



Next steps

Many recommendations from our Rebuilding Shattered Lives report still need action to improve outcomes for women who are homeless or at risk.

We will continue to press for further action from local and national government to better identify and respond to the needs of women who are homeless. We call upon local and national government to:

- **Collect and report data on gender** as part of annual street counts, to give a better national picture of where women are sleeping rough. This information is published in London, but is not available for the whole of the UK.
- **Provide leadership on women's homelessness.** We call upon the Minister for Women and Equalities to take the lead with colleagues across government departments, to ensure that action for women is effective in a time when resources are stretched and the future of funding for the homelessness sector is uncertain.
We ask every local authority to identify a senior lead for women's homelessness, making the most of resources across relevant local agencies.
- **Invest in early intervention to prevent women's homelessness.** Given many of the problems that lead to homelessness begin in childhood, we know early intervention for those at risk is vital.
We call upon government to make sure that the Troubled Families programme – and any new investment for individuals with complex needs – identifies girls and women who are at risk and need support to avoid homelessness.
- **Commission to ensure that all women have access to safe and appropriate accommodation,** including a choice of mixed or women only. Cuts to local authorities put pressure on services for people who are homeless, with specialist women's services at risk of cuts or closure. Action to protect women-only provision, including accommodation for women with complex health and substance use issues, is vital to keep women safe. This also reduces pressure on other public services, including in the health, social care and criminal justice systems.
Government funding for domestic violence services announced in March 2015 (£10m) and July 2015 (£3.2m) is welcome. However, sustainable funding sources for women's services are still lacking.

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**St Mungo's
Broadway**
Rebuilding lives, day by day

Rebuilding Shattered Lives

Update briefing, November 2015

In March 2014 we launched the Rebuilding Shattered Lives final report. This marked the culmination of 18 months of research and campaigning to get the right help at the right time to women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This update briefing explores the impact of the campaign to date and next steps needed.

Campaign overview

The St Mungo's Rebuilding Shattered Lives campaign brought together staff and stakeholders from different sectors who were all working with women who are homeless. The aim was to share understanding of particular experiences, challenges faced, and what support works for women.

Drawing on the expertise of a panel of advisors, we invited individuals, services and organisations to submit their experiences, ideas and research across nine themes. In total, we received 221 submissions from across three continents.

The final report found that:

- women's homelessness often occurred after prolonged experiences of trauma, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, frequently within the home
- women's homelessness often followed from, and resulted in, a cycle of mental ill health and substance use, and a myriad of other interrelated challenges to overcome
- many homeless women were left grieving for lost childhoods and lost children, and the impact was felt across generations
- a perceived failure to live up to societal expectations of women was a significant barrier to recovery
- women's histories were full of missed opportunities to get the right help at the right time.

Continued over...

"Women's homelessness is so often invisible. I have no contact with my family – I had a very traumatic childhood and don't want to see them. I did a lot of sofa surfing after I left my violent partner. But then I ran out of friends and became homeless."

St Mungo's Broadway resident



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Women's homelessness – the current picture

Overall, women's homelessness in its most extreme form – rough sleeping – is on the rise. Since 2010, there has been a **55%** increase in the number of people sleeping rough in England.¹

- Rough sleeping statistics by gender are only available in London. Of the 7,581 people seen sleeping on the streets of London between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015, 14% (1,094 people) were women. This is an increase from 11% in 2005-6²
- We know that women make up a third of those supported by homelessness services in England³
- We also know that the above figures are likely to be an underestimate as women often stay out of sight or move around at night for safety reasons. Many are 'hidden homeless' situations; for example women trapped in abusive relationships, squatting or sofa surfing with friends and family.

Improvements in practice – training update

Since launching the report, St Mungo's (St Mungo's Broadway since our merger) has developed training courses, workshops and resources based on the findings of the Rebuilding Shattered Lives campaign. We have been sharing these with practitioners across the UK and further afield, to encourage a gender and trauma informed approach to women's support.

In partnership with Homeless Link, we have trained more than 70 people working in UK homelessness services in Brighton, London and Manchester.⁴

We have also delivered training for professionals in Ireland (Dublin and Cork) for the Simon Community and in the Czech Republic as part of a three year exchange programme with Jako Doma.

We continue to develop and pilot new approaches to women's homelessness support internally through our women's strategy.

St Mungo's Broadway Women's Strategy 2014-15

Our women's strategy has achieved the following outcomes during the past year:



- More than 250 women have received financial support to increase wellbeing or meet ambitions through our Women's Grants. Individual grants have included transport costs to visit children and family, course fees, laptops and equipment for college or to set up businesses. Groups and social enterprises established have included a women's multi-media project, gardening enterprise, jewellery co-operative and yoga group.

'The Women's Grant has helped me to move on confidently, giving me the financial opportunity to complete my driving lessons. I feel free and great! I feel on top of the world!'

Resident who passed her driving test with the support of a Women's Grant.

¹ Government Rough sleeping statistics 2010-1015

² CHAIN, Street to Home report in London, June 2014-15

³ Homeless Link (Support for single homeless people in England, Annual Review 2015)

⁴ <http://www.homeless.org.uk/products/training/courses/supporting-women-experiencing-homelessness>

'It has reduced social isolation and increased the quality of daily living and my wellbeing. My confidence has increased by being given the opportunity of 24/7 access to social networks, general information and the acquisition of new I.T. skills. Just Brilliant!'

Recipient of a tablet computer through the Women's Grants scheme.



- We've established a **Children and Family support service**, including training for staff on contact, loss and reconnection, case advice, factsheets and parenting classes for our clients.
- We've started a **women's psychotherapy service** including increased access to therapy for our clients and psycho-educational groups on women and trauma.
- More than 80 women attended a **women's employment and training fair** for homeless women in London, who met employers, training providers and accessed workshops on areas such as self esteem and setting up a business. Feedback from attendees included: *'I was able to look at setting up my own business and how achievable it may be'*, *'I liked that it was aimed at women specifically'*, and *'I wish this had existed 10 years ago'*.
- We've offered a variety of **training courses** on supporting women's recovery internally for staff and volunteers.
- We've published **new internal policy and procedures** on areas such as domestic violence.
- Our Outside In **women's client involvement group** has been relaunched, now meets monthly and is well attended by clients across the organisation.
- We've set up a **women's outreach network** in London, hosted by St Mungo's Broadway and attended by outreach workers and commissioners from across the capital.

Impact:

- **91%** of St Mungo's Broadway women clients are satisfied with the service we provide overall, compared to 87% in 2013-14⁵
- **89%** of these clients agree that St Mungo's Broadway understands their needs compared to 87% in 2013-14⁶
- **92%** of staff in our Women's Strategy survey said that, as a result of Women's Strategy related support, they had improved knowledge of how to support women experiencing homelessness.

Quotes included: *'The support on offer is excellent and exceeds the support available in other organisations'* and *'We have a great support network for our female clients.'*

Improvements in raising public awareness

The Rebuilding Shattered Lives campaign has contributed to increased public awareness of women's homelessness. Media coverage has reached a combined potential audience of almost eight million people. This includes features in media such as The Guardian, Independent and Telegraph, BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour, ITV news and RTE news in Ireland, as well as sector press such as Inside Housing.

Impact on government policy

The final report and its recommendations has received substantial attention from parliamentarians since its publication in March 2014. The Rebuilding Shattered Lives report has been quoted in three separate House of Lords debates and discussed by the Women's Parliamentary Labour Party and the cross government Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness.

Despite this, the impact on policy decisions has so far been limited. However, we were encouraged by the government's express interest in the specific needs of women who are homeless in the Homelessness Change programme of funding for hostel refurbishment and development; with the funding prospectus stating *"funded hostels should provide for the different needs of male and female homeless people."*

We also recognise that local authority budget cuts have made it difficult to maintain and increase specialist accommodation and support for women with multiple and complex needs.

⁵ St Mungo's Broadway Client Satisfaction Survey 2014-15

⁶ St Mungo's Broadway Client Satisfaction Survey 2014-15