

Welcome to the Basement Project newsletter. The idea of this is to provide brief updates on the project so it will only be produced when we have something interesting to communicate. Items will be brief and you may need to speak to the office for more information. The Basement Project supports 16-35 year olds in the Bromsgrove area who are homeless or in danger of becoming so.

What exactly IS the Basement?

The project has 3 parts, the **Basement Drop In Service**, the **Outreach Support Service** and the **Private Tenancy Scheme**, all of which operate under The Basement Project charity.



The **Drop-in Service** provides a place where young people can talk to a qualified youth worker and trained volunteers about various issues including housing and homelessness. It offers informal mediation and advocacy should that be appropriate. Practically, young people can get a shower, do washing or even get a meal at the Basement. When possible the service offers emergency food/toiletry parcels and can sometimes help with the purchase of other essential items. The service also runs workshops including life skills training, healthy eating, self esteem, confidence building, budget management, driving licence theory, IT skills and cooking on a budget.

The **Outreach Support Service** is funded through the Countywide Supporting People programme and the team consists of 2½ full-time equivalent support workers who are fully trained and qualified. The service offers between 24 and 30 places for individual young people to have a dedicated support worker who will meet with them on a weekly basis to help them manage the transition to independent living.

The **Private Tenancy Scheme** provides help for young people to access private rented accommodation. It was set up due to the increase in waiting lists for social housing and unrealistic initial financial outlay for many young people. Trained workers help the person do affordability checks relating to income, outgoings and possible benefit entitlement to ensure any placement is sustainable. If necessary the service can provide a certificate bond or rent in advance and extra help with ongoing support to ensure once a person has secured a tenancy they are able to sustain it.

Did you know that.....

...visits to the drop in service have **DOUBLED** over the last 5 years to over 800 by 2010 and that will almost certainly be exceeded in 2011...sadly the demand for this service is increasing?

...over the last 3 years the Private Tenancy Scheme has successfully **prevented** 55 young homeless people (and many of their children) **from homelessness**, including 32 new tenancies?

...grants and local authority **funding has dropped** considerably over the last 12 months and will almost certainly drop again in the next 12 months?

...due to the reduced funding, these **valuable services** have been **CUT** with staff redundancies and reduced opening hours – just when the demand is increasing as more Bromsgrove young people find themselves facing financial hardship and possible homelessness?



The Basement is below the Baptist Church, New Road, Bromsgrove, B60 2JD

www.bromsgrovebasementproject.co.uk

<http://facebook.com/TheBasementProject>

The Basement in the Press

The Project was front page news in the local Advertiser recently highlighting concerns about the future of the project due to reduced funding in the current economic climate and the need for more financial support.

The positive responses included a very generous large donation from an anonymous donor and the offer of support from a local company and also at least one private individual.

The negative response was the belief in some readers' minds that the project WAS closing!



We still need to increase the income to secure the future of the project but
WE ARE NOT CLOSING!

As long as we can continue to keep going we will but it is encouraging to know that local people are willing to support when possible.
So *thank you!*



Friends!

Who needs friends? The answer is we all do! And we have many who support us with financial donations and gifts of food. They are already our friends and we are extremely grateful to them. But we need more friends - that's why we are setting up "The Friends of the Basement". Will YOU be our friend as well and help us continue this valuable service? We only ask for £30 a year donation (although you can give more if you want to). To become a friend please contact the Basement on 01527 832993, or post a cheque payable to The Basement Project to The Basement Project, Bromsgrove Baptist Church, New Road, Bromsgrove, B60 2JD (please write your name and address on the back and add the word "Friend") or drop in and see us in the Basement of the Baptist Church! You can also give using the *donate* option at www.bromsgrovebasementproject.co.uk

Who does the Project help?

Answer: Young people from a variety of backgrounds and with different problems – but that mostly stem from problems at home or actually being homeless. One such was a 16 years old girl who had become homeless due to a family conflict. Originally housed by YMCA in Worcester she had no friends there, so came back to Bromsgrove to stay with a 'friend'. Concerns were raised about her welfare so the Outreach Team became involved.

BDHT initially found her to be intentionally homeless leaving her with limited options, but after discussions with the Basement Outreach team agreed to help. The Outreach team arranged for her to stay at her grandparents in the short-term, enabling her to leave a potentially high-risk environment and return back to school to complete her GCSE's while a long-term solution could be found.

Unfortunately none of these long term solutions included being able to stop in Bromsgrove, so after discussing them with her, referrals were made to Redditch YMCA, St Basils, Redditch Council and Townsend Gardens in Selly Oak.

The client attended interviews with support from the Outreach Team and was then able to choose which option was the best for her. She accepted one of the offers, settled in well, completed her GCSEs and has moved on to college.

Thanks to Bromsgrove Printing, 14, Worcester Road Tel: 01527 873181 for donating the printing cost of this newsletter