

Homelessness Kills

“Homelessness Kills” is the name of a report into the effects of being homeless, which was commissioned by the charity CRISIS.

This research reported in 2011 showed some shocking statistics. For example, homeless people “die 30 years younger” than the national average. In fact this means dying at 47 for a man but even younger at 43 for a woman.

These life expectancy rates are similar to those in some of the poorest countries in Africa such as Sierra Leone. Some of the main reasons for the increased mortality in homeless people in the UK are drug and alcohol misuse and suicide.

To bring these statistics nearer to home we know the names of 25 people who have visited Hope Kitchen over the last 9 years who have died. Most of these have been well known to us and we have had the privilege of offering our respects and love and support at their funerals. Some were older people but many much too young.

What can we do at Hope Kitchen?

-Be aware that many of our guests face serious problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health issues as well as other health problems.

-Explain that there are local services to help with these problems.

Alcohol and drugs

STAR is the local drug and alcohol service. It is located near to Hope Kitchen at Thrift House, 13 Wellington Place (between Lloyds Bank and the Nationwide Building Society). Free phone 0300 30 38 160. Open 8am to 8pm Mon to Thurs; Fri 8am to 5pm and Sat 8am to 2pm.

Mental health

Take seriously anyone who says they feel suicidal. Speak to a team leader and help the guest to access mental health services. The Accident and Emergency department at the Conquest Hospital always has specialist help available.

Medical problems

Station Plaza Walk-in Centre open 8am-8pm every day (just by Hastings station). Don't forget the Seaview Project have nurse-led drop-in clinics 4 days a week and their team is available on Saturday evenings at Hope Kitchen.

Hope Kitchen

Lastly continue doing what we do, being Hope Kitchen. That is, offering food and drinks and hope and prayer to those who are marginalised and homeless. We are here to listen and walk alongside those who may be struggling with life. We offer unconditional acceptance and some practical help or advice if appropriate. Lastly we work with other agencies to contribute towards deposits for accommodation so that people can have somewhere to live.