# Brighter Futures

Brighter Futures offers effective solutions to complex needs with which many peoples' lives are troubled.

Our customers have suffered difficult 'trigger' circumstances which include mental illness, sexual or physical abuse, trauma or institutionalisation. Their best attempts to deal with these situations on their own have often drawn them into addictions or other dangerous situations (Effective Solutions For Complex Needs, Brighter Futures Academy paper No. 5/12, July 2012).

Our customers need someone who has not been involved in their complex cycle of stress, disadvantage and misfortune to help them think about the most effective way out of their situation and to befriend them as they make that difficult journey. That is what our support workers do for thousands of people every year.

Their work is backed up by our network of houses, day centres, specialist staff, groups, therapies and employment opportunities. We work in partnership with other organisations that provide specialist services as part of our packages of support.

All our work is delivered in accordance with Brighter Futures values and employs defined methodologies which have been developed over the last 25 years.

We are a one-stop shop for people with complex needs. Our work is as varied as our customers. We are united by our ability to create effective solutions and to offer a Brighter Future to all.

Everything we do is guided by our values. All our work is measured against these values. Our values are…….

•Passionate

•Creative

•Equal

•Empowering

•Sustainable

# Do we know what percentage of our homeless are women?

Brighter Futures has supported vulnerable women with complex needs since 1974. By listening to the stories of the women we support we identified two significant issues – the systematic sexual exploitation of vulnerable children and the links between childhood abuse, multiple and complex needs and homelessness. In 2001 we secured funding to develop an outreach and advocacy service for women involved in, or at risk of entering prostitution.

In the same year, in partnership with Staffordshire Police, we conducted a survey of the life experiences of women involved in sex work. The survey results identified that women were not staying in hostels because they felt vulnerable and feared harassment by other service users and that over 90% of the women were involved in sex work to fund either their own or their partners drug use.

Data from our work with rough sleepers provided consistent evidence that very few women were sleeping on the streets, even though we knew that a large number of the women we were supporting were roofless. Our evidence led us to the conclusion that sex work was the way in which women slept rough and that this should be reflected in the way services were provided.

We republished the article in 2012 because we believe the evidence it contains and the conclusions it reaches are still relevant to the debate surrounding the needs of homeless women with complex needs. Brighter Futures believes that rough sleeping will not be brought to an end until services recognise that sex work IS STILL how women sleep rough and find new ways of working with arguable one of the most excluded groups of people in society (“Street Sex Work – How women sleep rough”, Brighter Futures Academy Research Paper No. 3/12, June 2012).

For more information on our services log onto www.brighter-futures.org.uk