It is generally accepted that delivering a tenancy support service to formerly homeless substance users is highly specialised. Often, such service users are regarded as too difficult for most mainstream services. The service users of the Handel Street Tenancy Support team receive specialised support in securing and keeping a tenancy of their own, settling into the local community and managing their substance use. Eight service users and three members of staff were interviewed using a semi-structured schedule. The findings from the service users provided the framework for the staff interview schedule. Some basic demographics were collected about the service users. From the research findings presented here, the Handel Street Tenancy Support team success lies in providing specialised support which enables service users to maintain their tenancies, manage their substance use and address a range of other issues from health and training to family contact.

Tenancy support for substance users:
A study of the Handel Street Tenancy Support Team

A research report by Rachel Harding, Natasher Lafond and Neil Stillwell
Tenancy support for substance users:

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The information in this publication is accurate and correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication.
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Summary of the research

The research was to evaluate the Handel Street Tenancy Support team in delivering a service to substance using service users.

Eight service users and three members of staff were interviewed using semi-structured qualitative methods.

Some basic demographics were collected about the service users at the time of the interviews about their age, gender, ethnicity, the length of time they had been supported in their own tenancy by Handel Street Tenancy Support team, the length of time they had been homeless before being housed with support from Handel Street Tenancy Support team and the total number of previous tenancies.

Quarterly monitoring information was analysed for the year October 2005 to September 2006.

It was found that tenancies were maintained because of the team’s support and expertise.

All of the service users interviewed were substance users and most had made positive progress in managing their substance use.

Service users’ health generally improved since receiving support and addressing their substance use.

Budgeting was seen as a support priority, and managing bills was often new to service users.

Independence and activities were important, as were training opportunities.

The role of Handel Street Day Centre was multi-functional: it was used to provide crisis intervention, a venue for activities and a contact point for the Tenancy Support Team’s drop-in. This role is to be clarified, as some service users avoid a drinking environment and substance using peers.

Service users’ contact with families was a significant and sensitive issue; staff are to be encouraged by being offered training to approach this area of support with increased confidence.
Recommendations

There are four main recommendations from the research findings:

1. The Handel Street Tenancy Support team is to continue to deliver a service that promotes the housing, health, independence, training and employment opportunities of its service users. It is a specialised team whose support for a complex population is highly effective.

2. Delivering the service is to continue to be done in a respectful and professional way that builds on the working relationship with other agencies and positively promotes the interests of service users.

3. The role of Handel Street day centre is one of crisis intervention, a venue for training opportunities and contact with service users, but also a place to refrain from visiting for service users who wished to avoid a drinking environment or substance using peers. This role could benefit from further clarification.

4. The significance of family contact was an important one for both staff and service users, and staff showed sensitivity to and awareness of the possible benefits and difficulties that such contact could bring. Staff could benefit from training to have increased confidence in promoting positive family contact for service users.
Tenancy support with substance using homeless people

Tenancy support – sometimes called tenancy sustainment or floating support – focuses on helping people keep a tenancy, particularly when they have been homeless or would risk losing their housing without support (Seal, 2005). The processes involved in tenancy sustainment are as much to do with adapting to change as helping people secure accommodation (Seal, 2005; Seal and Stretch, 1992, in Seal, 2005). In Framework, the term ‘tenancy support’ (or tenancy sustainment) is preferred because it best describes the scope of the work involved – from brief interventions to long-term support. Tenancy support responds directly to need, preventing unnecessary returns to housing crises or homelessness because the support was too short, whereas, “ ‘Floating Support’ is avoided in recognition of the fact that the service may be required on a long-term basis” (Framework 2003, p. 10).

Tenancy support with formerly homeless people who use substances, whether drugs or alcohol, has not been extensively researched (Willis, 1999; Fountain et al, 2003), yet there are clear recommendations as to why tenancy support is necessary for this social group. Referring to Kraus, 2001, Gurstein and Small (2005) argue that housing is the “cornerstone of care” for homeless people who use substances, and call for imaginative and flexible working on the part of housing providers, to prevent a return to homelessness. In a London-based study, Fountain et al (2003) found that official government statistics greatly underestimate substance use among homeless people and distort the reality of the link between homelessness and substance use, despite evidence from previous research (e.g. Fitzpatrick et al, 2000). In a study by Crane and Warnes (2003) that included Handel Street Day Centre, street drinkers in particular were associated with being too difficult to receive assistance from mainstream services, and were often “homeless or have housing-related problems” (p. viii). Willis (1999) and Rutter (1999) both write about the contribution to ending and preventing homelessness that tenancy support can make with substance using homeless people, and Matthews et al (2005) stress the importance of the tenancy support service being specialised enough to respond adequately to complex needs.
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Why the research was carried out

Framework has been providing tenancy support to substance using people with a risk of homelessness or history of homelessness, including rough sleeping, who are service users of the Handel Street day centre since 2002. Handel Street itself opened in 1991 for street drinkers and the project has since developed to address the housing, health and social needs of homeless people, particularly those who use substances and rough sleepers. Specialised support has been provided for people who have typically been service users of Handel Street, successfully applied for a tenancy and now receive help support in keeping that tenancy and settling into their local community whilst managing their substance misuse. All of the staff on the team are qualified or expected to be qualified to NVQ level 3, Practitioners Certificate in Substance Misuse. At the time of the research, all staff delivering the tenancy support service also delivered the Handel Street Day Centre service. This has since changed as of April 2006, and the staff now either work with tenancy support or at the day centre. It can be suggested that the combination of work roles at the time of the research fieldwork was unique, not only in Framework, but also in the UK. However, this is now no longer the case, and the distinction of work teams has helped develop both services separately.

Framework wanted to have an evaluation of this, the Handel Street Tenancy Support Team. In particular, evidence that the service helped people move on from homelessness and that those who use substances can be housed successfully in local communities was to be most useful. Framework was also open to the research suggesting ways of improving or revising the service, and to responding to criticisms about the team’s effectiveness.

Who carried out the research

The research team was made up of Framework’s research co-ordinator and an assistant. Both members of staff were familiar with but not employed at either Handel Street day centre or Handel Street Tenancy Support Team. The research team also included a service user of Handel Street’s Tenancy Support Team who was in an ideal position to participate because he had been involved in research before and in the recruitment of a university student to carry out a Masters in Research with Framework. At the time of the research, the service user’s own tenancy support was low-level, coming to the end of his need for continued support. The service user undertook training about boundaries and confidentiality, and signed an agreement that he had understood the research task, his particular
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role and any associated issues. De-briefing sessions were also held by the full research team part way, and then after completing the interviews. The service user’s role was in designing the research with the rest of the team, writing and finalising the questions, and carrying out the face-to-face interviewing. The interviewing itself was done either by one of the research staff or by the service user alongside one of the research staff with the service user asking the questions and leading the interview and the staff member making notes or tape-recording the conversation. Findings and recommendations were discussed initially within the research team, and then also with the staff team prior to finalising the report. The research team was supervised, managed and trained by the research co-ordinator.

How people took part in the research

The Handel Street Tenancy Support team were consulted about involving service users for interviews, and staff helped recruit people to take part. Following a service user meeting and individual key working sessions from staff, the service users were told about the research and invited to take part using a general flyer posted out to all service users (Appendix). Incentives were offered in £5.00 shopping vouchers. Using incentives is standard practice in Framework to recognise the time given by service users (Walsh, 2006; Harding, 2006; Jepson, 2005; Harding, 2005; Smith and Harding, 2005), as it is in carrying out research to increase uptake from people who might otherwise be hard to reach (Cloke et al, 2005; Ensign, 2003; Fountain et al, 2002).

There was a combination of three methods used in sampling the service users. Firstly, theoretical sampling (Henn et al, 2006; Glaser and Strauss, 1990) was used in that service users were selected on the basis of their receiving the service, and staff that they delivered it. These basic theoretical considerations then informed all interviews, to build up a picture of what difference the tenancy support team made to service users. Secondly, as the service users took part on a voluntary basis and only if they chose to respond to the invitation, convenience sampling was also used (Henn et al, 2006). The selection of the service users for interviews was not representative of all Handel Street Tenancy Support Team service users, and it was not intended to be typical. Service users who expressed an interest in taking part suggested a time and place to be interviewed – either the team’s offices, Handel Street, and in one case, a pub, and another, the service user’s own home. The interviewers would then meet with them as planned and the interview would take place. Three of the eight interviews had to be re-arranged, and in a ninth case the service user did not turn up at all. All of the interviewers were taken through an introduction, explaining the purpose of the research and asking for their signed
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consent that they agreed to take part. This was to gain their individual, informed and signed consent (Birch and Miller, 2002). The third method was collecting basic demographics about age, gender, ethnicity according to the categories of the census (NSO), the length of time they had received support in their own tenancy from Handel Street Tenancy Support team, the length of time they had been homeless before being housed with support from Handel Street Tenancy Support team and the number of previous tenancies.

Risk assessments were carried out before each interview with service users, in light of the fact that drug and alcohol use could be expected as having taken place. An interview at the team’s offices or Handel Street, while in a separate room or office, had staff to hand, and interviewers were made aware of how to make sure they had a clear exit from the room and be able to alert staff if necessary. The interview in the pub took place with the service user’s key worker to hand, and the interview in the service user’s own home took place with the key worker off the premises but available for contact via telephone, and able to return within minutes if necessary. Three of the service user interviews were carried out by the trained service user interviewer along with the assistant, one was carried out by the assistant on her own, and the remaining four were carried out by the research co-ordinator on her own. No incidents took place during the course of any service user interviews, and a full de-briefing was carried out by the research co-ordinator of the team after each interview and again once all of the interviews were complete.

Staff interviews were selected using purposive sampling (Bryman, 2004) to best answer the research questions designed for those with responsibility for delivering the tenancy sustainment service. The service manager was asked to take part, as he had worked at Handel Street for nine years as support worker, assistant manager and then manager, and overseen the start of the tenancy sustainment work. The team manager was asked to take part as she would be able to give an overview of the team’s work at the time of the fieldwork. The staff team were then asked if one of them would be willing to be interviewed as a support worker, given that they would have been key workers for a case load of service users.

Methods

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to gather the evidence. Eight service users, three staff members of the Handel Street Tenancy Support Team including the team’s assistant manager and one service manager for Direct Access and Substance Misuse were interviewed in face-to-face semi-structured interviews.
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Analysis of quarterly statistical notes and data held at Framework giving information on the work, staffing levels and numbers of service users. The figures were collected over the course of a year from October 2005 to September 2006, covering the time of the fieldwork and analysis. The figures were reproduced and included in the study with permission from the Handel Street Tenancy Support Team manager and assistant manager.

There were four stages to gathering the evidence from interviews and the monitoring figures and notes. Firstly, the team’s aims and objectives were studied and a basic list compiled of broad themes about what the Handel Street Tenancy Support team states as its main tasks. Secondly, eight service users were interviewed using a semi-structured schedule which guided them through each of the open questions, and allowed them to talk about any other subjects that were important to them. In this way, emerging themes were allowed to feature from the interview conversations (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), directly informing the remaining fieldwork. In addition, basic demographics were collected from all the service users who took part (appendix). Thirdly, three staff members (service manager for direct access, the Handel Street Tenancy Support Team manager and a Handel Street Tenancy Support Team support worker) were interviewed according to the themes which emerged from the service user interviews. Fourthly, quarterly information and notes were collated from Framework’s monitoring department, again according to the themes that had emerged from the service user interviews.

Data analysis

There were two stages to the analysis of the interviews. Firstly, and using grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), we took the results of the interviews with service users to inform the structure and analysis framework of the interviews with managers and staff. In this way, we discovered emerging themes, and deliberately allowed service users to lead by ensuring their thoughts, feelings and opinions about their experiences and lives (Arksey and Knight, 1999; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) guided the rest of the fieldwork. All of the service user interviews were transcribed, and written out in full from the recordings made or the notes taken. The full interviews of service users views and experiences were then coded according to key emerging themes, again following grounded theory. Secondly, the coded data was categorised to formulate a structure for the staff interviews. In this way, what service users said was used as the basis for gathering evidence from staff. Grounded theory was not applied to the staff transcripts, but they were coded and
analysed according to the categories established from service users in-depth interviews to manage large amounts of data (Mason, 1996).

The demographic information and statistics were analysed to present an overview of the categories, providing a basic profile of the service users who took part. The figures and notes from the quarterly monitoring were analysed by calculating a year’s mean average for the information that related closest to the findings from the interviews. The quarters covered the time October 2005 to September 2006 inclusive, and so were concurrent for a year with the time of the interviews and the bulk of the qualitative analysis.
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Findings

Housing

Service users saw the tenancy support team as their main housing resource, and often the reason for an end to their homelessness. Personal histories of homelessness included rough sleeping. Having their own tenancy was a significant contribution towards independence. There were positive referrals to the involvement of the tenancy support team, and specific mention was made of how they were helped to maintain their tenancies. Over time, service users noted an improvement in the appearance and upkeep of the property; becoming house proud was common. For many, the homes in which they currently lived were their first experience of independent living. Securing a tenancy was seen as the starting point in re-building their lives and allowing them to address other issues.

Staff talked of various ways in which they helped service users with setting up the home and maintaining it well. It was important for staff that service users were able to live in their homes with the minimum amount of difficulty. Enabling service users to live in their homes safely was also an important consideration, and this involved helping service users to keep their home for themselves, rather than having lots of others calling and causing trouble. Staff noted the contribution that tenancy support made to the prevention of homelessness, as previous attempts by service users at keeping a tenancy by themselves and without appropriate support had led to a breakdown in the tenancy, and a return to homelessness. Staff had also noticed that service users who completed their programme of support and no longer received tenancy support were able to live independently in the community.

“I wasn’t going to get re-housed by the council. I came here for help”
“I’ve got my own flat now that makes a lot of difference because my self esteem is higher than when it was when I was on the streets”
“Years ago if you came in here you’d have to wipe your feet as you went out, that’s how bad it was”
“Getting my own place cause it was a starting point”
“Got my own place and got my own life back really”

“A lot of our service users would struggle in their tenancies without our support”
“Hopefully it’s setting the targets right at the beginning”
“Helping ’em maintain security and trying to make sure that people aren’t hanging around the flat”
“I know for a fact that before this service existed there was no way that they would have maintained tenancies and the reason I know what is because they didn’t”
“The number of people that left...are now settled in the community and living OK”
Substance use

Service users were asked directly if they had a substance use problem as part of the interview. All of the service users interviewed were either current or past substance users, and they all described their substance use as being a problem. The different substance use problems disclosed included alcohol, cannabis, heroin, crack cocaine and cocaine. Details were given about the impact of substance use on their lives, any relationships and the length of time they had experienced a problem. One service user highlighted difficulties in having access to services. Most had made positive progress using a range of approaches from controlled drinking, drug and drink diaries, or medication to abstinence.

Staff aimed to provide support for service users about their substance use, whether it was to stop using, reduce the amount of use or continue to remain substance free. Reducing substance use was seen as important given the demands of keeping a tenancy on an individual financial budget for rent and bills. Arranging a community detox and helping service users access treatment were seen as part of the support worker’s role. Staff were attentive to the non-medical needs of service users who wanted to control or stop drinking, and would arrange for them to be occupied so that they were not spending their time thinking about alcohol. Staff also raised an awareness of safety issues for service users who continued their substance use. These included the safe handling of injecting equipment and returning used needles properly and responsibly.

“I've been stoned for last past five year”
“I've been on heroin and crack for ten years”
“I stayed with a bird for ten years…for eight of them I was drunk”
“It’s hard accessing the services there for drugs”
“You can see…if there’s a pattern… what makes you use”
“I've done it so many times and I've never been clean for this long and I've never done as well”

“… targeting those people who were probably going to continue to drink, who were probably going to continue to use drugs”
“People can manage a habit, if everything around them is not too chaotic and not having too much of an impact”
“You need challenge from day one substance misuse. And that’s not about saying, you can’t do that”
“…making sure that they're referred into community detox services or they're using Porchester Day unit so they’ve got something to do during the day”
“… using needle exchange programs properly. Not just, they’ve signed up for it. That they are actually making returns and they're not just chucking needles around the place, you know, a big part of a support workers job”
Health

Service users had different ways in which they measured their health. Sub stance use and its impact on health was important in that health improved with a reduction in drug or alcohol use. Three of the service users interviewed received medical intervention in reducing or stopping substance use. Simply making and keeping medical appointments was significant in maintaining good health or dealing with ongoing conditions appropriately. Personal hygiene was seen as important to health issues, and comments were made that washing became more regular once someone was settled and supported in stable housing. Body weight was also highlighted as an indicator of health in that eating properly and weight gain was an outcome of reducing substance use and being housed.

Staff spoke of how health – both physical and mental – formed part of a service user’s support plan; a health review was included in the initial assessment on entering the service. Service user’s health was promoted through encouraging access to medical advice, liaising with health professionals, organising registration with basic health services and accompaniment to first appointments if necessary. Mental health was promoted through meeting with MHST workers when necessary. Staff also noticed that service user’s mental well-being was enhanced by the contact and attentiveness of workers given that the support in itself was reassuring. Healthy living was promoted by staff through food and nutrition information, safe drug use awareness, organising walks and football, and reduced membership rates for local gyms.

“Yeah, like with my drinking I've cut right down on the drinking and that’s all under control now, and I'm on medication and everything now as well”

“I take care of my health issues now. I suffer with leg ulcers and have Hepatitis C. I make and keep appointments”

“I weighed just over six stone. And my boyfriend was just under 10 stone. I'm now 10 and a half stone and my boyfriend’s now 15 and a half stone, so we’ve put quite a lot of weight on.”

“Making sure that people are referred to GPs and are registered with GPs, Dentists”

“We'll make an appointment, we'll go with you, we'll sit in the surgery with you, we'll help you explain your problem to the doctor if you, if you need such a thing”

“Knowing that they’ve got a key worker…it just stops them worrying and that helps with the mental health a lot”

“Well we sit and we listen. We don’t talk at people, which helps in quite a way really as people then get it out, get their issues out”

“Do loads of stuff around nutrition…safe injecting…drugs awareness…first aid stuff, how to put somebody in the recovery position, so all those kind of stuff”

1 The Mental Health Support Team, base at the Hostel’s Liaison Group, offers support specifically for homeless people with mental ill-health. Although service users of Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team are not homeless in that they have their own tenancy, they are able to have access to MHST through Handel Street Day Centre if they experience mental ill-health.
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Budgeting and bills

Service users spoke of having had problems with budgeting and bills in previous tenancies. They also spoke of how managing their money was a new concept to them, and that paying bills, for example, had not been a priority. Seven out of the eight service users had established budgeting plans with their key workers; the eighth received this help from his parents. Most budgeting plans were done monthly, or more frequently if necessary. However, even with budgeting plans in place, service users could still have difficulties paying bills on time. Some spoke of their struggle to spend money on anything other than drugs. In such cases, the advocacy, support and repeated promptings from staff proved effective in paying money on time.

Staff saw budgeting as a support priority, as tenancies could be threatened or lost through not understanding or managing budgeting and bills. Staff worked to educate service users about the importance of budgeting and bills, and would highlight the consequences of non-payment. Staff were clear and honest in their interviews about what would happen if bills were not paid regularly: that without managing to budget for bills a tenancy would soon be at risk. The connection between managing money and keeping a tenancy was highlighted as crucial. All the staff mentioned budgeting plans as the tool to helping service users manage their money more effectively. They were particularly proactive in accompanying service users on initial shopping trips to assist them directly. Staff were proud of the budgeting work they did. They saw helping service users manage their money as key to the success in helping people keep their tenancies.

“I mean they’ve sort of lived on the streets and they just haven’t got a clue, and I didn’t have and I’m a hell of a lot better now”

“If you’re finding that you’re struggling with your money, they’ll sit down with you and work out everything that you have to pay”

“Basically she just keeps reminding me that my bills need to be paid”

“Now I like to be like in credit rather than debit”

“You have to start working with that as soon as somebody moves in, to make sure that the bills they need to pay are being paid; if the bills don’t get paid they will lose their tenancy. Its as simple as that”

“I’ll sit down with a budgeting plan and work out all their incomings and outgoings, and then negotiate with them gas and electric payment plans and water board payment plans help to encourage to keep them on top of their bills”

“…people will get further behind and further behind and often be threatened with eviction”

“We don’t get many people evicted. I think I can only think about one”
Independence, training and outings

Service users referred to and understood independence in different ways. Getting a tenancy was seen as key to independence, as was taking responsibility for health matters, substance use, maintaining a tenancy, even doing their own laundry. Conversely, independence was understood in terms of what would be lost if responsibility was not taken, and this was a major reason for wanting to maintain a tenancy properly. Service users were ambitious in wanting to develop their training and employment prospects; mention was made by one of volunteer work, another of wanting to train in nursing or as a carer. All of the service users mentioned the opportunities to have outings and take part in events. These included trips out with other service users, and for some, this was the only time they socialised.

Staff spoke about promoting service users’ independence through individual support plans (agreeing the priorities and processes to achieve goals in meeting need), utilising the training opportunities within Framework at AIR\(^2\) and the Academy\(^3\). All staff said that they tried to encourage service users to do things for themselves, from contacting utility companies if necessary to taking part in activities provided at Handel Street, for example. Attending monthly meetings, contributing to monthly newsletters, going out for meals and outings were also events that helped promote service users’ independence.

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2 AIR (Advice, Information and Resources) provides free advice on learning, training, volunteering and employment to homeless and vulnerably housed people in Nottinghamshire.

3 The Academy, the shared name for all Framework’s learning services, supports homeless and vulnerably housed people in Nottinghamshire to achieve goals in working towards training, employment and independence.
Service users were divided as to whether Handel Street Day Centre had a positive role in their lives, or indeed any role at all. Those who used the day centre did so frequently and for reasons that included getting a free hot meal, doing their laundry, having a safe drinking environment and meeting friends. Those who did not use the day centre gave as their primary reason that they wished to avoid the drinking activity taking place there. They also stated that they wished to avoid people they used to see in case they experienced any peer pressure from them to return to drinking or drug use again. There did appear to be a clear and individual choice made as to whether a service user would benefit from using Handel Street as a day centre.

Staff regarded Handel Street Day Centre to be the origin of support work with homeless substance users in encouraging them to move towards independent living. For current service users of the support team, the day centre had a specific role in crisis intervention and for emergencies only; access to free hot food and MHST was through the day centre. Other than this role, staff acknowledged that the day centre could be counter-productive if used by those who had past substance use and wished to avoid a similar peer group; service users were discouraged from using the day centre. However, for tenancy support service users Handel Street had two roles which sometimes conflicted: as a day centre open to all and as premises for those attending courses when the day centre had closed. As an activity base, Handel Street was the only facility available for running courses. This caused a lack of clarity: service users were expected to use the same premises for training but not as a day centre. Suitable alternative premises have been requested for service users wishing to take part in the activities and training available.

“I get a decent meal once a week and get my washing done”
“If it wasn’t for the wet centre I wouldn’t have eaten”
“I pop down to see my mates”
“I keep it at a distance because of my drug history and the people who use it”
“It has a lot of my old friends there who I used with”
“That’s why I tend to stay away from the wet centre, because of my drinking. But sure, if I want a drink I’ll go”

“I like to think that we’re fairly easy, that anyone can talk…and chat and get to know them as well”
“…day centre’s there if they have a crisis but that’s kind of about it”
“I think Handel Street day centre keeps a certain amount of people alive each year”
“There’s a doctor’s surgery…the needle exchange which is massively important…Can also get involved in the kind of, the activities and stuff that’s going on”
“We try to encourage people not to use Handel Street so much unless you’re a drinker, then the drinkers do because it’s a safe environment to meet other drinkers”
“We would not encourage our Tenancy Support clients to use it [Handel Street Day Centre]”

4 Handel Street Day Centre is also known as the Wet Centre in reference to the drinking allowed on the premises during day centre times.
Service users mentioned a number of different agencies, especially those outside Framework that were important to them and their tenancy sustainment, either directly or indirectly. Similarly, staff also mentioned other agencies, and the agencies can be grouped as follows:

- Support with substance use (The John Storer Clinic; local GPs; Compass; Newcastle House; Porchester Day Unit; the Priory Clinic; Addaction; The Health Shop; Double Impact)
- Other health agencies (The Queens Medical Centre; Occupational Therapy)
- Criminal justice (various agencies including NACRO, probation)
- Housing services (Nottingham City Council; YWCA; Framework’s Albion night shelter, Handel Street Day Centre and Sneinton Hermitage)
- Training and social assistance (Framework’s Academy, Flatpack and AIR; Social Services; Meals on Wheels)

This is by no means an exhaustive list of all the agencies involved with the Handel Street Tenancy Support team, but is of the services and agencies mentioned during the interviews.

While service users mentioned different agencies, staff also evaluated the impact that contact with such agencies made to their work. In particular, they highlighted how treatment providers give the clinical support for substance using service users which complimented the housing support work with the same individuals.
Help for and attitudes towards service users

Service users were all complimentary about the help and support they received from their key workers and the Handel Street Tenancy Support Team in general. Although this study was not measuring service user satisfaction, the positive comments are worth noting and should be included as they also contribute to the evaluation of the service. Specific incidents of help included applying for benefits, managing substance use, dealing with abusive partners and assistance with getting out and about. The team were also valued for the contact which their support work provided to service users who might otherwise feel isolated.

Service users mentioned their experiences of both positive and negative attitudes from members of the public and people they met in their everyday lives. It would seem that positive attitudes were associated with the perception of being someone who had their own home and as a result of improved appearances due to greater control of substance use. Negative attitudes were often the result of poor understanding about substance use. Sometimes anti-social and criminal behaviour occurred against service users just because they were seen as vulnerable.

Staff saw their role in helping service users as fundamental to the achievement of necessary goals, however small. Their assistance included keeping a careful track of what service users needed to do.
Families and relationships

Service users were not asked directly about their families, but this was an area that came up repeatedly. Six out of the eight service users interviewed spoke about family as being very important. They reported an increase in regular family contact as a direct result of reducing substance use and becoming more settled through tenancy support. Positive relationships with support staff and neighbours were also significant for service users.

Staff saw family contact as important, but would not actively encourage this unless invited to do so by the service user concerned. The appropriateness of the contact with family was also given careful consideration, as staff were aware of issues which could cause difficulties for either party. However, staff would support service users in maintaining positive relationships with their families wherever possible.

Staff were consistent in speaking about respect, professionalism and trust when asked about maintaining positive working relationships with service users. They recognised that without these qualities, their work with service users would be neither easy nor, perhaps, possible. Fostering a positive working relationship with service users was also dependent on the pace of work, particularly in assisting with significant changes to lifestyle and life choices. Positive relationships were seen as interconnected with building service users’ confidence and giving encouragement where necessary. In this way, service users were found to be more open to changes and entering discussions about making significant choices.

“We’ve both got back in contact with our parents. They now come down and they’re really happy, they’re really, really happy now”
“I’ve got two children as well you see and I have them every weekend now I’ve got a place”
“I get on with all the neighbours”
“They’re [support staff] very nice people you know – I don’t know what I’d do without them”

“Quite often there are reasons who people don’t see their families, children, whatever and we have to be very careful about that”
“One of the [individual assessment] interview form questions is, is there any contact with any family and that’s the only time its ever asked. Some families are very supportive and others are not”

“You need to have that open relationship that they can talk and fell that you’re going to help, support, advise and point in the right direction”

“Talking about the problems, getting open kind of discussions going…making sure you, you kind of, not doing it for them but helping them to work out the solutions really”

“its about confidence building and its also about trying, trying to encourage people”
Tenancy support for substance users: a study of the Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team

Basic demographics

The demographics collected

At the end of each service user interview, some basic demographics were collected. All of the information was volunteered by the service users, and they indicated for themselves which answers described them. The complete form used can be seen in Appendix two.

What the demographics show

Age, in years

The demographics show that the average age of the service users interviewed was just under 38 years.

Gender (male or female)

Three service users were female and five were male.

Ethnicity, according to the most up-to-date ethnic categories from the Office of National Statistics [online]

Seven of the service users identified themselves as While British and one as White Other.

The length of time they had been supported in their own tenancy by Handel Street Tenancy Support Team
The length of time supported in their own tenancy by Handel Street Tenancy Support Team ranged from 12 to 60 months ("about five years") and the average time was just over 25 months.

The length of time they had been homeless before being housed with support from Handel Street Tenancy Support Team

The length of time homeless before being housed with support from Handel Street Tenancy Support Team ranged from 0 to 132 months, with an average of just over 29 months. Two of the service users recorded 0 months or that they had not experienced homelessness, and volunteered information as to how they had come to use the Handel Street Tenancy Support service: one had been referred straight from hospital, the other had lived at home with his family. Both needed help and support to maintain their tenancies, and both had histories of substance use.

the total number of previous tenancies, either in their own name or as a joint tenancy with another person

Of the seven with previous tenancies, two of the service users had four, and six had one previous tenancy. The one service user with no previous tenancies had lived at home with his family.

The results can be seen in full in the table below (Table one).

Table one:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>age (in years)</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>ethnicity</th>
<th>length of time as TST service user (in months)</th>
<th>length of time homeless (in months)</th>
<th>number of previous tenancies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>White British</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>White Other</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quarterly information for October 2005 – October 2006

How the information was collected

Information collected for each three month or quarter period, and covering a year from October 2005 to October 2006 was also analysed. This covered the twelve month period of the length of the fieldwork, or when the research team were actually interviewing service users and staff for the study. The information had been produced by the Handel Street Tenancy Support Team, and presented on a given spreadsheet to the Quality and Monitoring Team. The Quality and Monitoring Team request a set of complete information each quarter from all of Framework’s services. They are then compiled in a report to the Service Delivery Committee and studied for any significant indications about the work and output of each service.

Which information has been used

The information presented here was selected from the complete quarterly monitoring set to include areas directly relevant to the research findings from the interviews with service users and staff. Other information was not included. The figures and NOTES of Table two show information for each quarter, and an average in the last column for the whole year.

The following information is shown:
The number of new clients per quarter – how many new service users joined the service in the three months period
Clients by the end of the quarter – the number of service users at the end of the three month period
Number of people on waiting list – how many people were waiting to become a service user but could not because the staff team were working to capacity
Average length of stay – how long each current service user stayed in the service on average; this figure included those service users who were new, those who were ongoing and those who left during the three month period
Average number of visits per week – the mean calculation of how many times a service user was visited by a support worker each week
Education/training attendees – how many service users have taken part in each training session offered
Social/leisure attendees – how many service users have taken part in each social or leisure event or outing offered
Clients’ meeting/forum attendees – how many service users have taken part in each service user meeting or forum
What the information shows

It is to be borne in mind that the figures show a snapshot average. While reliable, they do not give a complete or detailed picture, in that it is not possible to see what variations in working practices were carried out to respond to different service users needs, for example. Thus ‘average number of visits per week’ remain consistent throughout each quarter, but do not necessarily reflect the work of the team in changing the number of visits according to the amount of intervention a service user might require (see NOTES below the table). Also, the average length of stay is admittedly a crude figure that will include service users who had been receiving a service for a matter of days, those who continued receiving a service throughout the whole of the quarter, and those who completed their support during the time period. Similarly, the attendees’ figures (education/training, social/leisure, clients’ meeting/forum) show how many service users took part, when it could be that the same people attended more than one session.

However, the statistics do give a good indication of some of the work delivered to service users. They show a steady average for the number of service users by the end of each quarter and consistency in the average number of visits to each service user. There appears to be some fluctuation in the number of new service users by the end of a quarter, the number of people on a waiting list and a drop in the average length of stay for each service user. There also appears to be some fluctuation in the numbers of attendees for education/training, social/leisure and service user’s meeting/forum, although this could be explained by the seasonal events (see NOTES below the table).

The NOTES below the table give some more details about the figures being compiled. These have been taken directly from the information provided with the quarterly monitoring on being returned form the Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team to the Quality and Monitoring Team. They explain how the average number of visits per week includes differences for individual service users in meeting their changing needs, what the different sessions and events were for the education/training, social/leisure and service user’s meeting/forum, and other information about the activity promoted by staff for service users, particularly the monthly newsletter and the Handel Street Drop-In sessions.

Regarding the role of Handel Street Day Centre, it would also appear from the NOTES that the day centre was used as a point for any drop-in contact with service users at the day centre. Again, while important to provide this contact in an open and easily accessible way, it had the potential to be difficult should the service user wish to avoid a drinking environment or a substance using peer group.
Tenancy support for substance users: a study of the Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team

Table two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter:</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>total/average</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dates:</td>
<td>03/10/05 – 01/01/06</td>
<td>02/01/06 – 02/04/06</td>
<td>03/04/06 – 02/07/06</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients by end of the quarter</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of people on waiting list</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of stay in days</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average no. of visits per week</td>
<td>1 (0.743)</td>
<td>1 (0.911)</td>
<td>1 (1.002)</td>
<td>1 (0.955)</td>
<td>1 (0.903)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/training attendees</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social/leisure attendees</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients’ meeting/forum attendees</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:

Average number of visits per week to each service user (client) will vary for each service user because they would typically receive more visits when they begin their support (more than once a week), but less frequent visits towards the end of their support (once a month). Also if a staff member was away on holiday, service users do not always want another member of staff to visit in their place, and would rather go without being visited, which would bring the average figures for each quarter down.

Education and training sessions included allotment/gardening, flat pack, cooking, college for social care qualification, first aid, health and safety, IT training, cooking, carpentry, confidence building.

Social and leisure activities included day trip to Cleethorpes, narrow boat day trip, West Midlands safari park, walking in Derbyshire, social evenings, Nottingham city centre ghost walk, Christmas meal, visit to sea world, Southwell workhouse (National Trust).

Service users’ meeting or forum were monthly, except for where there has been a Christmas meal instead. Decisions taken at the monthly meeting or forum by the service users themselves included making the social evenings alcohol abstinent events (excluding those who turn up under the influence of alcohol).

Other information included having a monthly newsletter with contributions of service users poems, recording the minutes of each tenancy sustainment evening, shared peer support information and Alcohol Anonymous meetings information and times. Also recorded was the following: “Referral worker regularly has a drop-in session at Handel Street to talk/discuss with any of their service users any housing problems. All ex-service users and those on the waiting list have the opportunity to meet with a member of staff daily for any problems that may occur” (recorded as a footnote to quarter 2, 03/07/06 – 01/10/06).

__Handel Street Tenancy Support team can work with a case load of up to 36 service users__
Conclusions and action

Given the specialist role of providing tenancy sustainment for formerly homeless substance users, and the perception that such service users are difficult, it is worth explaining the task of delivering this service.

A good practice manual, written jointly by service users and staff, could help explain how to provide tenancy sustainment for formerly homeless substance users.

Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment team staff are to be encouraged in raising the area of family contact for service users as a regular support need.

Training could be offered to increase staff confidence in dealing with this sensitive issue.

Clarification of the role of Handel Street Day Centre in relation to the service delivered by the tenancy support team is needed.

A review of the relationship between the two services and how they best serve the interests of the service users could take place.
Tenancy support for substance users: a study of the Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team

Bibliography


Appendix one: information flyer

You are invited to take part in a study about Handel Street’s Tenancy Sustainment service:

*we want to know what works well to help you in your tenancy and what could be improved*

We will be interviewing Handel Street TST service users in their own homes, or at Wedgewood House. However, we won’t be able to get around everyone who is supported by Handel Street TST. If you don’t want to be interviewed, please let your support worker know, and they will make sure you are not contacted by us for an interview.

If you are OK with being interviewed, then you might receive a visit from us along with your support worker at your next key work session. There will be one interview, lasting up to an hour. You will be given a £5.00 voucher for your time.

We will be asking you about your experience of having your own tenancy, and of Handel Street TST. In answering our interview questions you may well talk about sensitive subjects such as your support needs.

The interview will be tape recorded, with your permission: if you are unhappy about this, we will still interview you anyway and make notes or remember what you say. On completing the research, all recordings will be destroyed, and please be assured that it will not be possible to identify you from the final report. The research report will be published on the Framework website and sent to funders and policy makers.

*Thank you for your interest,*
Rachel Harding (research co-ordinator),
Natasher Lafond (research assistant),
Neil Stillwell (service user participant)
Appendix two: service users interview schedule

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research study. The purpose of the study is to find out what works well and how the support delivered by the Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team can be improved.

We will be asking you about your experience of having your own tenancy, and of Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team. In answering our interview questions you may well talk about sensitive subjects such as your support needs. You are free to stop the interview at any time, and should you feel at all uncomfortable about the discussion, please contact your key worker to talk through any issues. You will also be given a £5.00 voucher for your time.

You are assured that all you tell us will be confidential: your responses will be used to help Framework learn from clients about our services and it will not be possible to identify you from the final research report. However, should you disclose information that gives us cause for concern for you or another, we will need to pass this on and will tell you why.

The research report will be published on the Framework website, and copies will be sent to staff and board members, funders and other interested parties. We will present the findings to a Tenancy Support Evening meeting and will send you a copy through the post. The research will be used as evidence of what the support team achieve, and to improve the service where necessary.
This consent form is to check that you are happy with the information that you have received, that you are aware of your rights as a participant and to confirm that you wish to take part in the study.

Please tick as appropriate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Have you been made aware of the research topic?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Have you had the opportunity to discuss the topic with the researcher?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you understand that you are free to refuse to answer any questions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the research at any time?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you understand that the researcher will use all information confidentially?*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you agree to take part in this study?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do you agree to have this interview tape recorded?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are you aware that you can contact your key worker should you be uncomfortable with any of the discussion during the research?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*In the event of information disclosed that gives us cause for concern for you or another, we will need to pass this on and will tell you why.

Signed: ________________________________

Print name: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Main lead question:
What difference does Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Service make to you?

Follow-up questions

Tenancy sustainment:
What support do you have in managing your budgeting and bills?

Emotional health:
Do you feel better now that you have your own place?

Self care:
Do you think you’re looking after yourself better now that you have support from Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Service (eating, health)?

Social integration:
Do you feel part of your neighbourhood?
What role does Handel Street Day Centre have for you now?
Do you have any support from meeting other service users?

Substance misuse:
Do you have a substance misuse problem?
Would you say that you are managing your drinking/drug use better since getting support from Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Service?
AGE (nearest year) ..............................  

GENDER (male/female) ..............................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHNICITY (as defined by client)</th>
<th>White: British</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Other</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<table>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese or other ethnic group:</td>
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</table>

Length of time supported in own tenancy by Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Service (months) .................................................................

Length of time homeless before being housed with support from Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Service (months) .................................................................

Total number of previous tenancies ..............................................................................
Some information about the researchers:

Rachel Harding is Framework’s research co-ordinator, has published studies on the Framework website, and presented findings to the board to help change services and make a positive difference to the lives of service users. Rachel has also worked with rough sleepers in Nottingham and can be contacted at Beech Avenue (0115-841-7711).

Natasher Lafond is the research assistant for this study. She has worked at London Road and 32 Bentinck Road and is a clinical researcher at Nottingham City Hospital.

Neil Stillwell is the service user participant for this study. Neil has assisted in Framework’s research with the Day Centre’s Review study, and helped in recruiting a student researcher.
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Main lead question:
What difference do you think Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Service makes to your clients?

Follow-up questions

Housing
How do you take on a new client?
How do you help your clients maintain their tenancies?

Budgeting
How important is it for you to help your clients deal with budgeting and bills?

Substance misuse:
What support do you provide around substance misuse for your clients?

Health
How do you promote the health of your clients?

Working relationship with clients
How important is it to have a positive working relationship with your clients?
How do you maintain this positive relationship?

Other agencies
How important is it to work with other agencies in supporting your clients?
How do you maintain this relationship with other agencies?

Independence
How do you empower your clients to develop their independence?

Clients’ relationships with their families
How important do you think it is for your clients to have positive relationships with their families?
How do you encourage your clients to develop positive relationships with their families?

Handel Street
What role do you think Handel Street has for your clients?
Appendix four: service user participation agreement

PARTICIPATION OUTLINE AND AGREEMENT
FOR SERVICE USER PARTICIPATION

WHAT THE RESEARCH IS ABOUT to find out how Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team supports its service users, what works well and what could be improved

THE AIM OF INVOLVING SERVICE USERS IN INTERVIEWING OTHER CLIENTS is to be empowering: it is hopefully beneficial for clients to speak with other service users who have been through the same sort of experiences than just with members of staff who might have never been homeless

ALL SERVICE USERS ARE TO BE GIVEN THE CHOICE of whether they would like to be interviewed by a member of staff and a service user, or just a member of staff (i.e. either Rachel or Natasher) – please don’t be offended if clients ask that they only talk with staff

BEING INVOLVED IN INTERVIEWING you are invited to accompany Rachel or Natasher in listening to other service users; Rachel or Natasher will be guiding the interview by following the agreed schedule, and will need your help in listening: prompting where necessary will keep the conversation going and make sure it is appropriately directed

AWARENESS OF HOMELESSNESS ISSUES when interviewing service users, they might mention their experiences of homelessness that could remind you of what you have been through yourselves and this could be difficult for you: please be aware of this and if you are at all uncomfortable, speak with Rachel or Natasher when the interview has finished, and there will be a de-briefing session after each interview has been completed

ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS you might find that some of the clients you help to interview have difficulties being focussed on the questions they are asked; it is important to be willing to repeat questions politely and let people know what you mean by a question if they do not understand at first; Rachel or Natasher will guide the interview. If you are asked to say whether you agree with them about a point of view, don’t be drawn into this and politely say that you couldn’t comment.
INTERVIEWING SKILLS above all, be respectful! All clients can stop the interview, or refuse to answer a question. If they appear to be uncomfortable in answering a question, be kind enough to ask if they would like to leave that one or come back to it later. Remember that clients will be telling you something of their own story in answering the questions, and that it is your job to record this as accurately as possible, not to make comments or tell them what you would have done.

CONFIDENTIALITY any clients interviewed might disclose personal details or sensitive information and it is very important that you are respectful of this. You are not to discuss this information with others except with Rachel or Natasher in a de-briefing session. Confidentiality will be assured to all clients who take part with the exception that if it seems likely the client has or will harm themselves or another staff or appropriate authorities must be informed.

BOUNDARIES none of your own personal details (e.g. address or telephone number) are to be given to any client you interview and you are not to accept such details yourself. It is requested that you do not touch or attempt to touch a client, and that you politely refuse any requests to be touched so as to avoid being accused of inappropriate conduct. An interview might be stopped if boundaries cannot be kept.

THE SERVICE USER OUTLINE, CONSENT FORM AND NOTES ABOUT INTERVIEWERS (give out copies) – please take some time to go through this; it will be easiest if you just read out what is written.

INFORMATION it might be that should a service user interviewee ask for advice, you could help and feel you are in a position to advise them; in this case 1) ask if its OK to mention this to a member of staff/key worker and 2) after completing the interview, give the information required in front of the staff/key worker; if its not OK to mention this to a member of staff/key worker, the information is not to be given.

PLEASE SIGN THE CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

REFERENCE we will be giving you an open reference commending you for your work with us that you can take with you.

ENJOY IT! we really hope that you enjoy interviewing other clients with us and thank you all again for being interested in taking part in the research.
Appendix five: confidentiality agreement

Please sign to say that you have read, understood and agree to the following conditions:

The research is confidential within the research team: Rachel Harding (Framework Housing Association Research Co-ordinator), Natasher Lafond (Framework Housing Association Relief Researcher)

To be respectful of the other service users you help to interview: they might disclose personal details or sensitive information and it is important that you don’t discuss these with others

You are required to complete the preparation training in:
- awareness of homelessness issues
- assertiveness skills
- interview skills
- confidentiality awareness

before taking part in the review with the research team

Any breach of confidentiality will result in a letter of complaint to you so that it is unlikely you will be able to take part in similar work in the future

Name …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Signature …………………….. Date ……………………..

Project ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Project manager …………………………………………………………………………………

Witnessed by ……………………………………………………………………………………

Signature ………………………….. Date ……………………..

We will be giving you an open reference commending you for your work with us.
## Appendix six: service user data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>housing</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing central to the team’s work with service users</td>
<td>I wasn’t going to get re-housed by the council. I came here for help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough sleeping, living at shelters and had bed-sits.</td>
<td>I just feel more independent… I was at my mums you know, I was living there, I was living there… then I was on the streets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the team helped maintain tenancies.</td>
<td>I feel more secure in my tenancy, because in the past I’ve had the tenancy, when things got on top of me I’d just disappear and go back on the streets. I’ve got my own flat now that makes a lot of difference, um, because my self esteem is higher than what it was when I was on the streets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General improvement in tidiness and upkeep of property.</td>
<td>My flats tidy cause I know I’ve got visitors and [support worker] can visit whenever or drop by. My last place was a bombsite… I’m proud of my flat now I’ve got more respect. Years ago if you came in here you’d have to wipe your feet as you went out, that’s how bad it was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing housing fundamental to addressing other issues.</td>
<td>Getting my own place cause it was a starting point. Got my own place and got my own life back really.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>substance use</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substance use, history of using and drugs of choice</td>
<td>I’m a heavy cannabis smoker… I’ve not been sober… I’ve been stoned for last past five year I smoke cannabis,… And drink I’ve been an alcoholic all my life I’ve been on heroin and crack for 10 years I don’t buy nothing apart from cannabis, tobacco and rizlas I stayed with a bird for ten years but that was it. May have been ten years but for eight of them I was drunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing substance use</td>
<td>I’m a dry drunk Just before I got on methadone, you know, I was doing like sort of a half ounce of heroin a day which is quite a lot, and like the same with crack as well I’ve done it so many times and I’ve never been clean for this long and I’ve never done as well Like with my drinking I’ve cut right down on the drinking and that’s all under control now and I’m on medication and everything now as well You can see why you’re using. You know, so you can see if there’s a pattern to it, what makes you use You look back on it and you realise just how much your using and you know, you sort of see that pattern and it just enables you to change it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>health</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Various ways of measuring health;</td>
<td>I’m cleaner. I’m washed my hairs and all that, I’m bathing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tenancy support for substance users: a study of the Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ongoing health concerns, improvement in hygiene; eating and weight gain</th>
<th>I weighed just over six stone. And my boyfriend was just under 10 stone. I'm now 10 and a half stone and my boyfriend's now 15 and a half stone, so we've put quite a lot of weight on.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keeping health appointments</td>
<td>I take care of my health issues now. I suffer with leg ulcers and have Hepatitis C. I make and keep appointments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving health through reduced substance use</td>
<td>Yeah, like with my drinking I've cut right down on the drinking and that's all under control now, and I'm on medication and everything now as well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**budgeting and bills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning to manage bills and budgeting</th>
<th>I wouldn’t pay nothing, I wouldn’t pay bills of nothing...[support worker] got me on top of that didn’t she! I mean they’ve sort of lived on the streets and they just haven’t got a clue, and I didn’t have and I'm a hell of a lot better now.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budgeting and managing bills part of support plan</td>
<td>If you’re finding that you’re struggling with your money, they’ll sit down with you and work out everything that you have to pay. They sit you down an you know, just how much money you get coming in, what you need to pay on your gas, your electric everything else, what you’ve got left sort of, and they're accounting for you shopping, absolutely everything in there. Just to know what I needed to pay every week like gas, electric and TV licence. So I knew what was coming in and what I had to pay out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service users benefited from effective support and advocacy</td>
<td>Basically she just keeps reminding me that my bills need to be paid. Now I like to be like in credit rather than debit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**independence, training and outings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tenancy as independence example</th>
<th>Got my own place and got my own life back really.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>responsibility as independence example</td>
<td>I just feel more independent. I went to the John Storer clinic when I wanted to come off the drugs and they said there was a minimum four-week wait. So I went to my doctor because I didn’t want to be on drugs for another four weeks. It’s your decision to make. You make a decision to take drugs and it’s down to you. I've got a lot more to loose now as well. I'm in credit with me gas an electric and I plan to keep it that way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one service user volunteered and others showed interest in further education and employment</td>
<td>They’ll find out loads of information about all different courses for you, where they are, what time they are, and they like come up with that information more or less straight away. Well actually I'm thinking I’d like to do a certain college course or I’d like to do some college course but I don’t know what. We've both sort of got itchy feet, you know, we’re wanting to get back into work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service users involved in events</td>
<td>Once a week I go to the meal here. There’s the monthly things telling you what events and what going on I go to events and evening sessions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**independence, training and outings (continued)**

| trips out were popular | I’ve only been on one and that was to Water World. |
I went to Southwell, that was to the workhouses. We've been Wollaton Park, Nottingham castle, all over. They took us all on a day trip to Skegness.

**provision of events was vital**  
I don’t get out a lot do I? I can’t socialise or that.

| **the role of Handel Street Day Centre** | I keep it at a distance because of my drug history and the people who use it. It has a lot of my old friends there who I used with. I prefer not to be around those people unless they’ve changed like me and done well for themselves. I try and avoid that because of all the drinkers there you see. I don’t want to surround myself with that at the minute, cause I’m on controlled at the minute. I don’t want to loose control and the temptation might be too, too much. That’s why I tend to stay away from the wet centre, because of my drinking. But sure if I want a drink I’ll go to the wet centre. |
| **Reasons for using Handel Street Day Centre** | I sort of find this a place where I can come and have a chat with people. It’s a meeting place. Your friends are there. I pop down to see my mates. I get a decent meal once a week and get my washing done there. If it wasn’t for the wet centre I wouldn’t have eaten. |

| **other agencies** | service users mentioned other agencies  | complete list in ‘Findings’ |

| **help for and attitudes towards service users** |  |

| help for service users | [support worker] comes with me for support to appointments. There isn’t anyone else I could or would turn to. When I get a letter of appointment [support worker] goes through it all with me and gets me where I need to be. If it wasn’t for [support worker] I probably wouldn’t have gone. I wouldn’t have been able to get there for a start. It gives me a chance to get out where as I wouldn’t be able to get out. I wouldn’t be able to meet new people you know. |

| high praise for Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team | They’re priceless to me really  
You start coming here and people just want to help you. Everybody wants to help you and you realise, that with help you could actually do some thing. That I could actually turn everything around. There’s always someone that you know is willing to help, if you ring up and ask to speak to your key worker and they’re not there whoever you speak to will say, ‘is there anything I can help you with?’ And if they can’t help you with it they’ll find someone that can. So, there’s always help sort of on top if you like. |

| high praise for Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team (continued) | I feel 10 tons better and if I have or get any problems there then I can come here. |
Tenancy support for substance users: a study of the Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team

| positive attitudes | They follow everything up, they don’t just like say ‘Oh yeah, alright you wanna do this, get on with it’. They really do follow everything up. They just do so much for you, tenancy support, they do so much to help you, you know whatever it is, whatever your needs are you know, they’ll just sort of work around you. It literally was Handel Street that got me DLA sorted. If I didn’t have them (Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team) I’d probably be dead! I mean this service, it’s just brilliant really. They’re not going to judge you. They talk to the person. It’s like being talking to somebody like as a human being instead of judging them It’s the company as well, once a week you get to see somebody. |
| negative attitudes | I got chatted up the other day as I was coming out of the doctor’s surgery the other day by a handsome man. They make you feel human and worth something. They have involvement in your life and help you to have an interest in yourself. Where I am now, the caretaker always says ‘Hello’ when he see you. |
| families and relationships | They’ve robbed me. Thinking that I’m drunk and disorderly and I wouldn’t know. People see it as self inflicted rather than medical. |

| families and relationships | positive attitudes |
| Making contact | positive attitudes |
| Making contact | I’ve both got back in contact with our parents they come down and they’re really happy, they’re really really, happy now. I’ve got two children as well you see and I have them every weekend now I’ve got a place. Its time to sort of give them a bit more stability…so that they know their going to see me on the weekend. |
| Positive relationships | Positive relationships |
| Positive relationships | My neighbours are lovely and I speak to them and get on with them. I also know a couple across the way who I'm friends with. I get on with all the neighbours. |
| Positive relationships with staff | Positive relationships with staff |
| Positive relationships with staff | They’re all nice people and very kind and considerate. Nice, warm, friendly. I mean, you are, as far as I'm concerned, you’re worth your weight in gold. They’re very nice people you know – I don’t know what I’d do with out them. They do a really good job. What ever job you do, there’s always days when you sort of get up and you really cant be bothered, but they still come in and they still smile and are really nice to you. |
## Tenancy support for substance users: a study of the Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team

### Appendix seven: staff data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>housing</th>
<th>It’s kind of about supporting people…in appropriate accommodation until they were ready to make changes. At worst, they just about maintain that tenancy and they don’t become homeless again with arrears or anti social behaviour…stuff attached to their name which is going to stop them getting housing in the future…its not ideal for somebody to just be hanging on by the skin of their teeth but its better than it was before. A lot of our service users would struggle in their tenancies without our support.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>what the team do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helping staff maintain their tenancies</td>
<td>Hopefully it’s setting the targets right at the beginning. To make sure that whoever we move in doesn’t have a hugely negative impact on, on the people around them. Helping ‘em maintain security and trying to make sure that people aren’t hanging around the flat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>those leaving the service able to live independently in the community</td>
<td>The number of people that left…are now settled in the community and living OK. I think the success rate of people who are…moved into tenancies and maintained them, and I can think of two or three individuals who without this service…I know for a fact that before this service existed there was no way that they would have maintained tenancies and the reason I know what is because they didn’t.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>substance use</th>
<th>I think crucial to us in our minds was targeting those people who were probably going to continue to drink, who were probably going to continue to use drugs. People can manage a habit, if everything around them is not too chaotic and not having too much of an impact. You need challenge from day one substance misuse. And that’s not about saying, you can’t do that.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>all service users were substance users; staff delivering a service aimed to help them stop, reduce or remain clean</td>
<td>Maybe if people are wanting to look at controlling their drinking or maybe even stopping drinking, making sure that they’re referred into community detox services or they’re using Porchester Day unit so they’ve got something to do during the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staff helped service users reduce substance users through community detoxes, drugs diaries, getting people “scripted” and accessing treatment.</td>
<td>If they’re a drug user and an injecting drug user that they’re using needle exchange programs properly. Not just, they’ve signed up for it. That they are actually making returns and they’re not just chucking needles around the place, you know, a big part of a support workers job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continued substance use – raising awareness about safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support plan includes mental and physical health; accessing medical advice.</td>
<td>Making sure that people are referred to GPs and are registered with GPs, Dentists. We’ll make an appointment, we’ll go with you, we’ll sit in the surgery with you, we’ll help you explain your problem to the doctor if you, if you need such a thing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mental health promoted through listening and referrals to professionals</td>
<td>Knowing that they’ve got a key worker that can help, it just stops them worrying and that helps with the mental health a lot. Well we sit and we listen we don’t talk at people, which helps in quite a way really as people then get it out, get their issues out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promoting physical activity; safe substance use awareness; food and nutrition</td>
<td>So it is buying basic stuff that’s reasonably healthy but, but, they are going to actually eat it rather that it’s going to stick on a shelf. Do loads of stuff around nutrition, we’ve done safe injecting courses for people that are involved in the service, we’ve done a drugs awareness courses for people that are involved in the service, first aid stuff, how to put somebody in the recovery position, so all those kind of stuff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budgeting and managing bills help keep a tenancy; staff highlight consequences of non-payment</td>
<td>You have to start working with that as soon as somebody moves in, to make sure that the bills they need to pay are being paid if the bills don’t get paid they will loose their tenancy, it’s as simple as that. If they’re not paying their bills that’s when the problems start and then everything slides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budgeting plans</td>
<td>I’ll sit down with a budgeting plan and work out all their incomings and their outgoings and then negotiate with them gas and electric payment plans and water board payment plans help to encourage to keep them on top of their bills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high success rate in managing to keep clients in their homes</td>
<td>Usually people will get further behind and further behind and often be threatened with eviction. We don’t get many people evicted. I think I can only think about one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting service users’ independence through support planning and referrals to e.g. AIR</td>
<td>Taking them maybe to AIR to sort of find other things that they’re interested in. We’ve got the AIR project, which is very popular which we try, which do many, many courses which is part of Framework, it does loads of things. There are lots of projects in this organisation, which we’d like people to get in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsibility as independence example</td>
<td>Allowing that person to decide if they want to go and giving them the tools to get there. Trying to encourage them to take part in the cooking down at Handel Street any activities and day trips. We’ve done safe injecting courses for people that are involved in the service, we’ve done a drugs awareness courses for people that are involved in the service…first aid stuff, how to put somebody in the recovery position, so all those kind of stuff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outings and newsetters

| Outings and newsetters | At Christmas we always go out for Christmas meals and the newsletter. Quite a few people have been getting involved in the newsletter. |

Role of Handel Street Day Centre

| Handel Street seen as for emergencies only | Food, meals. Yeah, like a safety net. We try to encourage people not to use Handel Street so much unless you’re a drinker, then the drinkers do because again it’s a safe environment to meet other drinkers. We would not encourage our Tenancy Support clients to use it. I think Handel Street is more crisis intervention. [The] day centre’s there if they have a crisis but that’s kind of about it. When they're drinking heavily then Handel Street is safe, they're, they're going to get something to eat, they're going to get looked after if there is a problem so its ideal for them. I've know a couple of people who have gone in and had their laundry done in an emergency, but if your in your own tenancy you ought to be able to do your own laundry. |

Importance of Handel Street Day Centre

| Importance of Handel Street Day Centre | I think Handel Street Day Centre keeps a certain amount of people alive each year. For some people, some people for sometimes it’s the best place they can go. There's a doctors surgery down there that they can access the doctor. Things like the needle exchange which is massively important in harm reduction. Keeps a lot of people alive that wouldn’t survive if that place weren’t there. Can also get involved in the kind of, the activities and stuff that’s going on. I like to think that we’re fairly easy. That anyone can talk, even if you come down, got a problem and your key worker’s off, that you can talk to another member of staff, and I think that’s done through the TS evenings because you don’t just, you see the other workers as well don’t you. And get to chat and get to know them as well, so you feel, so everybody feels that they can talk to them. |

Other agencies

| Importance of working with other agencies, especially treatment providers | There’s no way we’d be able to do it on our own. We’re always dipping in and out of other services. We need to network with everybody. It’s making sure that people are still working with other agencies and not just you as a support agency. We couldn’t do it without them. We couldn’t do any of the work we do without the treatment providers. |
Tenancy support for substance users: a study of the Handel Street Tenancy Sustainment Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>encouragement of service users</th>
<th>We do a lot of taking people to appointments and things otherwise they wouldn’t get there anyway or otherwise they’d forget…we keep a record of when people have to go and do thing and we take them along to them.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>families and relationships</td>
<td>It’s not something that we would ever ask. Quite often there are reasons why people don’t see their families, children, whatever and we have to be very careful about that. One of the interview form questions is, is there any contact with any family and that’s the only time it’s ever asked. Some families are very supportive and others are not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not frequently discuss; sensitive issue</td>
<td>If we know that families visit and we know that they get on well with their families we would sort of ask how’s things going.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staff encourage positive contact</td>
<td>You need to have that open relationship that they can talk and feel that you’re going to help, support, advice and point in the right direction. Think it’s being open and honest with them, not judging them. Just being reliable and professional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staff relating to service users</td>
<td>It’s what they think is right for themselves and what they want to do. We’re not there to patronise people, it’s about working together. Your there to help if, if and assist if, to the level that those people want. Talking about the problems, getting open kind of discussions going about sort of problems that they’re having and making sure you, you kind of, not doing it for them but helping them to work out the solutions really.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding service users</td>
<td>It’s about confidence building and it’s also about trying, trying to encourage people. You must not be negative. We’re not in the business of sitting there with people and saying no you can’t do that and you can’t do this. If it’s something that isn’t possible we can, we need to explain it in a proper, respectful way and offer another alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staff encouraging service users’ confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Framework is a leading provider of housing, support, training, care and resettlement services, opening doors to homeless and vulnerable people.

- Opening doors to young people and care leavers
- Opening doors to older homeless people
- Opening doors to vulnerable women
- Opening doors to people vulnerable to tenancy breakdown
- Opening doors to rough sleepers
- Opening doors to people with mental health difficulties
- Opening doors to substance misusers

For more information about our work please visit www.frameworkha.org