

**Impact  
Assessment of  
the Closure of the  
Wet Centre at  
St Giles Trust,  
Camberwell  
(November 2005  
to January 2006)**

## **BACKGROUND**

The Camberwell street drinking and street population issue is recognised as one that has historically been difficult, entrenched and prevalent. In response to this recognition and increased local pressure, the Camberwell Street Drinking Intervention was created. The work of key partners involved in this Intervention has led to reduced numbers of street drinkers engaging in anti social behaviour in Camberwell and the opportunity for individuals with street drinking histories to address their behaviour and receive help and support. In addressing a problem highlighted by the local community, the Intervention has been universally hailed as a successful project due to the recognition and awareness of sustained reductions in the levels of anti social behaviour and numbers of street drinkers in the area.

As part of this Intervention, temporary wet slots were funded at St Giles Trust. The Camberwell Wet Centre (as it was named) opened in September 2004 and was open for a total of 13 months (an initial six-month trial period, which was extended for a further six months due to requests from the local community and the Community Council, and then supported for a further month as agreed by the Executive in order to make a final decision about the future of the Centre). It offered two slots a week from 10:00am until 3:00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Its aim was to provide a safe place where street drinkers could go and receive helpful services without having to stop drinking. The service was only open to the core-identified group of Camberwell Street Drinkers and was not designed to attract new street drinkers.

The Wet Centre closed in October 2005. The Centre was designed to be a short-term solution to give some respite to the local community whilst initial engagement with the street drinkers was carried out. It was also considered to be counterproductive to the long-term solution to the Camberwell street drinking issue. It is well evidenced that Wet Centres do not eradicate the problem of street drinking and for some drinkers offer a poor substitute to being out in the open. They also do not often succeed in getting drinkers to change their behaviour.

It was also recognised (see Jane Walkers report: Camberwell Street Drinking Intervention: an evaluation of the process and outcomes, 2005) that the “problem remained that at 3.00pm, 2 days a week, this group of potentially problematic drinkers were discharged, often inebriated, en masse back into the community. It has been argued although the Wet Centre was useful in targeting this problematic client group and enticing them into services; it was also keeping them in the area for a long period of time.”

This report responds to the call by the Executive (on Tuesday on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2005) to be kept informed of progress in the Camberwell area following the Wet Centre closure.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The following methodology was used:

**Two key agencies:** Camberwell Safer Neighbourhood Team (Metropolitan Police) and St Giles Trust.

Data was requested for a 3-month period in 2004/05 November - January (when the Wet Centre was operational) and the same period in 2005/06, when the Wet Centre had closed.

**Visual Audits:** St Giles Trust Outreach workers used this method to collect data. This involved visiting the key areas of activity at various times of day, to count how many street drinkers were visible.

**Incident reports:** The Safer Neighbourhood Team recorded the number of alcohol related anti social events associated with this identified group. Incidents were recorded following a local agreed framework.

**Enforcement measures:** The Safer Neighbourhood Team also reported on the number of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Interim Anti Social Behaviour Orders, and Anti Social Behaviour Orders issued during the period of the Camberwell Street Drinkers Intervention.

**Key areas of activity are identified as:** Camberwell Green, Denmark Hill, Milkwell Yard, St Giles Church, Lucas Gardens, Cold Harbour Lane, Wren Road and Butterfly Walk. Particular focus is given to these areas, as they were identified 'hot spots' for street drinker and street population activity.

**DATA SET**

**Camberwell Safer Neighbourhood Team feedback**

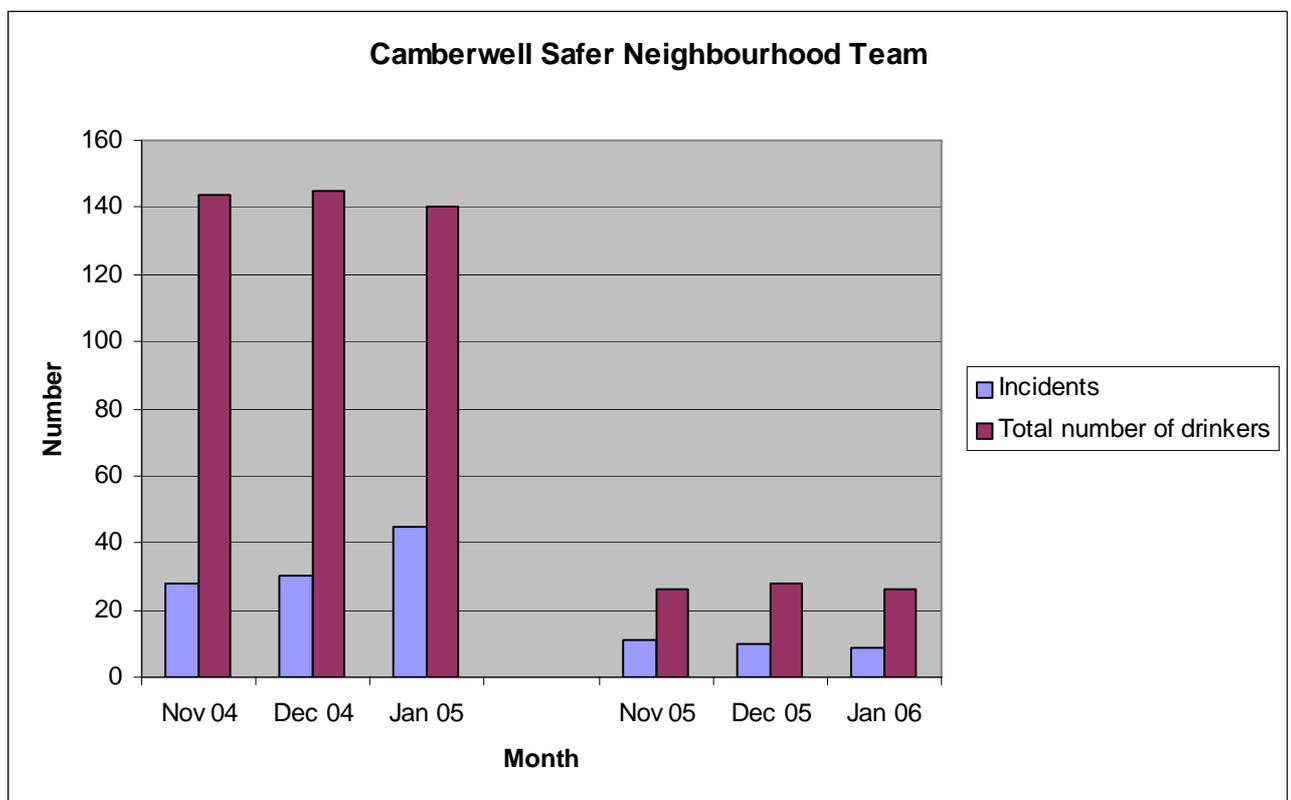


Table1. Shows the number of reported incidents with the total number of drinkers involved by month Nov 04 -Jan05 and Nov 05- Jan 06.

Since the start of the Camberwell Street Drinking Intervention, 21 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts have been issued and signed. Only one of these was issued and signed after the closure of the Wet Centre.

One interim Anti Social Behaviour Order was granted in January 2006.

Six Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) have been issued since the start of the Intervention. None have been granted since the closure of the Wet Centre, however there is a known Camberwell street drinker who has been referred to court for ASBO. Eleven arrests have resulted from breaches of ASBO since the start of the Intervention, none of which have happened within the 3-month period since the Wet Centre closure.

### St Giles Trust Outreach Team

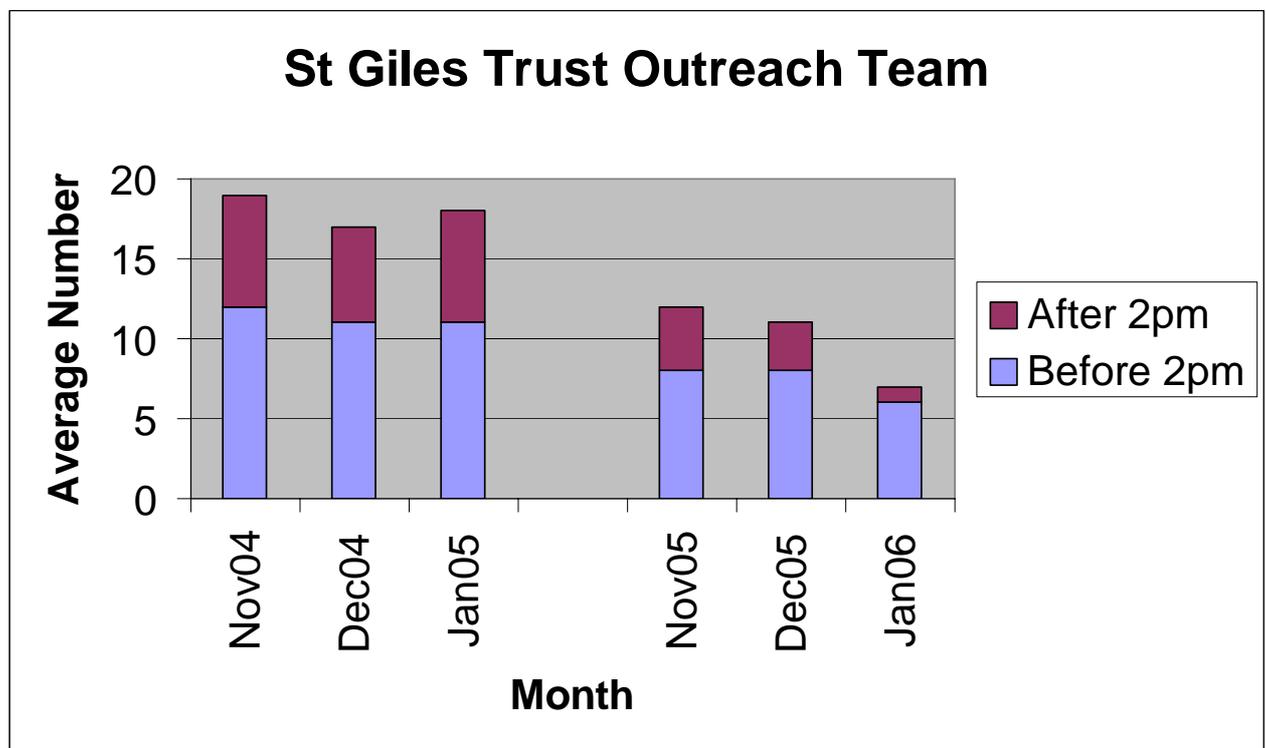


Table 2. Shows the average number of street drinkers recorded, by month Nov 04 - Jan05 and Nov 05- Jan 06, before and after 2pm.

### OTHER ISSUES

Marina House (South London and Maudsley Trust) currently offer approximately 300 treatment slots to Lambeth residents. Lambeth PCT have recently applied for planning permission for a similar treatment facility in Lambeth which has been agreed. It is planned that those out of borough clients will no longer be entering the Camberwell area for treatment after March 2007.

## CONCLUSION

The data set does not show that following the closure of the Wet Centre, there has been an increase in the number of street drinkers present in the Camberwell area, or an increase in the number of street drinker related anti-social incidents. The data does indicate a sharp decline in incidents and the number of street drinkers visible in the Camberwell area. This decline has been as a result of the continuing partnership work with this client group. This work is encouraged and supported and the Camberwell Together Action Zone (TAZ) continues to keep street drinking issues high on its agenda. The Operational Forum, which has been instrumental in the delivery of the Camberwell Street Drinkers Intervention, will continue to deliver work with the identified group and any other street drinkers who start to use the area. A regular update report from the Operational Forum is formally made at the Camberwell TAZ.

*The new financial year sees an end to Neighbourhood Renewal funding in Camberwell for outreach and co-ordination work. However strong partnership working, action planning, ownership, co-ordination via TAZ and enforcement via Safer Neighbourhood Team and Southwark Anti Social Behaviour Unit will continue. High visibility via the wardens will also be a high priority, and additional action via licensing; cctv, trading standards, strong community councillors involvement and consultation will be initiated.*