

Multi Agency Monitoring (MAM) – Lancaster District

Multi Agency Monitoring (MAM) was introduced in Lancaster District towards the end of 2006, but has been actively adopted since April 2007. Each of the six agencies listed below completes a MAM form when they come into contact with an individual who is homeless or threatened with homelessness. Individuals are assigned a unique code to ensure that double counting does not occur, and to chart their presentation history.

In this way, once the MAM system has been running for some time, it should be possible to identify any emerging patterns in presentations and therefore to assist people to solve their housing problems at an earlier stage. As MAM forms are completed by a range of voluntary organisations, in addition to Strategic Housing, the data should provide a more realistic picture of the problem in the District than indicated by the P1E statistics.

This system not only records individuals to whom the Council would not owe a Statutory Duty, but also individuals who are unlikely to approach a statutory organisation.

The participating organisations are:

- Lancaster and District Homeless Action Service (LDHAS)
- Lancaster and District Women’s Aid (LDWA)
- Morecambe Homeless Action (MHA)
- Signposts
- Lancaster City Council Strategic Housing
- YMCA

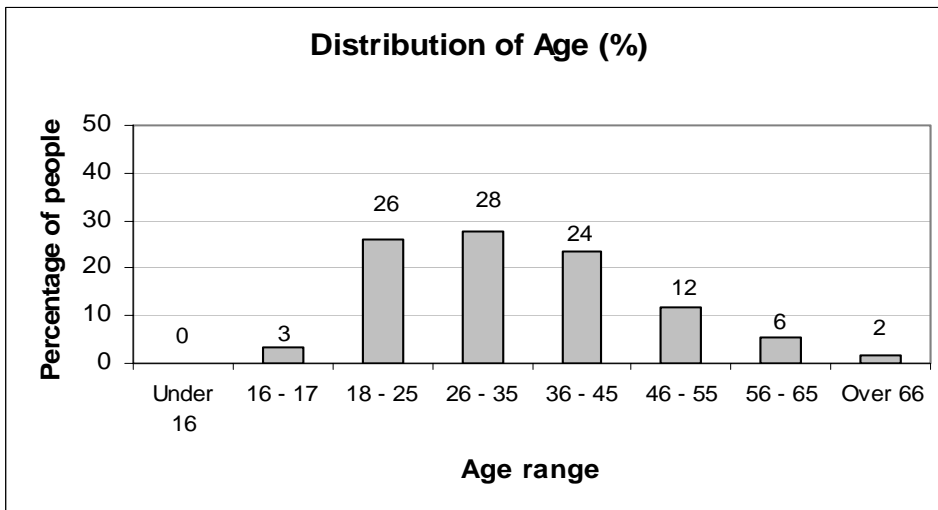
The table below records the number of visits made by individuals in housing need from Lancaster District to all of the participating agencies between April and December 2007.

| Organisation name | Number of contacts | % of contacts | Number as 1st contact | Number as 2nd contact | Number as 3rd contact |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| LDHAS | 82 | 14 | 73 | 9 | 0 |
| LDWA | 104 | 18 | 101 | 2 | 1 |
| MHA | 26 | 4 | 25 | 1 | 0 |
| Signposts | 38 | 7 | 35 | 3 | 0 |
| Strategic Housing | 220 | 38 | 203 | 16 | 1 |
| YMCA | 111 | 19 | 97 | 14 | 0 |
| Total | 581 | 100 | 534 | | |

N.B. It should be noted that no MAM returns had been received for Signposts or MHA for December by the time the analysis was conducted.

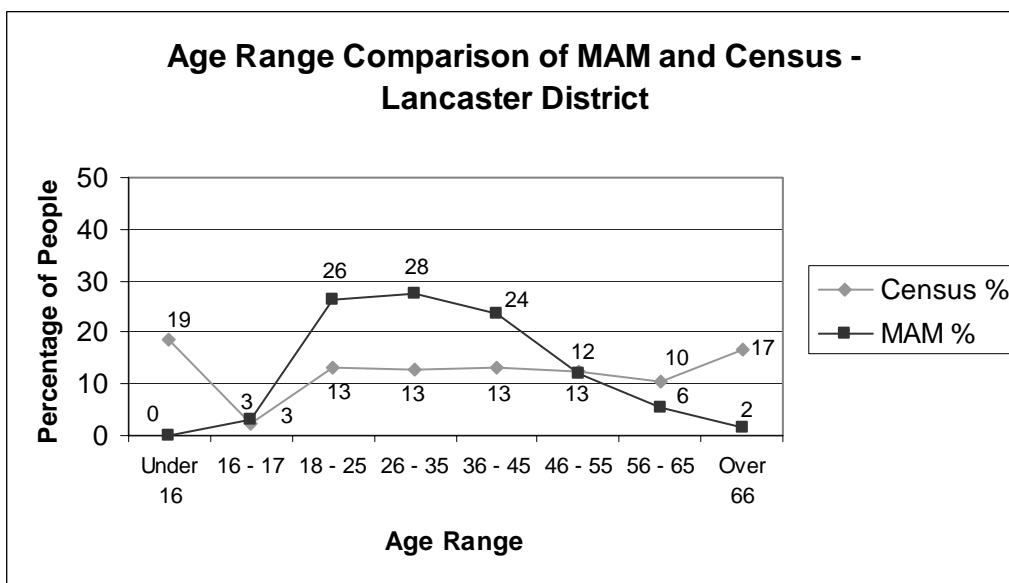
It can be seen that a total of 534 people made 581 visits to the participating agencies, thus indicating that there are a number of people visiting an agency or agencies on more than one occasion. This is likely to be an underestimate of the number of visits, as it was clear from the interviews with some of the participating agencies, for example LDHAS, that the same clients come in on a daily basis, but it would clearly not be feasible to complete a MAM return for every one of their visits.

There may also be a slight underestimate in the number of people seen, as several MAM forms were returned without the date of birth of the individual on it. Without this information the unique code can not be generated and therefore the individual can not be included in the database for risk of double counting. The age distribution of those seen is demonstrated in the graph below.



Young adults (18 - 35yrs) represent the largest proportion of those who are homeless, threatened with homelessness and in housing need; 26% of those seen were aged 18 to 25yrs and 28% were aged 26 to 35yrs, therefore this age-group represent over 50% of all of those cases seen. This contrasts with only 18% of older adults (46 - 65yrs). This is a similar pattern to that seen in the acceptances data from the P1E Returns. It is encouraging that only 3% (17 people) of those seen were under 18 years of age.

When comparing the MAM data with Census 2001 data it can be seen that young adults are significantly over represented in terms of housing need than would be expected on age distribution alone. This indicates that in Lancaster District young adults are having difficulty accessing the local housing market due to a lack of social housing and increased house prices.



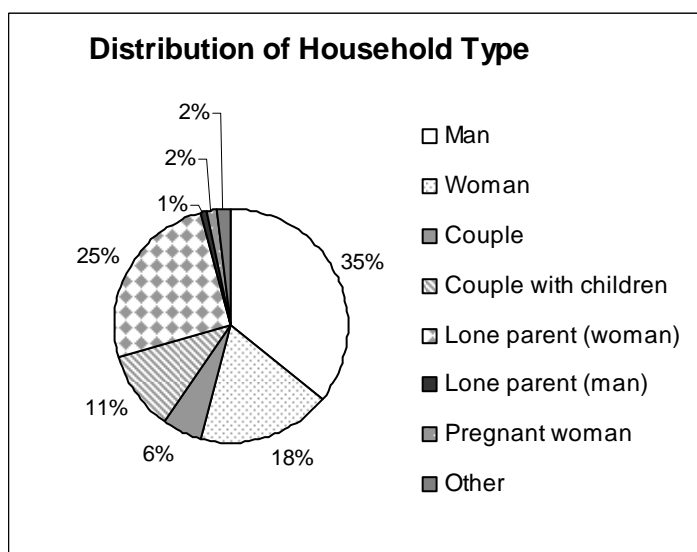
Individuals seen by agencies completing MAM returns predominantly described their ethnicity as 'White – British'. This is what would be expected given the breakdown of ethnicity in the District as estimated from the Census data.

| Ethnic Origin | Number | % |
|---------------------|--------|------|
| White British | 510 | 95.5 |
| White Other | 5 | 0.9 |
| Black British | 3 | 0.6 |
| Black Other | 2 | 0.4 |
| Asian British | 2 | 0.4 |
| Asian Other | 1 | 0.2 |
| Dual Heritage | 1 | 0.2 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0.0 |
| Traveller | 2 | 0.4 |
| Refused to disclose | 0 | 0.0 |
| Unknown | 5 | 0.9 |
| Other | 3 | 0.6 |
| | 534 | 100 |

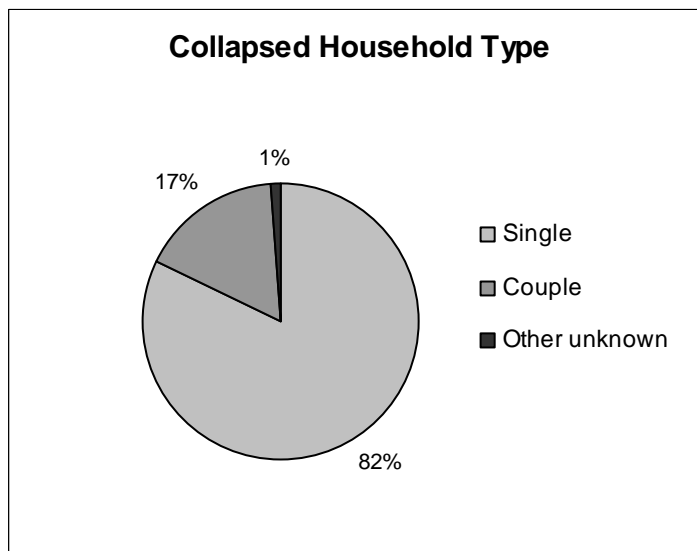
There is a slight difference between the ethnicity of those seen by the MAM reporting agencies as a whole and those presenting as homeless in the P1E Returns. A greater proportion of those presenting are classed as 'White – British' on the P1E Returns. This could indicate that other ethnic groups are less likely to approach Strategic Housing than they are a voluntary organisation, however caution must be used when drawing such a conclusion as the numbers involved are very small.

Data from the section on the MAM form regarding disability shows that 27% of people stated they had a disability or disabilities. The most common were mental health issues at 52% (74 people), followed by a physical disability at 33% (47 people). Taking the two categories together this equates to 23% of all people seen by the agencies returning MAM forms.

The following two pie charts demonstrate the household type of those threatened with homelessness or in housing need.

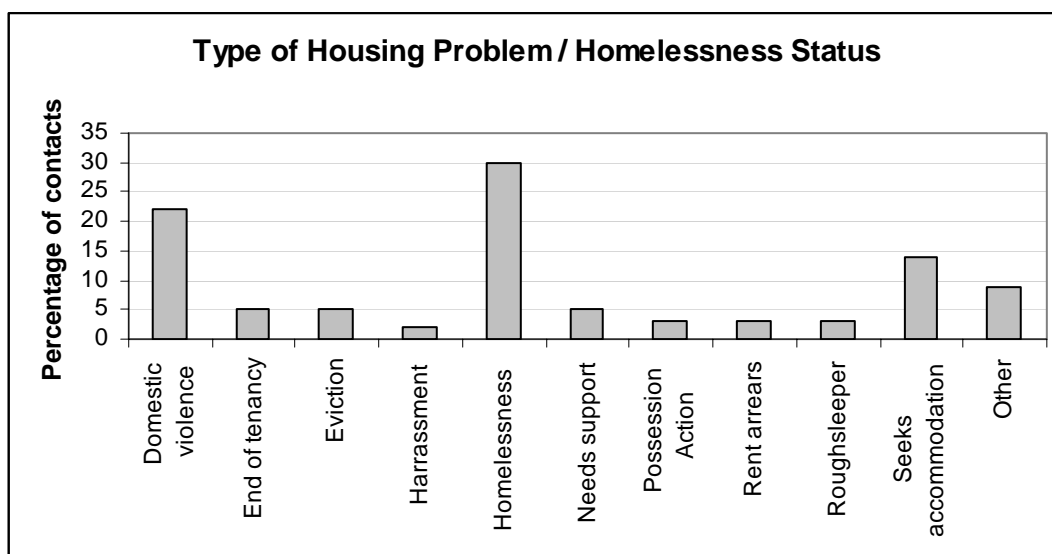


It is clear that the greatest single proportion of individuals seen by the MAM reporting agencies are single men. However, overall the greatest proportion of those seen are female when single women, female lone parents and pregnant women are all taken into account.



By collapsing the categories of household type it can be seen that by far the majority of people visiting the organisations are single. 64% of the couples had dependent children and 32% of single people were lone parents. In total nearly 60% of the people seen did not have children. This contrasts to the P1E figures whereby, on average, 53% of accepted homeless cases had dependent children. This may be accounted for by the fact that families with dependent children are more likely to approach a statutory organisation, and will automatically fall into that Priority Need category.

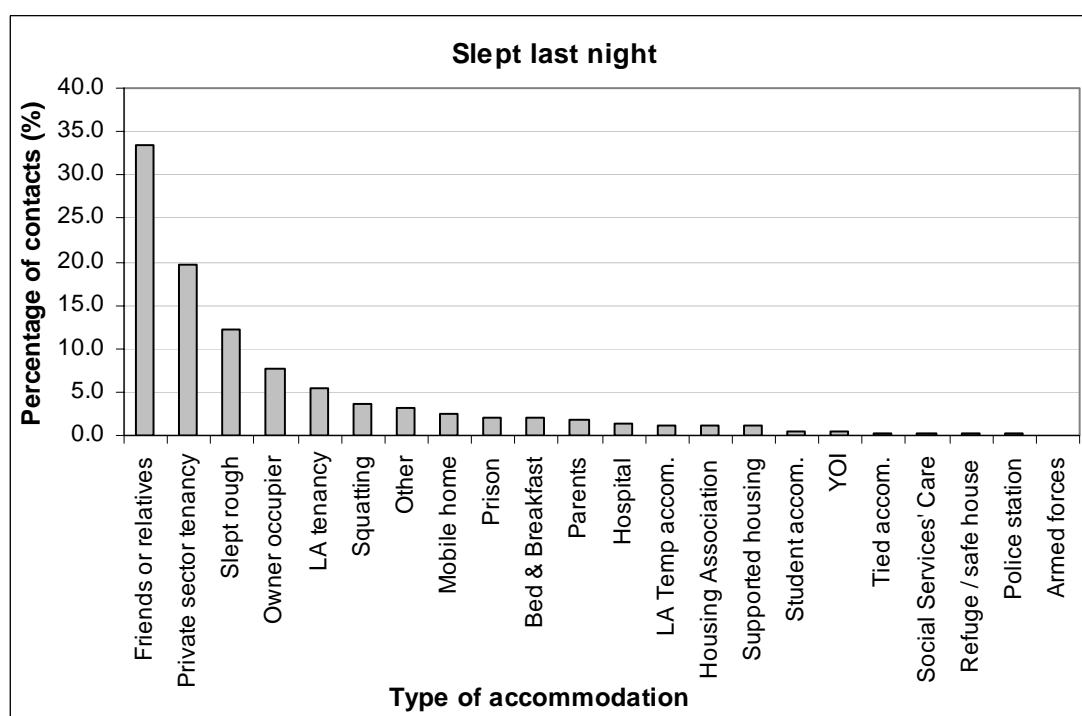
The largest proportion seen are considered to be homeless (30%) or at risk of homelessness as a result of domestic violence (22%).



The data from this graph needs to be considered with some caution as agencies appeared to perceive the same individual's situation differently. For example, one individual had been recorded as having 'homelessness' as the housing problem on a visit to one agency and then had visited another agency in quick succession and had been recorded as 'seeks accommodation'.

20% of all people were recorded as having Statutory body involvement. 50% of which had Social Services or Mental Health Team involvement. Less than 1% of the total were recorded as being owed a full homeless duty by Strategic Housing. The data occasionally shows different statutory involvement for an individual on different contacts. However, these are likely to reflect plausible differences given the time between contacts in these instances.

The graph below illustrates where individuals had spent the night before approaching one of the participating agencies.



The majority of people can be seen to be staying with friends or relatives. However, it is notable that just over 12% of nights prior to visiting one of the participating agencies were spent sleeping rough. This equates to 63 people having slept rough at least once, which is nearly 12% of all of the people recorded in the MAM returns.

At each contact there is the opportunity to record zero, one or two contributory factors that have led to the individual's homelessness or housing need arising. Again there is variation in reporting between agencies, with some individuals having recorded different contributory factors when presenting at two different agencies within a short period of time. The table below demonstrates the main contributory factors that have led to the homelessness or housing need arising.

The main contributory factor cited was domestic violence at nearly 19% of responses. This is substantially greater than the average of 12% shown in the P1E Returns who are found to be owed a statutory duty and have domestic violence as their main reason for homelessness, and the 2% of accepted applicants having this

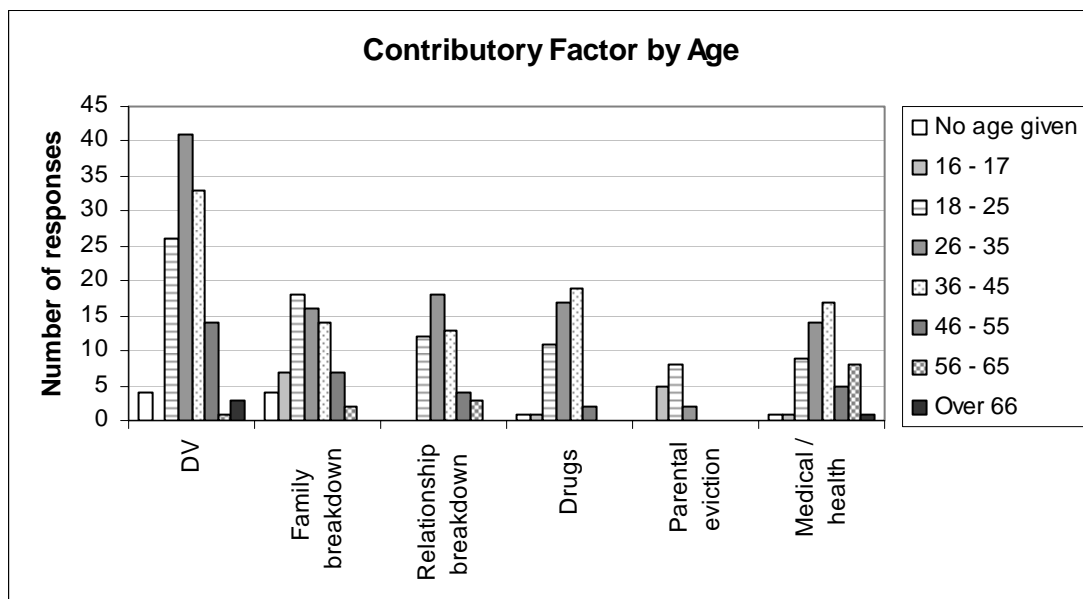
as their Priority Need category. This was followed by family breakdown (11%), medical or health problems (8%), drug issues (8%) and relationship breakdown (8%).

| Contributory Factor | Number of responses | % of responses |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Domestic violence | 125 | 18.7 |
| Family breakdown | 71 | 10.6 |
| Medical / health | 56 | 8.4 |
| Drug issues | 51 | 7.6 |
| Relationship breakdown | 50 | 7.5 |
| Alcohol issues | 32 | 4.8 |
| Landlord / tenant other | 29 | 4.3 |
| Overcrowded | 29 | 4.3 |
| Violence outside the home | 28 | 4.2 |
| Violence inside the home | 26 | 3.9 |
| Other financial | 22 | 3.3 |
| Offending | 22 | 3.3 |
| Unsuitable accommodation | 18 | 2.7 |
| Parental eviction | 15 | 2.2 |
| Loss of job | 14 | 2.1 |
| Needs life skills / support | 10 | 1.5 |
| Pregnancy | 9 | 1.3 |
| Repossession | 9 | 1.3 |
| Housing benefit | 7 | 1.0 |
| Household friction | 7 | 1.0 |
| Mortgage arrears / levels | 6 | 0.9 |
| Neighbour dispute | 6 | 0.9 |
| Rent arrears / levels | 6 | 0.9 |
| Family leave area | 5 | 0.7 |
| Other | 5 | 0.7 |
| Abuse | 4 | 0.6 |
| Difficult to place | 4 | 0.6 |
| Ex-forces | 3 | 0.4 |
| Fuel costs | 3 | 0.4 |
| Compulsory Purchase | 2 | 0.3 |
| Death in family | 2 | 0.3 |
| Gambling issues | 1 | 0.1 |
| Homophobic harassment | 1 | 0.1 |
| Move for work | 1 | 0.1 |
| Racial harassment | 1 | 0.1 |
| Sexual harassment | 1 | 0.1 |
| Total | 669 | 100 |
| <i>N.B. There could be none, one or two contributory factors given at each contact point, therefore the number of responses is greater than the number of people or contacts.</i> | | |

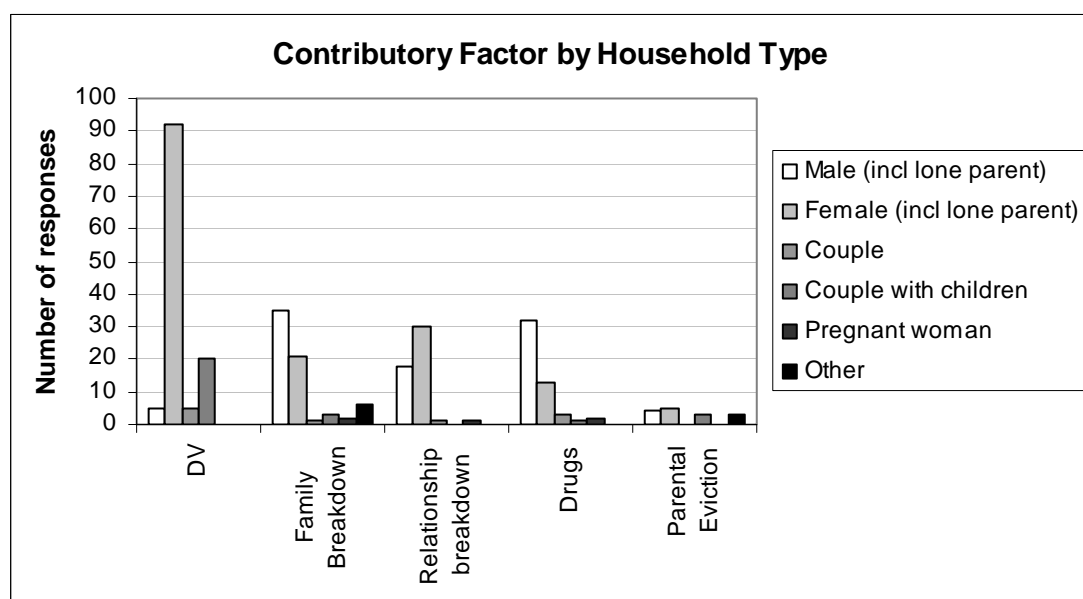
An analysis was conducted to consider the relative age and household distributions of the contributory factors with the following results.

Domestic violence and relationship breakdown generally follow the pattern of age distribution (of all respondents), although the number citing domestic violence as a contributory factor is slightly weighted towards the older adult range, rather than the 18 - 25 range.

16 - 17 yr-olds are greatly over represented in the category of 'family breakdown' compared to the general age distribution, which highlights the need for mediation services, such as that run by YMCA. Drug issues are predominantly seen to be contributory factors in those under 45yrs.



As would be expected parental eviction affects young people more than older people, with 33% of those reporting it as a contributory factor being 16-17yrs and 53% in the 18-25 age-range.



Where domestic violence is seen to be a contributory factor it disproportionately affects single women and female lone parents. A total of 37% of *all* contacts involving single females or female lone parents had DV listed as a contributory factor.

Single males and male lone parents are most likely to have family breakdown or drug issues as contributory factors. 12% of all contacts involving single males and male lone parents have drugs (6%) or family breakdown (6%) listed as contributory factors. The table below demonstrates the main outcome of each contact / visit with the participating agencies. Unfortunately because of the relatively new nature of the MAM monitoring in the District the greatest proportion is shown as 'section not completed or unknown', but in the future it should be possible to have a clearer sense of both interim and final outcomes for individuals.

| Outcome (main) | Number of contacts with that outcome | % of contacts with that outcome |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Section not completed / unknown | 304 | 52.3 |
| Support provided | 53 | 9.1 |
| Referred to Homeless Officer | 40 | 6.9 |
| Housing Advice given | 28 | 4.8 |
| Assisted to retain own accommodation | 23 | 4.0 |
| Referred to solicitor | 11 | 1.9 |
| Floating support provided | 10 | 1.7 |
| Accommodated | 9 | 1.5 |
| Referred internally | 8 | 1.4 |
| Staying with friends / relatives | 8 | 1.4 |
| Found refuge / safe house | 8 | 1.4 |
| No further contact | 7 | 1.2 |
| Other | 7 | 1.2 |
| Referred to specialist housing advice | 7 | 1.2 |
| Benefit Advice given | 6 | 1.0 |
| Referred to Housing Assoc. | 6 | 1.0 |
| Bed & Breakfast | 5 | 0.9 |
| Private sector housing | 5 | 0.9 |
| No show for appointment | 4 | 0.7 |
| Client found own accommodation. | 4 | 0.7 |
| Referred to specialist support agency | 4 | 0.7 |
| Inappropriate referral | 4 | 0.7 |
| Refused options | 4 | 0.7 |
| Unable to provide help | 3 | 0.5 |
| Found hostel accommodation | 2 | 0.3 |
| Referred to Citizen's Advice | 2 | 0.3 |
| Refused offer of accommodation. | 2 | 0.3 |
| Returned to family home | 2 | 0.3 |
| Application declined | 1 | 0.2 |
| Housing Assoc tenancy offered | 1 | 0.2 |
| Income raised | 1 | 0.2 |
| Referred out of the area | 1 | 0.2 |
| Referred to Health Authority | 1 | 0.2 |
| | 581 | 100.0 |

From the table it can be seen that the most common real outcome is for support to be provided to an individual, which was usually an outcome if the individual had been in contact with an agency such as LHDAS or LDWA and it was not felt appropriate to refer on to the Homeless Officer. Referral to the Homeless Officer was the outcome in just under 7% of contacts, suggesting that the participating voluntary agencies are only referring onto the Homeless Officer where it is felt that there is a good likelihood that the individual will be accepted as being owed a full duty. Housing advice had been given in nearly 5% of cases and 4% of contacts resulted in individuals being assisted to retain their own accommodation, thereby acting to prevent a homeless presentation being made. Of concern was that only just under 6% of contacts resulted in an individual being accommodated in some way. Due to the large number of contacts where the outcome is unknown it is not clear whether this is an accurate reflection of the situation. The P1E Return statistics would suggest not, and that this figure is an underestimate.

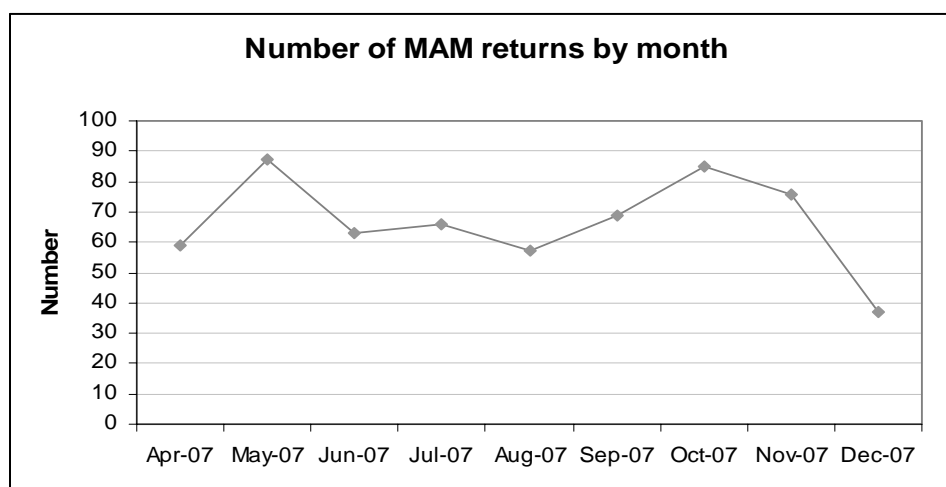
As a result of the earlier differences identified between the number of MAM contacts and P1E Returns recording domestic violence as a contributory factor the outcomes from the LDWA MAM returns were further examined.

Where LDWA was the 1st and only contact, the following outcomes were achieved:

| Outcome | Number of contacts | % of contacts |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Support provided | 35 | 37% |
| Referred to Homeless Officer | 18 | 19% |
| Assisted to retain own accommodation | 16 | 17% |
| Referred to Solicitor | 10 | 11% |
| Found refuge / safe house | 6 | 6% |
| Referred to Housing Assoc. | 2 | 2% |
| Housing Advice given | 1 | 1% |
| Referred internally | 1 | 1% |
| Referred out of the area | 1 | 1% |
| Section not completed | 1 | 1% |
| Private Sector Housing | 1 | 1% |
| Returned to family home | 1 | 1% |
| Refused options | 1 | 1% |
| | 94 | 100% |

From this it can be seen that a great deal of work is done with clients by LDWA to minimise the number of individuals who present to the Homeless Officer. Indeed in 81% of cases during this period preventative work has been undertaken. It is not clear what the outcome was in the cases of the 18 women who were referred to the Homeless Officer as, as yet, there are no MAM records showing them as a contact for Strategic Housing.

Finally an analysis was conducted to look for any monthly variations in the data. The following graph illustrates the trend of returns for the period April – December 2007.



N.B. Averages were used to complete missing data (excluding nil returns).

This indicates a levelling off of contacts to participating agencies during the summer months with an increase again into autumn with a clear reduction during December. The decrease in December can perhaps in part be accounted for by the participating agencies being open for fewer days during that month and also by the presence of the Christmas shelter run by LDHAS. It will be interesting to see in the future whether these trends are replicated.

The MAM system gives an indication of the level of homelessness and housing need in the District that cannot be illustrated in its entirety by the P1E statistics. With the continued cooperation of all six of the participating agencies future analysis should be able to provide a clearer picture of the routes and outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness in the District.

Neighbourhood Task Force
ES/6 2 2008