals for these spaces were allocated through our own, and our partner organisation outreach teams to ensure access for those most in need.

In November, further funding was secured to increase the number of bed spaces to 20 each night. With the increase of bed space, we were able to relax our referral protocol, allowing a wider range of people access to the spaces.

The aim of the beds is to allow a safe, warm space for homeless people to have a hot meal, sleep for the night and have breakfast before being able to access the SMART Prebend Centre and its facilities from 8am.

Based on the last official count (31st January 2108) more than 50% of rough sleepers in Bedford have accessed the winter night beds for emergency shelter*.

Due to the early success of the winter beds the project beds were increased from 10 to 20 in early December.

*% calculated between November and December 2018.
The overall aim of the Milton Keynes Initiatives is in line with Bedford Initiatives: to help those who are rough sleeping in Milton Keynes to tackle the problems that led to their homelessness and create plans for a brighter future. The highly skilled outreach team work closely with rough sleepers forming supportive relationships with people who have otherwise lost trust, and have often been excluded from other services.

The initiatives team works in partnership with local professional partners and housing providers in Milton Keynes but in particular with Milton Keynes County Council and Connexions.

The service is funded by the recent successful award to Milton Keynes from the MHCLG (Ministry of Housing) to support the government’s commitment to ending homelessness by 2027.
Clear goals for Milton Keynes Initiative to support rough sleepers

1. Work with those currently rough sleeping to relieve their homelessness, by finding them support for the complexity of issues they face and assist them into accommodation.

2. Work longer term with those housed via the outreach services in Milton Keynes to provide tenancy sustainment to those individuals who do not meet the requirements of the housing first pathway and prevent further rough sleeping and homelessness in the future.

3. Support and coordinate the reconnections pathway and services for any individuals looking to relocate back to their county/ country of origin.
Meaningful support and successful outcomes

Since project inception (14th November 2018) through to 31st January 2019 the team have:

Received **82 rough sleeper referrals** from partner agencies

Delivered **341 interventions** including:
- Access to **housing** advice
- Mental and physical **health** advice and care
- Support to access **medical** services
- Assistance with completion of **documentation**
- **Substance misuse** advice, support and signposting
- Accompaniment to **important appointments**

Supported **44 rough sleepers** to:
- Move into **temporary accommodation**
- Access **emergency accommodation**
- Gain **long term accommodation**

Issued **20 new home starter packs** including bedding, cleaning products and food.

Provided more than **200 food parcels**
Jim is a 58 year old male who had been street homeless for approximately 8 years when I first met him. He’d been in accommodation previously, but both times he had lost the tenancy and been evicted due to rent arrears, and anti-social behaviour. He was alcohol dependant, and had been for a long time. He had poor diet and hygiene and was well known to the community police and street wardens. His pitch where he slept was outside the main train station and he would beg daily. He got into fights on a very regular basis.

My first contact with Jim was during a walk in April to see who was at the station after a phone call from the Street warden. I spoke with him, but he was reluctant to talk about himself. I continued to visit him regularly and over several weeks we built up a good relationship. He allowed me to take him clean clothes, and to buy him some food. He told me a little about his life but said he was full of shame about some decisions he had made in the past. He said he had been in prison, and had caused a lot of hurt to people he cared about. Jim seemed to believe that he didn’t deserve anything better in life. He said he also felt let down by services who promised to help him but then didn’t. We talked about his expectations, and what was actually possible for me to do.

One morning I had a voice message on my phone from Jim saying that he was ready for more support, and would I help him to find accommodation. I went to see Jim and we headed straight to the council offices; he was placed in emergency accommodation overnight. The following day, I supported Jim to go back to the council to sign up for accommodation. The studio flat provided was empty, so I contacted a local charity who said they would be able to supply him with some furniture. While we were at the flat, we got the electric working so he had hot water. That day Jim received a call from a local hostel offering him a bed, we explained the situation and they wished him luck.

The next morning, I received a call from the street warden to say that Jim was back outside the train station and very distressed. I went to see him straight away, and he said that he that he was scared of not coping at the flat. We discussed his concerns and then contacted the hostel to see if the room was still available. I explained what had happened, and that having spent a night on his own, Jim would be better with daily ongoing support to build his confidence and for him to adjust to living in his own accommodation. They were really understanding, and agreed that he could move in that day. I supported him to move that afternoon.

There have been a few small setbacks along the way, but Jim continues to live at the hostel, and has been there for over 3 months now. He has reduced his drinking, and is adjusting to a more settled way of life. He has been back in touch with his family and has visited his Mum. I occasionally see Jim out and about, and it is a pleasure to see how well he is doing, and to know that, by working in partnership with other services, SMART has been a positive part of his ongoing journey.

Written by Cassie Robus - Reconnection Worker, MK Initiatives.
Funding

Not all of SMART’s projects are commissioned and funded by government. Although each commissioned location is allocated money to provide set services, unforeseen changes in the market can often mean that additional funding is required to continue to deliver high levels of care. It is therefore vital that we continue to create additional streams of income so that we can respond to unpredicted circumstances and events – we are committed to doing this.

“With ever decreasing Local Authority budgets, it is more important than ever to create services that are self sufficient and to do this we must continue our efforts to find passionate supporters, donors and sponsors.”
Anita McCallum, SMART CJS CEO

The SMART Prebend Centre receives no government funding*, the project is entirely self-funded. The centre costs more than £250,000 a year to operate and relies entirely on the generosity and good will of our communities and stakeholders.

*Correct February 2019.
Fundraising

2018 saw the official launch of SMART’s new digital fundraising platform, leading to:

- More than doubling online donations from £8,000 in 2017 to £19,400 in 2018
- More than tripling the number of individual donors from 94 in 2017 to 374 in 2018 and
- An increase in regular monthly donors from 1.6% of online donations in 2017 to 24.6% in 2018

5 key fundraising events were held during 2018, which helped to collect much needed money:

1. SMART Howard House Sponsored Walk
2. SMART Wokingham Colour Rush
3. SMART Prebend Centre Superhero Bike Ride
4. SMART Prebend Centre Dinner Dance
5. SMART Prebend Centre Christmas Relief In Bedford Appeal

Circa £75,000 raised

100+ local groups and national corporations and 400+ individual supporters donated or took part in fundraising

49 employees and volunteers participated in fundraising events
Our fundraising heroes

17 individuals gave up their time and energy during 2018 to organise fundraising activities from sleep outs to Santa runs, cake bakes to Christmas Jumper days.

“I live in Bedford and can see the difficulty people are having on the streets. Also my colleague has been touched personally by the support your centre provides. I hope the money raised will help to make a difference to those who really need it over the winter months.” Karl Fedyk

“No matter how many layers I put on, I just couldn’t get warm. I’m glad that I have the weekend to recover, but I cannot understand how people are able to cope more than one night sleeping on the streets. The event has really opened my eyes to how difficult it is to function without warmth and shelter.” Haydn van Weenan

“As I love running, I decided to do a Santa run with my dogs. I setup a fundraising page on the SMART website and started to promote it. We had a fab time on the day with lots of encouragement from other runners and walkers in the park who were keen to know why I was doing it!” Teresa Moxham

Individual fundraising efforts during 2018 raised over £6000
WITH THANKS

We would like to thank staff members, volunteers, and stakeholders for sharing their time, stories and faces to help produce this year’s Impact Report.

We would also like to give heartfelt thanks to all individuals and organisations who have generously donated in support of our work.
For more information about:

SMART – [www.smartcjs.org.uk](http://www.smartcjs.org.uk)

To make a donation visit to support our work visit: [www.smartcjs.charitycheckout.co.uk/profile](http://www.smartcjs.charitycheckout.co.uk/profile)