University of Plymouth in association with the Institute for Contemporary British History, King’s College, London

Event organised as part of the Annual ESRC Research Festival 2017 and hosted by Real Ideas Organisation, Devonport

Witness Seminar Series

EVERYDAY OFFENDING IN DEVONPORT PAST AND PRESENT

Devonport Guildhall, Plymouth
7 November 2017
Session Two: Community Responses to Everyday Crime

Organiser: Professor Kim Stevenson, Professor of SocioLegal History, School of Law, Criminology and Government, University of Plymouth
Chair: Dr Judith Rowbotham, Visiting Research Fellow, School of Law, Criminology and Government, University of Plymouth
Expert Consultant: Michael Kandiah, Director of the Witness Seminar Programme, Kings College London

Panel:
Mark Bignall, Hamoaze House, Devonport
John Hamblin, Shekinah Mission, Plymouth
Ed Whitelaw, Real Ideas Organisation, Devonport
Tim Gibbs, Salvation Army, Devonport
Keith Johnson, Devonport Naval Heritage centre

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<td>KIM STEVENSON</td>
<td>Welcome to the second of today’s Witness Seminars. This morning we looked at policing everyday offending in Devonport and we had some fascinating anecdotes, stories and comments from the panel which will set up this afternoon’s session. Judith will explain to the panel members how the Witness Seminar works in a moment and just to those who weren’t here this morning, this is part of the annual Economic and Socio-Research Council festival. A week every year in November various universities around the country put on various public engagement activities, such as this one. This is the fourth Witness Seminar that we’ve put on as part of that series and quite a few people in the room have been involved in some of the earlier ones. Also, there’s an exhibition downstairs about policing, everyday offending and crime, and what happened to people who committed a crime in the past. So, thanks to everyone, especially those that have given their time up to come and I’m sure it’s going to be just as fascinating a session as we had this morning.</td>
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<td>JUDITH ROWBOTHAM</td>
<td>The Witness Seminar programme, the ideas for that originated with Dr Michael Kandiah, who was unable to be with us this morning, but is with us this afternoon. He pioneered the idea of witness seminars that would create a historical record, an oral historical record of individuals, events, themes, ideas, because the exhibition you see downstairs was created because in those days if you wanted to communicate with somebody, you wrote something down. These days you have Facebook, you have social media generally, you have email, all of which is likely to prove ephemeral, so the stories behind the headlines don’t get told. The idea of something like this is to put on record some of those stories, some of those realities, so that we can both fill in for future historians and other people the realities, but also so that, we as academics, you as community members, can feed to us as academics some of your ideas,</td>
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your priorities, so that we can use what we generate here today usefully in guiding and inspiring our research. Now, everything is recorded and is on record in this, but when the event is transcribed, everybody is provided with a copy of the event, if you have spoken, you have a chance to redact, to change, to tweak, because this is not about ... this isn’t journalism, this is not about revelations and scandals and things like that, so, if you’ve said something you don’t want on the record, you’ve changed your mind, that’s fine. Nobody’s going to say “oh, you can’t do that”. You say what you feel needs to be said, if you change your mind later, it can be redacted. That, I think, is one of the important messages that this is about creating something which can be useful. It’s something also where you can feel you’ve made a valid contribution. What I’m going to do is start off by asking each of the panel members if they will introduce themselves, explain their relationship to Devonport, the community and in about five minutes just sum that up. I will then give some questions, very broad questions and eventually, at the end of the first hour, we’ll open it up for comments, contributions and everything from the floor, but if you feel, going through, that you’d like to say something, if the panel members would like to invite a member of the audience to say something, this isn’t some kind of formal classroom, wave a hand to catch my attention and I’ll involve any of you in that sense. The idea is that it should be informative and organic. I started on the left last time, so this time I’m going to start on the right and if I could invite Mark to start off by giving a quick summary.

MARK BIGNALL

Ok, sure. So, my name’s Mark Bignall and I run Hamoaze House, which is the day service down the end of the road at the end of George Street, the old port admiral house. The day service is made up of two buildings. There’s Hamoaze House which is essentially for adults and these are people that are described as having multiple and complex needs, which is to do with four major issues – drugs and alcohol, mental health, offending and accommodation issues. We take referrals from across the city and we offer day services. We’re open for six days a week. People can have formal groups in the morning and participate in a variety of group activities in the afternoon. We’re open for four evenings a week as well, with various activities. Essentially, the purpose for people coming is to make some changes with some of the choices that they’ve been making with their lives, changing some of their behaviour, essentially addressing alcohol and drug-related issues. The length of time that people can stay is open-ended completely, so, everybody that attends needs to ensure that they have a care plan, a purpose for being there and that they’re chipping away working on their care plan, achieving the things that they want to achieve. We also have some family support workers. So, we have an ‘affecting others’ group that takes place on a Tuesday evening and on a Monday morning we have a drop-in coffee session for members of the community and the wider city who have somebody who they love and care about who has an alcohol or drug-related problem, they can come along and get some support. We’re based in the community. Although I wasn’t around when the building originally opened, there was considerable resistance from the community to have such a building. There were lots of
concerns about having people that had alcohol and drug-related issues in Devonport. Over a number of years, we’ve developed a wonderful relationship with the local community and they’re involved in lots of what we do. We have a gym down in the basement and they can access that gym. We run holiday clubs for members of the local community for children during the school holidays and half-term holidays. We have a youth club on a Friday evening that we run. We have a Christmas pantomime, so the service users get together and put on a Christmas pantomime. We invite people in for that. We have a summer fun day. We open up the grounds during the summer and we just celebrate and have a nice day, usually it’s very sunny and it’s been very successful. On Christmas Day, we open the doors and have a Christmas lunch and we do that in collaboration with another charity. We have a house next door called Seymour House and that’s to deal with young people and we work in partnership with ACE, the old Plymouth tuition service and essentially the young people, that I think have been failed by the education system, they can attend there as an alternative to going to a residential establishment and have a youth and educational kind of input. I guess what we’re trying to do, in short, is create a nurturing, safe, decent, warm, caring, respectful environment, that’s also firm, serious and straight, where people can learn to build their confidence and develop pro-social skills, where people can find things that they start to value and cherish. Much of that is sunk into relationships, relations that they have with themselves, relationships that they have with each other. We try to get people involved in doing things for other people. Lots of people that arrive at Hamoaze and Seymour have been done to for most of their lives and we try and change that and give them opportunities to do things for other people. It’s a great way of building self-worth and self-esteem. I mentioned that we have groups every day. The groups that we have, to call them group therapy, I think, would be slightly strong. I think we use light touch therapy. We use something called ‘solution focus therapy’ where people focus on lots of solutions and ways of moving forward. They’re very supportive and people are encouraged to share things and support each other so they don’t feel on their own. We use a lot of what I would think of as pragmatic and kind of humanistic stuff. So, we use the kind of things that kind of work. It doesn’t mean to say that we aren’t ever going to offer people one-to-one or therapy if they need it, but people don’t leave places like Hamoaze House saying “I received some remarkable systemic family therapy”, they leave places like Hamoaze House saying “when I got there I was made welcome, they made me lunch, they did things for me”. So, we try and do things that lots of people describe as ‘thank you’, as going the extra mile and we try to kind of embed that into our treatment programme and make that the norm. We are in the process of cut-backs, as I think lots of social care and charities are and as a result of that we decided that we would try and find ways of making some money, of becoming slightly independent. On that point, we have just recently bought a horse-box and we had a very generous donation of some money and we’re turning the horse-box into a proper barista coffee-box and our plan will be to move the horse-box outside of the grounds of Hamoaze, for those of you who know that area,
there’s lots of footfall during the summer, with a view to people using the service being able to have training in barista work, selling coffee, food and hygiene, customer care, with a view to those people selling coffee. The profits that we make from the coffee will be invested back into the box to develop things and also into Hamoaze and Seymour, to the wider charity. People working in it will get an opportunity to begin to build experience that they’ll be able to translate into a CV to increase their possibilities of employment. We also, very recently, and we’ve just had a decision from the trustees, who have been very visionary, we’ve been given a double-fronted shop up on West Hoe, that we plan to turn into a charity shop. There will be opportunities for clients to get involved in that and do some kind of selling. Clearly, there’ll be opportunities for them to buy some things at a very discounted price and again. Hopefully that will be a way to make some kind of income and make ourselves slightly more independent. The only other thing I wanted to say is that we try very hard in taking the ‘them’ out of the ‘them and us’ so we try and have a very level playing field.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM
Thank you very much Mark. John.

JOHN HAMBLIN
Good afternoon everybody. My name’s John Hamblin and I run an organisation called ‘Shekinah’. Many of you, hopefully, will know of us. We’ve actually been around for 25 years, this year and I guess I feel a bit of an outsider because technically we’re not a Devonport based organisation. We sit on the borders of Devonport and Stonehouse. Many of you will know we’ve been in Bath Street for many, many years and before ‘Shekinah’ was there, there was a place called Bath Street Mission, I think, before that it was another Mission. I think it’s had a presence on that site since about 1870-something. I joined the organisation 15 years ago when we only had the only building and I think our work very much focussed around targeting rough sleepers. We were then, and are still now, the only open access drop-in centre in Plymouth for rough sleepers. We are open six days a week, just about to go to seven. Over the years I seen some huge changes about the people coming over our doorstep. Lots of people say that the people are more complex these days. Personally, I disagree with that. I don’t think people are more complex, I think we’re seeing more complex people, so, I think there’s a difference. I think we get normal people coming through. I guess for us, as an organisation, we realised that giving people cups of tea and clean socks and a meal in their belly actually doesn’t change a lot. It’s great if you’re doing that six days a week, but if they’re still on the street, you’ve got a problem. Over the years we’ve developed quite a comprehensive range of services, not only in Plymouth, but in Torbay as well. We’ve got about 62 staff now working across Plymouth and Torbay. In Plymouth, we’ve still got Bath Street, which I’ll come back to, but we also, I guess nine, 10 years ago, recognised that actually giving people skills and employment opportunities was a good way of breaking the cycle of homelessness and possibly, in some cases, the cycle of addiction. We set up a construction and education training centre. That’s in Stonehouse Street and that’s still going today. In Stonehouse Street, we have a number of opportunities for people. We have a construction training workshop. There’s a co-located boxing gym there and we also do some kind of light
touch therapeutic interventions that Mark talked about. We also have a kind of employment team based there. We would say we do it quite well and we place probably about 100 people a year in Plymouth back into fulltime employment and we support them for up to about 12, 18-months post-employment because that’s the really important bit.

Getting people into employment is relatively straightforward, keeping people there is more difficult. Bath Street is still very much an open access drop-in centre. Eight o’clock in the morning it opens, so we still see the majority of people that are rough sleeping in the city. As you can imagine, at the moment, that’s a huge challenge. For me, at the moment, we are clearly seeing the biggest numbers of rough sleepers in the 15 years that I’ve been involved with ‘Shekinah’. My guess is that any one night, at the moment, we’ve got anywhere between 50 and 60 people sleeping rough on the streets, which is unheard of. If we go back five or six years ago, we may have had around 12 or 13. I guess the other significant thing that happened to us is as we kind of started developing services, we got kind of sucked into the world of criminal justice. We were always in it, let’s be honest, we often label these people as kind of homelessness, addiction, criminal, they are the same person. It’s often the same person bouncing around the system. Several years ago, we were approached by what was the probation service to ask whether we could do some formal work with them. We have for the last probably six years at Stonehouse Street run a probation hub. We have a hub at Stonehouse Street where we offer light touch supervision to people who were under the probation service and are now under the CRC service, as it’s now called. I think that, for us, has been really interesting and I think it’s been very positive for the people coming to the service. At Bath Street on a Tuesday, on a Tuesday afternoon, we run a ‘women only’ space. People that have used it has said it’s really beneficial. I guess we recognise that we deal with a number of women. Our general split is about 80/20. We would say probably overall ‘Shekinah’ is 80% male and 20% female. I don’t think they’re accurate figures, but what I think we’re unearthing is there’s a lot of women out there who would probably choose to stay in abusive relationships rather than tip out onto the street. So, I don’t think we’re seeing the true extent of women coming into the kind of system. So, we have set up a women’s space on a Tuesday afternoon, which is good. I guess more recently we were successful in winning the OPCC – Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner contract to deliver restorative justice across Devon and Cornwall. So, we got on a four-year contract, we’ve got a designated team who are based in Torbay, but we have a worker in Plymouth and a worker in Exeter and a worker in Cornwall. Again, I think there’s some potential for some interesting stuff I think we can do over the coming years. I could waffle on like Mark did, nicely, but I won’t. [laughter] We’ve been around a long time and we’ve seen massive changes. I’m happy to contribute to the debate and I’m happy to contribute to the lustrous world of criminal justice.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM

Thank you very much. Ed.

ED WHITELAW

My name’s Ed Whitelaw, I’m the head of enterprise and regeneration for RIO – Real Ideas Organisation, based here. This is one of our buildings. Our simple starting point is the world can be a better place if
we can have more social enterprise in it. What we mean by that, essentially charitable purposes, but operating like a business. We generate most of our own income. We broadly do four things. We work with individuals, in practice that tends to be quite a lot of young people through schools, but we also have some quite specific programmes that tend to work with young people in a slightly chaotic place and slightly lost between leaving education and trying to find a meaningful job and a place in the world, employment and that kind of thing. We do a lot of work with other organisations, which is often straightforward, sort of commercial consultancy work, local authorities, hospitals, supporting other social enterprises to grow and develop. We do a lot and have a specialism in helping heritage buildings and being more enterprising and have a greater social impact. The third thing we do is we operate so many straightforward businesses that customers understand. We run places like this which sell meeting space, they sell loaves of bread, they sell cups of coffee, they sell weddings, they sell offices, straightforward personal business stuff, which tends to be a lot of where we generate income to support other work from. In the ideal we try and bring those together in one place, working places, so, if we can get those programmes all working together in one place, they tend to stack up to a larger impact and they tend to become much more commercially viable to support the organisation. So, there are a number of communities in the South West that we’ve made a very long-term commitment to and I think it’s that long-term commitment that’s very important. Our first one here is Devonport and I’ll come onto that. We also have a base in Liskeard, also Torbay to some extent and developing work in Gloucester. That long-term stuff is quite interesting because our approach to our work here in Devonport is what we kind of call ‘inclusive regeneration’. The problem that we see with much of regeneration is it’s often public enabled, it’s often driven by private finance. Therefore, the ultimate goal within that is essentially in money. That’s fine and all well and good in many circumstances. The problem with that tends to be that you’ll come into an area that needs regeneration, knock down a lot of houses, build new houses, build new facilities, the price will go up, a whole lot of new people move in and what you tend to do is, rather than solving the social problems that might be there, like crime or whatever that is, health, education, household incomes, you tend to push social problems elsewhere. So, as a social enterprise we’re interested in different ways of doing that, so it doesn’t happen. So, we’re able to invest in Devonport, a big part of that community goes on a long journey and take as many people with that and keep a very diverse community going here. We started with a 25-year lease on this building, it’s now a 125-year lease. So, that’s kind of our interesting starting point, how do we solve social problems and not just push them around. The work with the Guildhall, particularly, this started about 10 years ago, as part of a wider ongoing regeneration of Devonport and there were a set of problems with that and it’s particularly these heritage buildings, which are very much the historic architectural regalia of the area. These have a strong community value, but they’re actually very difficult to operate. This is a Grade I listed building. It’s essentially derelict. They’ve been seven years in the
regeneration investment and still no-one can come up with an idea how to solve the problem of this building, which is really important to evolve because I think it’s symbolic of the value of the community and how people feel and how people look at. I won’t go into the details too much of how this works, you’ll probably get a sense of it, but we’ve been open for seven years, it pays for itself and it creates about 1% profit, which we stick into the community. There are four aims of that project. One is conservation, how we find new approaches for managing heritage and conserving heritage and we have a wealth of difficult, expensive, beautiful, wonderful buildings in this country, all looking for new purposes. On the back of that, we can do work with people individually, directly from support programmes and working with partners and services, doing a lot of work with [inaudible] and help people set up local community businesses to solve problems. The third bit then is really about creating a local economy. This is a very flat local economy, nobody coming in or going out, how do we kick-start that? The fourth bit is the bit that’s really interesting is about how you shift perceptions of the area. I’m really interested in the idea of belief and I don’t mean that in a spiritual way, but I mean that in the sense that one of the key differentiating factors from what is the physical sciences and what is the social sciences and to me, that’s the role of belief. So, the classic example is the economy. If you believe the economy is doing well, they go out and spend money and the economy does well. If people believe the area is a bad area, those who have the ability and mobility to leave, leave. The people who are more vulnerable on the one side tend to get shoved in there and that’s the place that tends to become a worse place to live. So, how do you upset that spiral and create a positive sense of belief about that area that attracts different investment and makes people feel more self-valued? I think that has a real knock-on to what actually goes on in the area.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM

Thank you. Can I now invite Tim.

TIM GIBBS

Hello guys, I’m Tim Gibbs and I work with the Salvation Army hostel up the street. Before I start, I want to thank you guys for your time earlier. It was really interesting to see the history of the police in Devonport and in the rest of Plymouth. There were some fantastic stories from Reg, Alan and Katherine as well. It was really nice to be able to see the other side of the desk. I work at the Salvation Army hostel up the road. We’re just opposite Granby Green and we’ve been there for a very long time. We have about 72 beds there in total, with 10 extra beds. We also have the block of flats behind it, that’s part of our project too. We take people from the street, all the way up, into housing. We also offer quite a lot of support there and we offer food and drink included in the price. So, it’s quite a wholesome and holistic approach. We’re doing quite a lot of different projects with the University and with volunteers at the moment. We worked previously quite closely with the dental school, which has been really fun. My job, what I do, is I am the Safe Street co-ordinator. So, I run a mini-hostel within a hostel, which is slightly confusing, but it’s essentially a dormitory/waiting room for the rest of the city. We work in quite close company with the other hostels nearby and my job is to make sure people are comfortable and that they’re moving forward with their position and making sure that they get the
right support that they need. If somebody’s a higher support needs, it means they’ll be moving forwards a bit quicker and if we can find somebody a place for them to go to straight off the streets, we’ll put them towards the right people, signpost them there. The hostel itself, we offer quite a lot of support. We have probably a staff of about 12 support workers and as I said, a kitchen and cleaning staff that provide a proper support service. What else can I say?

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM

That seems fairly adequate. Finally, can I ask Keith to...

KEITH JOHNSON

Good afternoon everybody. Sorry I wasn’t here this morning, I had a quick appointment at the hospital. I represent the Devonport Naval Heritage Centre. I’m the co-ordinator for the volunteers. What we concentrate on over the years is we’ve been trying to save so many artefacts that would’ve been thrown away or destroyed. Also, to represent the maritime history of the West Country, which is sadly neglected. This is one of the most historic centres in the country for naval history, yet compared with London, Portsmouth and all the other towns that have got naval backgrounds, we’ve suffered quite poorly, about to change. So, what we’ve done over the years is create eight galleries and a nuclear submarine and that’s been fairly popular, but our problem is we’ve been integrated and locked in with the Dockyard and when you get anywhere near the Dockyard, you’re talking about nuclear safety passes and goodness knows what else. What I have done just recently is ring fence lists so we don’t have to get passes for people to come into the historic centre, but if we want to go to the submarine, then we go through this [inaudible] of getting people checked out and what nationalities they are and so it goes on. The other thing we concentrate on as well, I know often a neglected part of Devonport history, in particular, is the Dockyard worker. Now the whole of Devonport here, as you see it today or most of it, the historic bit anyhow, is as a direct result of that Dockyard down there. From 1691, when it was green fields, it developed into the largest town of the three towns. So, you had Devonport here, Plymouth, which was a dirty, smelly town down the road and Stonehouse sandwiched between the pair. In a very short period of time Devonport had a greater population than Plymouth did and it was, by far, richer than Plymouth. The reason for that is it was sucking in all these people from around the country who were a skilled workforce and then they set up a town and then the town developed into people wanting to sell things, provide services. As I say, the Dockyard worker, a bit neglected. So, we do a lot of work on presenting the Dockyard worker and his lifestyle. We’ve got some photographs of people, not so very long ago, handling asbestos, women during the War. So, we’d like to show that history of how basically the workforce had to contend with some really dangerous work. The submarine, itself, we are hoping, in the very near future, that it will be moved from its present location to number one dock and then cocooned in there in a dry block. Then we’ll be able to get people to come straight down into the gate and onto the submarine, so we won’t have to go through this nonsense. Well, it’s not nonsense really, for obvious reasons, we don’t want the general public just walking into a nuclear site. Our archives, we’ve got a fairly comprehensive archive and we discover things all the time. The classic is, we found 10,000 plate
Negatives in a skip and we've gone through only about 1,000 of those plate negatives and we're picking out stuff like ... for instance we saw some gun barrels on the dockside and we done some research and we found out that they were Graf Spee's guns. Now, if any of you know the famous battle during the War and it was a secret deal between the British Secret Service and the people that were scrapping Graf Spee to smuggle the guns back. We also found photographs of HMS Campbeltown being converted to look like a German destroyer prior to the St Nazaire raid and so it goes on. We found another one, the launching mechanism to launch a battleship. Now that doesn't sound very important, but they don't launch battleships anymore. At the moment, the archives are up in Hillcrest, which is in Plympton.

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**KEITH JOHNSON**

I'll summarise it quite quickly in as much that we are hoping in the very near future, well not hoping, it will happen, that NMRN, that's Naval Museum and Royal Navy will take over the Heritage Centre. That means that we're then into a different ball game. We're not having to deal with the Navy, we'll be able to get lots of money which we haven't been able to get before. For instance, they're throwing a million pounds at the refurbishment of the two remaining terraced houses. That's almost overnight and so you will see, in the very near future, a big development down there. Education, we do a lot of stuff with schools. In fact, I'm giving a lecture to a school tomorrow about crime and punishment and we do lectures on a monthly basis. Other agencies that we get involved with – the University, the city museum, Bodmin Jail and [inaudible]. On that basis, that's what we are and that's what we're going to be doing. Thank you very much.

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**JUDITH ROWBOTHAM**

Thank you all. One of the things that Steve Fleetwood said when we interviewed him as he wasn't able to come to the session due to an emergency meeting, was that when he started working as a policeman, the ethos had been something which charred very much with something that Ed said, which was that you policed your own community and you didn't care about pushing problems elsewhere. They then became somebody else's problems and that the attitudes were very different. So, I think that one of the things which I'd like to ask people about is where they see Devonport from their experience as fitting into the wider issues of Plymouth and how important it is that there is some kind of, their experience, their ideas, some kind of Devonport identity as part of what they do. If I could start with you Mark.

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**MARK BIGNALL**

Could you repeat that for me please?

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**JUDITH ROWBOTHAM**

Basically, are you very conscious of working as part of a wider Plymouth community and how important in that do you feel it to be to reflect a Devonport community identity?

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**MARK BIGNALL**

Ok. We're funded to work with the wider city. So, we work with everybody in the city that would require the service. But, we had a bit of a local focus and we've prioritised access over the years to people who live locally and we provide a number of services to people that live locally, like access to the gym or attending some of the ‘fun days’ so that we're very much part of Devonport and want to be able to support
Devonport in that way, as well as linking up with the wider city and the people that live in the city. So, we support people in that way.

**JUDITH ROWBOTHAM**

I know you said you were sort of on the borders and historically Stonehouse has been ... squeezed between Plymouth on the one hand ...

**JOHN HAMBLIN**

We work across the city really. I am, even now, still very conscious that there seems to be this healthy/unhealthy rivalry between Stonehouse and Devonport. Sometimes people that use our services will often talk about Devonport or Stonehouse in maybe kind of [inaudible] ways, but I guess from a rough sleeper’s point of view, if you’re rough sleeping in Stonehouse or Devonport, it makes little difference really. I guess on a personal basis, without upsetting anyone in the room, I’ve just got some really mixed views about this whole move onto identity around particular areas. I don’t know how positive that is for the city or whether that actually drives the vision. The amount of time I would argue potentially that we should be coming together on some of this stuff as opposed to sitting there saying it’s all about Devonport, it’s all about Stonehouse, it’s all about Plymouth. So, I guess I come across a very mixed view.

**JUDITH ROWBOTHAM**

Ed.

**ED WHITELAW**

I absolutely agree with that. I think there tends to be this double-edged sword, a two-way street. It can be very useful in terms of a sense of density and community and that can be useful in terms of mobilising and getting things done, but it can also become, if you’re not careful, the danger is it becomes a bit of a straightjacket, a bit isolationist and I think in the wider world, we’ve seen some of that idea. So, I think from our point of view we are really interested driving a diverse community, a dynamic and connected community where people come in and [inaudible] some mobility around that. The Devonport framing, it has some uses, but it has some dangers as well. I guess what that means in a practical sense is no public body gives this building any money to run. It needs to generate a certain amount of footfall and business, essentially, for it to keep its lights on, to keep it doing the things that its doing, employing local people, providing the services it does. So, fundamentally, and if we are to improve Devonport, improve the perception of Devonport, improve the local economy, improve opportunities for people, we need to bring other people from around a place. That allows us to support people who we see as our beneficiaries and the people in Devonport. So, it’s that kind of dynamism and that flow, but part of what it is that people come here to see is, as Steve was saying, is Devonport’s identity and history. So, it’s an interesting, complicated, two-way street. We want to preserve that identity, but only to the sense that it’s positive, constructive. I think it was, 10, 20 years ago, this is Devonport, we’re Devonport people, “we don’t like you, go away” and it was and it did feel quite closed and more isolated.

**TIM GIBBS**

I work for a company called ‘Devonport House’ and we have based our identity around the idea of Devonport, for better or for worse. I do think that it is interesting this idea of community and certainly in Plymouth we are trying to broaden out rather than lock-down our local areas. So, we work together with our hostels and we have a whole network of people who decide where would be best for a person to go,
where you can support their support needs. Unfortunately, on a national level, it almost seems like the opposite is happening with us. We get told that the people have to have a local connection to the area before we can support them. As Ed has said, you don’t have the opportunity there to move to a new place or to start afresh somewhere else, if when you get there, they’re going to reconnect you and put you on a bus and send you back. So, whether or not that is a good thing or a bad thing, it means that we can allocate our resources more locally and maybe help people who would have more of a chance of succeeding in that area, but if they’d left the area, because they’re not succeeding there, what use is that one? I do also understand the Devonport, Stonehouse rivalry that we have there. Some of the people who we supported have never left Plymouth. I’ve got a chap who I supported who hasn’t even gone to Dartmoor. The people who I see, the by and large of them, I think, are English and are pretty much local.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM: Keith.

KEITH JOHNSON: Well, we’re in a peculiar situation. We’re not in support like your other agencies on the top table here. Where we fit in is the promotion of Plymouth/Devonport. We get people from all around the world and it’s increasing all the time now, who have got some historical link, in as much as we get people from New Zealand, America, Australia, Canada, want to know where their relatives came from and what happened during the War and what their grandfather did during the War. At the same time, we present the Royal Navy in a modern environment as well and the families. So, we’ve got two sides – one is history and the other is where is Plymouth going? and where is Devonport going? There’s some exciting things going on in Devonport. The interesting thing was, this new development, which is called Ocean Gate, just down the road. The Navy pinched 60 acres from Devonport during the War and built a hutt camp there to plan for D-Day. Now that’s all been given back. All of these houses that you see around here are part of that deal. Ocean Gate is where the Navy is putting in development to do with light maritime industries including midget submarines. Now what they’ve done and how it’s impacted on us, the builders were building, this is in the last few weeks, and suddenly they hit all these cellars … Fore Street, the old Fore Street, the main shopping centre … which was completely obliterated during the War. Now, they’re building on top of that and they didn’t have a clue what had been there before and suddenly they’re going into banked cellars, with the vaults still in place; into a pub, with the beer still in place; into an iron-mongers, with all the shovels and stuff in place. They came to us and said “for God’s sake, can you tell us what was here before?”. That’s going to be an exciting development and they’re linking in with us. So, we’ve got light industry, we’ve got history and we’ve got the development of Devonport growth going on at the same time. It’s quite interesting.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM: Within what has come out already, from this panel, but also thinking of what we heard this morning, I think the question that I would like to ask everybody in the panel to reflect, and as I say, if there’s anybody here locally who’s got any comments, please wave a hand, but, is there a particular challenge associated with Devonport and for instance, its reputation? One of the things we heard this morning was that certainly
late ‘70’s, ‘80’s, from a police perspective, Devonport had a reputation and it wasn’t necessarily a very positive reputation. So, as community organisations of varying kinds, is that something which is still a challenge? Is it something which was never, in your understanding, that much of a challenge? and are there particular Devonport challenges or is it really city wide, indeed that affects most cities? Mark.

**MARK BIGNALL** Seventeen years ago, when I started coming to Devonport it was not uncommon for there to be maybe once or twice a month, a car on fire somewhere and there was quite a reputation and a notoriety that went with Devonport, but over the years I think that that has changed considerably. I think some of that is to do with opening Devonport up, as it were, and other people feeling able to come into Devonport and use the services in Devonport and access some of the sea-front, in a way that maybe hasn’t been accessed quite as much. I think there are people that would like to hang-on to the reputation of Devonport for a variety of reasons, but I think it is definitely changing. I think it’s a very different place from what it was many, many years ago. I guess that the challenge is to ... I suppose when the walls came down, it was a great big day and there is something very important about walls coming down and people being able to come into the place and access the place. So, people can live here and be happy and safe here, but have people kind of visiting and coming in and people can leave here and go elsewhere in the city and be a part of it. I think that any kind of future for Devonport that has a trajectory that has to do with walls or closing things down is not going to work. I think it has to be something to do with us all looking after each other and looking after the place.

**JUDITH ROWBOTHAM** Keith, what would you say to that comment?

**KEITH JOHNSON** I’ve seen two aspects. When I served in the Royal Marines, as you well know, Hamoaze House was the headquarters of the [inaudible] forces and that area was really rich, to put it mildly. You can see the development there going on and there is a new feeling within Devonport and you can see that the housing and light industry is coming back into Devonport. I can see it taking off. It’s like most cities, they start off and then they develop out and the hub of the city becomes derelict and then suddenly it becomes fashionable to refurbish those houses. You can see the same here, now. I think Devonport will become fashionable again. You go down to Durnford Street, I know that’s in Stonehouse, but you’ll see all the buildings there being refurbished. What they’re going to do with Stonehouse Barracks and other places ... look at Royal William Yard, that was a ‘dead duck’ as such, now it’s quite a place to go.

**JUDITH ROWBOTHAM** Ed.

**ED WHITE LA W** I think the current problems are part of this, broadly speaking, part of this wider Plymouth challenge that is, we are this place, rather far, far away and therefore our economy is slightly challenged by that and therefore a lot of problems that we have in the city generally spin out of the property and that results [inaudible]. I think the second thing is absolutely the reputation, as Mark has said, it has really improved. What is interesting now is what I get a sense of talking to people, like the police, while Devonport’s on the up, I think during the last 10 years, the wider country, is going down. So, partially we have seen a growing
development of crime more recently which is something that is a current debate and we need to focus on. in terms of that reputational stuff, which I think is really interesting, how do we work with the assets of the community, the density of the community, to make this bad stuff good. As an anecdote, I had the misfortune of being involved in the regeneration of Tiger Bay in Cardiff many years ago and that was purely private driven regeneration. Tiger Bay, a huge wealth, a very distinct wealth of heritage being a commercial dock and very much linked to the West Indies and a huge Afro-Caribbean community, very vibrant, very colourful, and there was some really great [inaudible], that what you should’ve done was to turn Tiger Bay into something fantastic, but what they did was essentially bulldoze it all, the people included, and Tiger Bay doesn’t exist, it’s just gone. I think what we need to do, yes, it had a rough and ready reputation, but we could’ve worked with that and turned that into something that was unique, but that didn’t happen and when I think about the regeneration of Devonport, I think it’s not going to be like that. We’ll work with the stories of heritage, the interest, as well as the rough and ready bits, but turn that into something that has a positive and has a reason for people to come here and keep that density.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM Tim.

TIM GIBBS I do think that Devonport does have a reputation. How it acquired that reputation I’m not entirely sure, I’m fairly new to Devonport. My family’s been here since 2001. My dad worked at the Salvation Army before I did. I’ve only worked here since 2014. We have had the issue of seeing the same people over and over again, which is a real problem. A guy, who’s just come back in, he’s been with us seven times. Seven times insisting we re-house him. So, whilst things are changing on the surface of Devonport, as you walk through it, if you walk through Devonport from one end, coming up from Union Street, it starts to look really nice, whereas I used to walk to work through the park and I’d come the housing and it was a completely different atmosphere. It was really interesting to see that. Whilst it is getting better, we’re still seeing the same clients and the same issues and the same problems. In fact, we’re seeing new problems like legal-highs and other drug issues. We’re now even discovering that we have quite big problems with human-trafficking in the country that previously eluded us. This is the thing, even in the hostel, if you want to look for trouble, you will find it. It’s kind of our duty to find these places where the issues need to be addressed.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM John.

JOHN HAMBLIN I think Devonport has always had a reputation. I’ve lived in and around Plymouth most of my life, does it have any more of a reputation than Whitleigh, Swilly or Barne Barton? I question that. I think people in those areas would say it’s worse in Devonport and that sort of stuff. I guess the bit that slightly troubles me, is whilst there’s lots of talk about the fabric of Devonport improving and none of us can disagree with the fact that if you walk around Devonport, it is better. The life expectancy figures don’t tell me this. So, if you go to public health and you speak to public health about the life expectancy figures in the city, there is a massive disparity of about 12 years, I think, between Devonport and
other areas and we haven’t seen a real shift in this stuff yet. So, whilst the superficial stuff’s being done, which is great, actually there is some deep-rooted stuff that I’m still not personally convinced we’ll manage to get to grips with. Poverty and life expectancy figures for Devonport are not [coughing] with the rest of the city.

ED WHITELAY

I think that’s absolutely right. There are things ... and it comes back to the idea of making generational commitments, I think there are things that you can chuck a reasonable amount of money at which can make a big difference quite quickly, and you need to do those, which are housing, social infrastructure and crime. You can deal with those in a 10 to 15-year period. John’s absolutely right, what you see ... it’s a bit confusing ... broadly, if you look at typically the people who’ve been here for [inaudible] they’re ... the challenge that they’ll experience ... actually life expectancy, health, education, income, which are very generational and very cultural, haven’t really shifted much. I think if you look at Devonport as a whole, it does look like it’s improved, but essentially for the whole of, half another population of people have moved in. Those things take a real long time to shift because they’re about people, they’re about families, they’re about generation. I guess we need to do this stuff first.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM

You talked about the belief.

MARK BIGNALL

I agree with that. Certainly, at Hamoaze we’re seeing third-generations of people coming into Hamoaze now, which illustrates, certainly to me, that things aren’t changing or we aren’t getting it right. The other thing that I’m curious about, I think John and I have talked about this before, there are places in Devonport where you can easily buy one can of beer early in the morning. Maybe if you went to other areas in the city, you wouldn’t be able to do that. There are shops in Devonport where they have very cheap cider stacked from floor to ceiling. There are more affluent areas of the city where’s there less poverty where you certainly wouldn’t see that and there are shops in Devonport that have machines where if you want to take money out, you would pay a few quid to do that. There are other cash-machines in other areas of the city where that does not happen. I think there is an underbelly of poverty and of health and equality that needs to be properly addressed. It would be easy to lose sight of those things with all the stuff that’s being done to make the place look nice and we must not lose sight of that. There are still people that come to Hamoaze and some of the young people that come to Hamoaze from some of the more impoverished areas of the city, who are not able to have breakfast in the morning, we give them breakfast, they have no money. There are lots of people using food-banks that live in some of those difficult areas. I think those are the things we must not lose sight of.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM

What has been coming up quite regularly in all of your comments is an implicit, at least, and sometimes explicit, link between poverty, inequality and the Devonport community and law-breaking crime, deprivation and all of those things. So, one of the things that that raises is where does that leave the police? As one of the prime agencies, which have from the start, have the modern uniform police, been expected to, as part of the community, police that community, have responsibility for protecting the vulnerable, for detecting and
preventing crime, things like that. Do you feel that with your various users, for instance, that that is happening? Are you getting what you need? What would you like to have more of?

**JOHN HAMBLIN**

My heart goes out to the police. I would like the police to go back to being police. I guess, from me, what I’m seeing is the police wearing half-a-dozen hats. We don’t often call the police. Generally, when we call the police we need help, but often they’re the wrong people to call. What we actually need is access to mental health services. The gateway to mental health services may or may not be sometimes with the police. Our observations of the police is that they’re not police anymore, they’re social workers, they’re mental health practitioners, they’re so on and so on. The focus always goes onto the police doesn’t it, because sadly if anything goes wrong, they are the people that will be there. If you take a step back, you could say there was an intervention back there that could’ve prevented involving the police and nine times out of ten, there is. Me, and I’m sure others will agree, access to those other services is just difficult, really difficult.

**JUDITH ROWBOTHAM**

This is Katherine, who’s a Devonport Police Community Support Officer.

**KATHERINE HICKLING**

I agree with that 100%. There are a number of families in Devonport that are in desperate need of help, desperate need of other services and as the police, we can put in a referral to refer them to other agencies, but I feel other agencies nine times out of ten, don’t meet the threshold for what is required from other agencies. So, a lot of people, unfortunately, are going without any help and any support because they don’t meet the threshold, which is why nine times out of ten the police have that involvement.

**JOHN HAMBLIN**

I think my other worries is we often revert back to kind of Dickensian ways of dealing with it. Let’s put another ‘drink zone’ in, it’s not going to work. Just read the national evidence of that. Street drinkers drink, addicts take drugs, do we want that? – no – but, that’s the harsh reality of the world we work in. You can put every ‘drinking no zone’ or whatever they want to call it, in the area, and it just soaks so much of your time. I just see that all the time and I think “this is just ridiculous”. It’s not working. It’s not effective.

**MARK BIGNALL**

I think doing it that way also goes back to what we were saying earlier about moving the problem from one area to another. If there’s a ‘no drink zone’ put in Devonport, then people will move elsewhere. I do think that a lot of people that are doing those things are not necessarily people without a home, but are people who are lonely and want to meet up with other people, so, they sit in the streets and drink. Usually it’s near a place where they can pool their money together to either buy alcohol or buy cans individually when they get enough money to do that. I think what we’re saying kind of illustrates, the police have a very difficult job to do because there are less services. The services there are in demand, they’ve got lots of waiting lists, thresholds have been increased in order to try and manage that, where else do these people go? I think it’s about a whole system change. It’s not just about the police. It’s across the board. There’s a whole culture change and a whole system change where whatever the mental health difficulties are in Plymouth, John mentioned some public health figures earlier, and public health in Plymouth are saying that there are 27,000 in Plymouth
with lower-level mental health problems and services need to be able to manage those things. Those 27,000 people will never ever get a service from the current mental health provision in the city. We need all other services to be managing those people and supporting those people. I think we have to be very creative in the way that we work together and manage things better so that some of the early intervention stuff that John referred to, is happening and we’re kind of preventing this. We’re seeing it and preventing it. So, I don’t think we’re doing it.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM This is Ed.

ED WHITEWAW I agree entirely with all of that. I think the problem lies in we’re seeing quite a significant cut-back in … there’s broader support, non-statutory services … classic example which we see in Plymouth is beds in Derriford Hospital, there are three-and-a-half wards full of people in the hospital who don’t need to be in hospital all the time and that’s because the services that used to exist to keep them healthier have all been cut-back. The services that help them get out of hospital, back into society and being independent and having [inaudible], I would suggest maybe and I suspect that the matter of policing is similar. So, a lot of these services that are working [inaudible] or might have picked up people or get them back into society are no longer … cut-backs or thresholds raised etc. More and more problems are landing on the shoulders of the police in a way that they shouldn’t do. That said, and I’m a big supporter of community policing, I think some of the evidence that Devonport suggested when there was a regeneration effort here and significant funding, actually what they funded was quite a lot of those roles and that had a really interesting and positive impact on [inaudible]. Now that’s gone, I think it’s time to do this change.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM Tim.

TIM GIBBS I think they’ve got some cracking police officers in Devonport. I really do and I do think that the service users and the locals have a real respect for a lot of them. There is a culture of not wanting to talk to the police, but they do have time for them and they will say “hello” and the police officers will say “hello” as well. There’s a bit of banter between our guys as well, which I do appreciate and can be on the receiving end of, sometimes. I do think we have a culture of wearing a lot of hats in the service, at the moment. When we get people coming in, they’re not people with loads of support needs, that’s for sure, people are on the streets for so many different reasons. You’ve got health, addictions, family issues, domestic relationship breakdowns, it’s a nightmare trying to refer people to the right places and do a little bit of signposting. The training that I’ve been given and I’m sure that the police get so much more training that I do, it’s so difficult to keep track of all of it. There’s not just one … I wish there was just one solution to it, but there’s not just one problem, it’s a dozen of different problems, all at the same time. So, fair-play to you guys for the efforts that you put in.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM Keith, your sense of history and heritage.

KEITH JOHNSON Yes, I come from a different background to these gentlemen here. They’re dealing with problems within the city and a certain population within the city. I think if we’re not careful, we start concentrating on that, not understanding that the city is moving in other directions. The
vast majority of people haven’t got those problems. I quite like the idea of where we’re going and that’s talking to school children, educating them about the shoulders that they stand on. We get school children coming in and they get quite animated and quite interested in their heritage. You’ve got to put pride back into a community. You’ve got to make a community feel that it’s special. I understand the problem that these agencies have got and to be quite honest with you, I wouldn’t have the patience. Sometimes I think I stand just to the right of Genghis Khan. I do see, just in the streets around here, some of the problems that they’ve got to contend with. As far as the police are concerned, I think yes, they’ve been forced into carrying out functions which they really shouldn’t be doing. There should be other agencies that should be taking on that role, but policing is difficult. I don’t think, to even a policeman, you realise the wear and tear on you and the person because you’re confronting all the time the part of the population that are either in trouble or you’re trying to sort out. Having travelled the world, as I have done, and I worked abroad, I don’t think some of the British people understand how lucky they are because in some of the places I’ve been, you’ve only got to blink at a policeman and before you know where you are, you’re in a cell with your thumbs tied to the ceiling. People just don’t understand how good the British police force is in comparison to a lot around the world.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM

I think what is so interesting about these responses is that while there is a very clearly perceived need that something more needs to be done in order to ... not uniform police, but policing generally. After all, everybody is responsible, if you like, for policing themselves, communities and things like that, but the uniform police are seen as actually facing a huge challenge and doing their damnedest. It’s a remarkably positive response from all of you in relation to that, so what do you think is needed? Melanie.

MELANIE SIMMONDS

Although I’m a serving police officer, my personal view is that I struggle sometimes when I hear politicians talking about crime falling and that’s then a justification for cutting investment in police and perhaps other services, because the reality is that our role is much more than simply responding to and investigating crime. In fact the majority of our time will be spent on non-crime related matters such as assisting people experiencing a mental health crisis or locating missing people. Safeguarding is also a large area of our work so I feel it’s very simplistic to link crime statistics alone to police funding.

I do also think that for young people growing up we need to consider what role models they have to look up to. What role models do the young people in Devonport have? Is it sports stars? Is it police officers, politicians? Perhaps not. A lot of questions I have posed there that would be my reflections at this time.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM

Anybody from the panel?

KEITH JOHNSON

I do wonder about the police force in one area. I speak from some experience because my daughter’s a profiler in the Metropolitan Police and her husband is a Detective Sergeant in the SA. One of their biggest complaints is that the politicisation of senior officers and they make decisions based on basically what they think their political masters and their careers need to progress. I think that’s a bit of a tragedy. It’s
where the police, in some cases, have not got control of what they want to do, either with it being a budget factor or whether it be a political rein.

**ED WHITELAW**

I very much agree. It is why do people make the decisions that they do? I think culture is important in that environment to people. People conform to what goes on around them. I think the problem we have here in Devonport [inaudible] quite an isolated community and they’re brought up in that and people [inaudible] it’s very, very hard to break out of that. I think we really need to understand that. Morality is very flexible and depends on the people [inaudible] and people tend to conform to that. Going back to our starting point and part of what we’re trying to do, it’s really diversifying, the experiences people gain and create the opportunities to get into different things and see how people live their lives, this can be a positive thing. Devonport is a place where you can succeed. It’s creating those opportunities, but also the belief that I can do that and I can do that. It’s always going to be difficult, but that’s part of it. Just a few little anecdotes on that. We have done quite a lot of work in the school here and what we found was that the school here is really, really good. Our focus wasn’t only around supporting the school, because they’re doing a very good job and adding support value to the young people. The problem was the wider community and what’s going on in the households. So, how do we change that? That kind of led up to the variety of different projects. I guess one thing … I’ll try to give an example of what I mean … one of the earliest projects that we … we had a fashion here about eight years ago. They were doing fashion shoots around Devonport, lots of young girls followed them around absolutely amazed by this. It’s putting that thing in that community and saying this happens where I am, I can be in these things and there are opportunities and choices. It’s that cultural challenge which I think we should try and create those opportunities as much as possible.

**JUDITH ROWBOTHAM**

Mark.

**MARK BIGNALL**

I agree with Ed and I was listening to what you were saying and making some comments. I think the problem is complex and I think some of the solutions are complex. I don’t think they’re easy, but I think there are some key things that we can start doing and learning differently. I think there’s something about early intervention, about spotting things kind of early and giving people the right support at the right time and the resources to do that. Support sometimes is about time. It is labour intensive. It’s time intensive. It needs to be costed and paid for in order to create or make a difference where suddenly it all sort of stops and the money isn’t being invested in crisis firefighting and regretting that things weren’t done much earlier, but lots of money invested here to kind of prevent people then moving onto a situation that we’re all trying to deal with. I think we need to be able to have people who are very skilled, engage with people, people who are having difficulties and understanding what their difficulties are and supporting them in making changes and I think the changes might need to come from them and I think they need to be changes that are realistic and changes that they can sustain above and beyond moving out of services. I think we need to do that in a spirit of decency and kindness and care and warmth and,
dare I even use the word love. A lot of the people that I certainly meet at Hamoaze, come to Hamoaze and they’re using alcohol and drugs as a form of self-medication to deal with lots of other things in their lives, be that trauma or undiagnosed mental health problems, whatever it might be. It occurs to me that the kind of things that I thrive on, the kind of things that I enjoy and makes me feel good about myself are the kind of things that everybody enjoys and makes them feel good about themselves. I think there are a lot of pragmatic humanistic things that we can do around people that will give them a very different experience and I think a lot of that is to do the kind of relationships they have with themselves and the relationships they have with everybody else in the world. If we can help people to improve those things, then I think that has a knock-on effect in terms of the decisions and the choices that they make and the risks or the risk taken behaviour they will or not get into. I don’t think the solutions are easy and I do think we need to be looking at early intervention a lot more than we ever have.

TIM GIBBS

Something that I see quite a lot is I see quite a lot of young people coming through our services. We had 21 care-leavers come through Devonport House last year which was quite a high number and another thing I’ve noticed is that housing and things like that isn’t really something I was ever taught at school. I wasn’t taught how to do my housing. I wasn’t taught how to pay housing benefit or do my Council Tax or add up that sort of stuff, and that is a big old gap in the market which worries me, to be honest, in areas where people are growing up without role models. We see quite a lot of people who do grow up in Devonport in the times that you guys described, the 1970’s and the 1980’s, so, it really isn’t too surprising … if you grow up around that kind of chaos, what do you really have to look forward to in Devonport?

MARK BIGNALL

Can I just say, if we’re looking at 21 care-leavers going into a homeless hostel, what is going on? These are people leaving care, leaving a structured service where there needs to be plans and ongoing support and they end up in a homeless hostel. Young people in a hostel with much older, very chaotic people. It’s dangerous. It’s disrespectful. We’re failing, we really are.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM

You were talking about the importance of aftercare when you get people into work, for instance.

JOHN HAMBLIN

On so many points, I think there is something about the inequality gap. What we know is, a more equal society is good for everybody and actually I’m living in a world at the moment where society is becoming more unequal on a daily basis and the gap is getting bigger and bigger. So, it’s no surprise to me. I’ve often said that rough sleeping is a barometer of society. It’s no surprise to me today we’re sat here with some of the biggest rough sleeping seen, because I think is getting worse. I’m just slightly worried that we become accepting of some of this stuff. Years ago, we talked about food-banks. I was probably one of a number of people that said “we shouldn’t have any food-banks” and actually, we’ve just accepted food-banks. It’s wrong. In the 21st century, it’s wrong. People getting meal vouchers and having to queue up to get something to put in their belly, it’s just inherently wrong. Sorry, I’m not answering your question about aftercare, but I just want to go back to the police question which was about more and more pressure on the
police. A classic example where police, in my view, have had to pick up a load more work, has been the recent privatisation/car crash of the probation service. So, if we look at how the probation service has been split in half, you’ve now got the NPS, the National Probation Service, the other half, the low-risk offenders have been hoofed out. So, people who were, in my view, getting quite good supervision, probably at best will get a phone call. It is no surprise to me. You don’t supervise people appropriately. What we know is when you have face-to-face meetings with people, you see people’s eyes, you can see what they look like, you can have a really good understanding of where they are. You can’t get that by a phone system. So, it’s no surprise to me that many people, on the CRC side of probation now, probably have been picked up by the police. The police probably wouldn’t have touched before. So, a car crash.

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<th>JUDITH ROWBOTHAM</th>
<th>I’m going to throw this open now to the audience. I saw one hand. Steve Pearce.</th>
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<tr>
<td>STEVE PEARCE</td>
<td>Yes, Steve Pearce. For the benefit of the tape, as they say, a former police officer in Plymouth. One question, I think Brendan’s gone, hasn’t he?</td>
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<td>KIM STEVENSON</td>
<td>Yes, he’s been called to an emergency.</td>
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<td>STEVE PEARCE</td>
<td>I just wonder of the current position. I’m retired and my knowledge is quite dated, but I like to think that when I was in police towards the end of my service I knew Plymouth quite well. But what’s in place now, within the city? Are all the people on the top table, effectively, in some sort of over overarching partnership or policy or strategy group. Or are you all working independently in your own little corners? Because I know at least two of the charities quite well on the top table, and I’m referring to my time when there was quite an effective partnership network with all agencies who had funding. They had people in positions, I think, that could do things and change things and bring things together more and therefore tackle the problems as a whole, as opposed to what I suspect is happening these days. It appears more disjointed with everyone beavering away in their own little corner. Is there anything in the city that I’ve lost touch?</td>
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<td>JOHN HAMBLIN</td>
<td>Well, I think there is still a health and well-being board ...</td>
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<td>MARK BIGNALL</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
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<td>JOHN HAMBLIN</td>
<td>... which you’d probably argue as an overview of civil kind of issues you talk about and I think in all fairness Steve, there’s certainly several agencies around the kind of multiple and complex needs stuff that I’ve talked about, are working far closer together and actually meeting on a regular basis. I think there’s far more collaboration than about system change, but it’s kind of very difficult when you’re shovelling it out the back and it’s coming in twice as fast in the front-door. I think we all feel ... we were only saying today ... we feel overwhelmed by the demand at the moment. The prevention work that we’d all like to get back to, because I think back in your day Steve, there was some really good prevention stuff going on, prevention work has gone. If anybody in this room thinks we’re doing really effective prevention work, I don’t want to upset people, we’re not. We’re fire-fighting at best and we’re struggling with that one, if I’m honest.</td>
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I agree with John. I think we’re doing lots of fire-fighting. I think prevention doesn’t really happen and I think there’s a problem in evidencing how prevention prevents, how giving me some input at the age of five stops me from becoming terribly problematic and needing lots of service at the age of 15. In terms of what’s happening, are we working together? All the kind of complex needs money and services have all got together and we meet on a monthly basis. That’s something called a SOG, a System Optimisation Group and essentially the purpose of that is to look at how we can improve systems and given that there’s cut-backs, there’s not going to be any more money, but what we can do to become leaner and meaner and better and create better outcomes for people using services. The commissioners have got alongside that and the way that they are now commissioning services ... there was a time when there’d be a pot in the middle of the room and we’d all be bidding for that pot and not really talking to each other and not really working very well together and hogging clients. I think that culture has significantly changed and there’s been a great big move away from silo-working. There’s a number of us, ‘Shekinah’ included, about eight agencies that we’ve got together and we’re planning ... we formed an alliance ... and we’re planning to tender for the complex needs money next year when it comes out, or maybe even this year if it comes out, with a view to a number of us offering a bespoke service and hopefully the experience at the end will be that all they’ve experienced is just one service, but actually there will be a number of services getting together, sharing things and becoming economically much more viable and skilled and improving the outcomes for clients.

[inaudible] ... there’s a slightly more positive bit from a social enterprise sort of social economy point of view on how we approach the world. So, the answer is yes and no. No because of various cut-backs, the time and the resources to do prevention to [inaudible] are much more restricted. I think on the more positive end of that, and where we’re involved in this in a more strategic level is around [inaudible] and growth. So, we have this thing in the city which I think is quite a good thing called ‘The Growth Board’ which brings together [inaudible] sector, private sector, public sector and there are separate sub-boards within that. I chair another one which is called ‘Connective Plymouth’ which is like the digital strategy [inaudible], but there is another one called ‘The Inclusive Growth Board’ which really looks at how we, centre wise, our local economy in such a way that it starts to try and address some of these situations that are much more root level. So, I guess part of the problem of what’s been going on in the economic field to the way we understand the economy is that it’s gone totally numerical. I think, the famous saying that “while maths brought rigour to economics, it also brought more [inaudible]”. Economics is fundamentally a social science. So, economics in the city over the last 10 years, essentially measured GBA, which is a [inaudible] mathematical calculation. The problem with that was actually very blunt instruments and quite [inaudible] science. If you look at the GBA for the city of the last 10 years, it’s gone up, which suggests everyone in Plymouth is getting richer, of course we all know that’s not happening. What has been happening over the last 10 years is, and this is not picked up by using a simple mathematical measure
like GBA, is that the top 20% of earners became richer and richer, the bottom percentage became poorer and poorer. [inaudible] So, what they’re adapting now is let’s look at that top bottom 20% and let’s have our targets for the city on how to improve the economic level and social situation for that [inaudible], we start measuring our success on that. Then there’s looking at targeting things like Twitters [inaudible] and if we can get 1,000 of them into meaningful employment, then actually we can start to make a change to ... because if we start doing those things which are long-term and big, we actually start improving issues around poverty which start to drive some [inaudible]. So, very sort of strategic economic change. That is going on and has been accepted in the city and from that policy the actions are starting to [inaudible].

TIM GIBBS I’m Tim and I don’t think there’s been enough anecdotes on this panel. So, I recently encountered an older woman who was staying with us on our ‘safe street’ programme. We had her referred in off the street and I was helping her put belongings away in storage and I noticed in a bag she had a breadknife about this long and I said “oh, what have you got this for?” and she said “it’s for slicing bread”, but I did have to confiscate that knife. One thing I realised afterwards, I sat down and Googled her name and it came up with a ‘Herald’ article about how she’d previously been apprehended by the police for threatening someone with a knife and having an episode on the street. The fact that I had to find that out through Google shows that we are not sharing information properly and this isn’t just a one-time deal. We have all of these alliances and teams and I get referrals in from throughout the city and it still seems like almost we behave in a sly manner sometimes trying to slip people, challenging clients without them realising and I don’t think that’s really fair. At the same time, I’ve had some fantastic advice and some fantastic instruction from more experienced teams throughout the country and throughout the city. So, it’s a bit of swings and roundabouts really. There is progress and there are things that are really worrying, so, it’s a weird handful.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM I think that’s a very sound comment about the issue of anecdotes because one of the other things that I think is so important, in many years as a teacher, one of the things I have learnt is that blanket strategies rarely work. You have to think of the individual and what works for the individual. I know that there are three service users here and I wonder if I might ask them if they would be willing to share any anecdotes with us about what you think the issues are in relation to what you’ve heard.

MALE SERVICE USER 1 I’ll go first and I’m a service user. I’m originally from Manchester and it’s a bit similar here. Who moves to Devonport to start here now? Not working here. Who moves to Devonport? I keep hearing about community, but I don’t see any community sat here. All the speakers, there’s certain ones that deal with the aftermath of everything, but all the rest is cosmetics. One is moving in, people are getting displaced, can’t get housing and then fall through the cracks. I use the services to pick it up.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM How did you end up here from Manchester?

MALE SERVICE USER 1 I came down, if I’m honest, with jails, getting shipped about the system. Got the chance to relocate and do something different, which I took the
opportunity of and thankfully [inaudible] and do some work on myself in a safe and secure environment. In fact, it’s a God-send in many ways. But, like I say, I’ve sat in many things, people such as yourselves, sat there, and I’m sorry for my French, but a lot of it’s probably been smoked up your arses and then you’ll probably have the audacity to patch over all of that for a job well done.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM
That’s the kind of comment that we need to hear. This is the second service user.

FEMALE SERVICE USER
I go to Hamoze. It’s strange actually listening to it all. I’ve come through quite a lot of services, criminal justice, ‘Harbour’, ‘Shekinah’, now at Hamoze. It’s quite difficult. I don’t live in Devonport. I live in Estover. It’s quite a way-out.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM
You had to travel in?

FEMALE SERVICE USER
Yeah. I’ve just come off probation and I found that probation weren’t very great at informing themselves, let alone anybody else in the office, let alone the police, let alone Hamoze or wherever I went. If you should be there or not be there and they would send letters and say “we know you’re at Hamoze” and I’d go “why aren’t you here?” – “you’re meant to be at the office” – “no”. Probation work alongside ‘Open’ as well. So, I had a worker from there that dealt with women offenders. The left hand doesn’t talk to the right hand. I found that quite a lot of it, I was going back through the same things time and time again. I’ve been in and out of Hamoze for the last seven years. I got detox in 2010. Then the services dropped off. Probation had a lot of support in place, services dropped off. The police only want to know me when I ring them up telling them I’ve got bi-polar and this is going to happen if they don’t. If you call them for help, they just laugh at you. Honestly. The local PCSOs used to come around to deal [inaudible]. All that information was just kept through them, it was never passed onto probation or to anybody else and I kind of see the same ... a lot of people that come through Hamoze are from Devonport and from those kind of areas, it’s not just where I live, it’s everywhere that those things are not filtering back down. [inaudible] comes to my door when they want to arrest me, but actually when I need help ... I’m in the middle of domestic violence ... where I’m sat here there’s a big MARAC meeting going on, but for me, I feel like I’m left in the dark. There is nothing. Somebody else, right now, this afternoon, is in control of my life and my future. I think they should involve addicts, people with [inaudible] abuse, a lot more in these decisions. These decisions will affect my life wholly. It’s not theirs. It’s not ‘Shekinah’s’. It’s not anybody else’s. If I didn’t know ‘Shekinah’ when I first went, then I wouldn’t know about ‘Harbour’, then I wouldn’t have got to Hamoze and the reality is I would’ve been dead down the road. They just don’t amalgamate very well and it is quite difficult having to go and say this, this and this, and then it all gets confused.

MALE SERVICE USER 2
Hello. My name’s Malcolm. I speak to a lot of people in Plymouth and a lot of people in the services and nothing really seems to connect. It’s like a continuous pipe from one place to another place to try and get someone.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM
So, do you feel you’re being listened to?
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<th>MALE SERVICE USER 2</th>
<th>For a short, brief period of time until that person hasn’t got enough time to spend with you and then you’re just kind of pushed off somewhere else to another person and then you tell your story again.</th>
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<td>MARK BIGNALL</td>
<td>Can you think of an example of that Malcolm where that’s happened to you? What are you feeling that you’re talking to some person, you get moved to somebody else or people aren’t talking to each other.</td>
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<td>MALE SERVICE USER 2</td>
<td>I think just in society in general is a bit like that. It always seems to be glossed over. They gloss it over and they kind of look at themselves if they’ve dealt with that sort of thing and then they just move you on to someone else.</td>
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<td>MARK BIGNALL</td>
<td>So, what’s been glossed over? The problem?</td>
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<td>MALE SERVICE USER 2</td>
<td>Yeah or your situation.</td>
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<td>MELANIE SIMMONDS</td>
<td>There was a report in the national media, only in the last week, where one local authority’s answer for tackling homelessness was to give a one-way ticket and a grant to the individuals to move out of the area. I found that approach towards members of our homeless community to be really shocking if I’m honest. As a society, with statutory, non-statutory and voluntary agencies as well as communities themselves, we need to find better solutions through working together that recognise and meet the practical and support needs of these fellow community members.</td>
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<td>JOHN HAMBLIN</td>
<td>I think it’s fascinating because I came across a document the other day that was written by Robert Lenkiewicz, back in the ‘70’s. Many of you will remember Mr Lenkiewicz, who had a very, some may say, an unhealthy obsession with vagrancy, as he called it. It’s a document, about eight or nine pages, where Robert went around the city and he spoke to senior police officers, local beat sergeants, people that ran the Salvation Army about the issue of vagrancy. Sadly, I read that document thinking if I could just change the dates, it would be the same conversation today. What has changed? Fifty-one years ago, something million people sat and watched ‘Cathy Come Home’ because we were all outraged about homelessness. What’s changed? Nothing.</td>
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<td>JUDITH ROWBOTHAM</td>
<td>And I’ll tell you where the path of giving someone a one-way ticket and moves them on comes from, it goes back to the Poor Law. Under the Poor Law you had a settlement and the parish in which you were born was the parish that had the duty to support you, so, you were born, say Manchester, you’d find yourself being moved from Devonport back up to Manchester because “hey, you’re Manchester’s problem” and then Manchester might say “oh, but you were illegitimate, so you’re not anybody’s problem”. Is it that kind of thing that you feel you recognise?</td>
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<td>MALE SERVICE USER 1</td>
<td>Yeah, I’m Peter, it’s international, isn’t it? Like I say, I’ll sit here, quite happy blowing smoke and someone at grassroots doing it, the left hand doesn’t know what the right hand’s doing, you’re quite happy to have all the money coming in, the investments, and then the ones that are forgotten are the blight on your communities. That’s how it turns out as.</td>
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<td>MALE SERVICE USER 2</td>
<td>I’ve had a lot of nice, good information today about what’s actually going on and maybe solutions as well, but not many solutions. So, what is actually going to happen? I believe that early intervention is a great idea. It’s brilliant and I think that’s the way it’s going to work, but how</td>
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you’re going to integrate that with [inaudible] adults, that is going to be a challenge.

**FEMALE SERVICE USER**
I think a lot of people, especially our peers and things like that, if they had intervention 10, 15 years ago, maybe their lives would be completely different rather than devastation and baggage that they carry they can’t unload. We have some very emotional groups and things like that and I think it’s easily forgotten that we didn’t just become drug addicts, we weren’t born like that, it was just kind of learn and it’s ‘monkey see, monkey do’ for quite a lot of it. It comes from people that are very close to you. Emotionally it’s very damaging and alone, ideas don’t work. Certainly, I’m speaking for myself, seven years, 21, I was already a full-blown alcoholic. If someone had listened to me when I was 17 saying the same thing to them, maybe I wouldn’t be in this situation now, but at 17, I was deemed even too young to drink. So, it was just brushed under the table and not even considered. There’s a lot of younger generations now drinking, abusing drugs, that kind of thing, which needs police intervention, families breaking down and that kind of thing. I think that for a lot of us, if we’re tagged at probably leaving school age, I’m not saying the problem would be totally alleviated, but it wouldn’t be as bad as it is now.

**JUDITH ROWBOTHAM**
David.

**DAVID REES**
Judith, the last Bishop of Liverpool, last week, wrote this second report on Hillsborough. In that document, he talks about a cultural change within society of people who have got the power, which is power or money usually, listening to people who haven’t got it and the cultural shift we have got to make is for these lovely people I’ve just listened to, through stories from, to be in the room with those people who have got the power and have got the ability to make the change in the system. Across organisations and coming down from several governments that shift has got to be made like there’s no tomorrow. I’m going back this afternoon listening to these stories, actually quite affected by it, and I think across organisations, the Bishop was talking about his church that he had served for a very long time, the voice of listening to people, listening to these small voices, for example, by others and [inaudible] who wishes to do it and having these conversations would make a big difference.

**MALE SERVICE USER 1**
Can I just say something?

**JUDITH ROWBOTHAM**
Yes.

**MALE SERVICE USER 1**
If you were to walk along Devonport now and pulled any of the locals, as such, and asked them about culture and our heritage or the theatre, what do you think your answer would be? Do you think most of the families recognise it, understand it, had the opportunities for it or do you think it’s elitist?

**ED WHITELAW**
I think if you asked 10 people, you’d get 11 different answers.

**MALE SERVICE USER 1**
Exactly. Most of them wouldn’t have a clue.

**ED WHITELAW**
I think you’d get a range of people from here who say we engage here every day [inaudible] in our building [inaudible] and you’d get another 10 coming in on top of that. It’s very diverse.

**MALE SERVICE USER 1**
So, there’s your problem. You’ve got the older generation that’ll probably give you the answers because they know a bit of culture. The younger ones, who knows what the answer’s going to be. You talk
about intervention and all the rest, it’s all well and good doing the kids, but who are their role models? It’s all well and good teaching them about heritage, but who’s their role models? Again, there’s a gap.

KEITH JOHNSON
A lot of the role models that you’re talking about are the life aspect of people who’ve been around the buoy and it’s what they pass onto their children. If they’re good parents, they pass on good manners and a belief in family values. We get some parents who haven’t got those skills. It’s a balance between those who are good parents and those who aren’t, to some degree. Then, the environment they’re brought up in is another. Peer pressure, you were talking about this, peer pressure. If you can recognise that fairly early on ... I’ve got a grand-daughter now and I’m concerned, like a lot of people would be, that when she’s in her early teens, if she gets in with the wrong group, she can become something that she shouldn’t be. So, society is complex.

MALE SERVICE USER 1
I know it is, but you could put that in a nutshell, couldn’t you? The haves and the have nots.

KEITH JOHNSON
Or you can say those who are striving to ...

MALE SERVICE USER 1
Due to circumstance, environment, whatever it may be [inaudible] ...

MARK BIGNALL
There is definitely something to be said for the gap between the rich and the poor and those are where all the wicked issues kind of happen and develop and grow and it is about us trying to close those gaps and bringing about a bit of parity and equal opportunity for everybody.

ED WHITELAW
I’d like to pick up on that point about the power and money scenario. Very simplistically put, we have an economic system that is on one hand [inaudible], essentially making people grow richer and richer [inaudible], essentially not throwing it away. The question then ... so, we talked about inequality, so the system that is driving increasing levels of inequality and if we fail to address that in the inclusive economy kind of way, that is a loser’s gain because essentially you ultimately come to simplistic, but [inaudible] the amount of people who have nothing, have nothing to lose and those that have, the haves, are [inaudible] everyone’s going to ... you know ... what are the approaches to that? and what worries me is we’re seeing a wider political narrative which is essentially just build the wall and build a higher wall and make the poor people for it, which is becoming more and more prevalent. But, you can never build a wall that big and we know we’re essentially going to run out of bricks and the amount of poor people on the other side of it will come crashing through at some time. So, it’s always going to be a loser’s game. So, what is it that we can practically do? And that’s we, all of us, because it’s the responsibility of all of us, to try and re-address that. I’ll leave that there.

MALE SERVICE USER 2
It’s mental health, isn’t it? and they give people the right of freedom to live again.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM
Are there practical things that you wish that people like you could access, that you don’t have access to through Hamoaze and ‘Shekinah’ and things like that?

FEMALE SERVICE USER
Two years I was on probation for assaulting the police. For two-and-a-half years I’ve been having problems with the guy I was with and we split up, and for a good 18 months [inaudible] and probation were trying to get PS involved. Because of the assaulting the police conviction, they won’t take me. So, I have been left on my own with
| JOHN HAMBLIN | domestic violence, now having eventually, two-and-a-half years later, the police stepped up a couple of weeks ago and said “no, you worry about automatic MARAC”, but I’ve been disallowed to go into PS. I can’t go into a refuge. I’ve not had any of that because of the stereotypes of addicts of convictions, which is very unfair. I’ve had to live with him breaking my foot, breaking my arm, breaking my jaw and nobody wanted to take responsibility. |
| FEMALE SERVICE USER | Part of that, I would argue, is sadly fuelled around this horrible debate that we seem to have got ourselves into over the last couple of years about the whole deserving, undeserving. It really worries me. If I look at some of the political conversations that have taken place about the kind of ... so we often find it funny when I speak to groups around issues of addiction, people will often say to me “they just need to stop taking drugs John” and then if I talk to ex-servicemen who are addicted, it’s “oh, that’s different”. We get into this whole kind of deserving and underserving looking at it. It’s outrageous. You should have access to all services. They worked with you for two-and-a-half years, it takes the picking up of a phone to get access to some services. It’s just wrong on every level. |
| DAVID REES | Apparently, I’ll never be allowed [inaudible] I’ll never ever be allowed to go to the Probationary Service, which is very unfair, I think. |
| JOHN HAMBLIN | I don’t even know the history, but I presume the issues you’ve just outlined, you can take that up with the MPs. You can take that up with the MPs and you can get the MPs to listen to what this person is saying and you can press them and you can just argue it and argue it and argue it. The MP can argue it. [inaudible] done something? |
| JOHN HAMBLIN | MPs good and I don’t mean this rude in anyway, they would if it was a deserving cause, I just might question whether the stuff we’re talking about in the eyes of some MPs maybe a deserving cause. I think, Mark alluded to earlier, I think some of the conversations about the system change. |
| DAVID REES | You could start a conversation with Nick McKinnel for example. You could get Nick McKinnel to take that to the MPs. You could raise this ... |
| JOHN HAMBLIN | You could, but we would be doing it half-a-dozen times a day. |
| DAVID REES | Well, I think you have to do that. I just think ... and I do know something about it because I was on the board of [inaudible] in London, so I understand where you’re coming from and I understand the context we’re all talking about, but you and I ought to do that because of who we are. We must do it. |
| JUDITH ROWBOTHAM | Mark. |
| MARK BIGNALL | I understand what you’re saying and I think campaigning is right. I think it comes back to a comment that was made earlier about communication, about us communicating, talking, representing, supporting and I think it isn’t just about John doing it, it’s about all of us doing it. It’s about everybody that has a responsibility and understanding and awareness, doing it and I think if it was my brother, would I be doing it? If it was my mum, would I be doing it? I think there’s something about us needing to be able to create services and a commitment to those services that if a member of our family went into that services, they would be treated in exactly the same way. |
| DAVID REES | If three letters dropped onto [inaudible] desk if he’s the MP or two of the others, for example, from Nick McKinnel, from retired judge Bill Taylor and from yourselves, for example, and anybody else, simultaneously, two days later or whatever, I’d be surprised if there was no effect. |
| JOHN HAMBLIN | I don’t disagree. Campaigning has a huge role, but again if you look at government, it gags charities, so, we’re not allowed to campaign. I’m not allowed to campaign as a charity. I totally agree that there’s more that needs to be done. |
| JUDITH ROWBOTHAM | Craig Newbery-Jones. |
| CRAIG NEWBERY-JONES | With issues such as this, sort of pan national issues, is the fact that campaigning is a key part and I agree with both of you. There’s also the fact that it’s maybe to do with the mediatisation of politics, is the fact that … I work in the 19th century … I’m an academic … but you look at Victorian governments, select committees, it’s all aspects of society, massively detailed. They detained people for months, years at a time. We lost that. Yes, they still occur, don’t get me wrong, but no way in the same detail that they were in the 19th century. Policy making’s a bit uncouth now. I’m getting a bit political, I won’t be on my soap-box or my ivory tower, but that’s the way I look at it, is the fact that yes, that campaign is important, but it’s about taking that sort of political football out of it, that media football, that re-election football. I can do with some real investigative politics which my Victorian governments, who I love very much, were really good at it. Where did that go? We lost that. We don’t do that at the same level anymore. |
| JUDITH ROWBOTHAM | How do you get that back though? I put that question back to you – what is it that you do to change that and get back to it? |
| CRAIG NEWBERY-JONES | You can’t. I don’t have a solution, unfortunately. I think the thing is, and I do think there’s been a change in political ideology within the political class. That’s what I think, personally, I think it is now more an obsession about re-election and media-spin, away from servicing the actual people that it requires to service. |
| JUDITH ROWBOTHAM | David Cox. |
| DAVID COX | Dave Cox, University of Wolverhampton. Just backing up what Craig said, I was fortunate enough yesterday to be invited to the 50th anniversary of the [inaudible] London, where the great and the good, several of the great and the good, including the Justice Secretary, Lidington. Baroness Newlove was on, Victims’ Commissioner, very interesting, Nick Harwood was on, head of the prison, Probation Service was on, all very good, very worthy, and then the Justice Secretary swept in in the last half-hour of the talk to give the keynote a rest, the last half-hour of the day, and just gave out completely meaningless platitudes and walked off. Nothing that was said would have influenced him. We’ve lost the political debate that we certainly had before. There’s a disjuncture between those in the head of government and everybody else, basically. |
| MELANIE SIMMONDS | I just want to say thank you all for contributing and that I’ve really taken onboard the experiences and views expressed today. I’m reflecting and thinking back to activities like Comic Relief, which have been going as long as I was a child. It’s sadly nothing new to me that young people and adults with mental health or addictions are finding themselves... |
homeless as I remember seeing this in Comic Relief when I was a child. We need to influence change but I’m also sat here, at the moment, reflecting on tragedies like the Grenfell Fire, how that came about and the lack of a voice those residents felt they had when they were concerned about the cladding and yet nothing happened. Even after that dreadful fire, we then found divisions in society being exposed through certain views that were expressed. For example it was widely reported that affected residents who had lost their homes in the most tragic circumstances were being offered housing in a nearby new establishment but other residents who’d paid half-a-million pounds or more for their flats were reportedly saying “I don’t want them coming in here, they’re going to lower the value of my property”. It exposed some really unhealthy attitudes that are inherent, I think, in some aspects of our society up and down the country. Even after Grenfell, I think a lot of the residents who were affected and lost homes and loved ones, they still don’t feel like, something as tragic as that, has influenced change at a political level or at local level. I don’t know what the answer is other than to try and continue to all take responsibility individually and collectively to respect each other and be kind, thereby influencing greater community cohesion, integration and fairness of opportunity.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM

Just three doors up from the Kensington Town Hall, it’s become commonplace to walk down Portland Street and see another little protest group. It infuriates me. It breaks my heart. The one MP who’s actually had the guts to come out and do anything is the local MP, who of course, is likely to come in for a huge amount of flack because she was on the committee which proved the [inaudible].

JOHN HAMBLIN

Sorry, just alluding back to something Keith said earlier, Keith said that part of the problem is that the vast majority of people, the issues we’re talking about, don’t affect the vast majority of people, which I agree with. I would counter-argue that there is a growing number of people who are now being affected, but the facts are that the vast majority of the public don’t give a toss. It doesn’t affect them. That is the reality. Some of the stories you’ve heard here today, there are lots of people sat in the city, they’re not bad people, but it doesn’t affect them. So, whenever someone starts shouting about a minority, the majority say “it doesn’t affect us”. It’s just tragic.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM

Tim.

TIM GIBBS

So, Steve, I do really sympathise with you there, when you said there is a lot of smoke blowing and there are a lot of problems in the areas that we work. I work in Devonport House, the Salvation Army hostel there, and we had 12 people that came to our place directly from prison and 15 people left to go to prison in that year. So, the prison made a profit of three from us, which is not acceptable and that’s over a year, but if it was as simple as putting people straight into a house, putting people straight into accommodation, I wish it was, I would happily go to work every day and do that, but unfortunately there’s so many more complex problems there and it is about building up this network of people who can deal with that. Me, just one guy, I can’t wear that many hats, as I’ve said previously. We do need to recognise when we let people down.
| MALE SERVICE USER 1 | I can say one thing with certainty, jail offered nothing. All it did was it just made me more bitter and twisted. Lack of staff, no help. Then you get out and you don’t even get a week’s money. You come out, limited resources to help you. I’m fortunate, I found Hamoaze, but for a lot of people accessing certain things ... people have moved areas and all the rest ... want a home, don’t qualify. So, the problem begins. Like you say, your community in Devonport, I don’t see anyone here. In fact, I’d say the community in Devonport has gone further and further out as the money’s come in. In my area, Salford, the money come in, [inaudible] had to move further and further out. |
| TIM GIBBS | What they’re doing up there is they’re addressing a supply and demand, but they’re addressing it for ... not the group here ... that we’re looking for, so, a thing like housing ... what would you call it ... it’s essentially where you can put your deposit down on your first house, that’s not going to be for our Devonport lads, that’s going to be for somebody else, in a different sector of society. The houses need to be built. I don’t send many of our guys out of Devonport House to go and get a mortgage and buy a new place. I send them to places like private rented, to social housing or even to other hostels. It’s really confusing and it’s really complex. So, there are things being built and there is a housing supply problem being addressed, but whether it’s the right ones or whether it’s ones that are making the most difference, that’s anyone’s game. |
| MALE SERVICE USER 1 | Well, like I say, Devonport is [inaudible] enough, you’re not even in a community as such, probably a community that don’t even speak to each other, fancy culture, the arts and all that bollocks, you know what I mean, rather than talk to each other. That’s what it is. Like you say, the ones that was the community, you’ve pushed out. The haves and the have nots. Then you have many boards like this will be going on, right across the country and MPs and like I say, they’re all smoke. I’ve been saying it for ages. I might be wrong saying this, but still, I’ll go with it. I’ve been saying for ages, the reason we’ve got crap in our arse is because [inaudible] allows us to sit on the fence. |
| MARK BIGNALL | Thank you very much Pete. |
| JUDITH ROWBOTHAM | Are there any other comments from you? Any other comments from the panel? |
| JOHN HAMBLIN | Can I just say, I don’t want to leave on a ‘down’, whilst there’s problems, there are some good people in the world who desperately want to try and make a difference. I think we must hold onto that. We don’t live in a normalist, non-caring society, not everybody. So, I think we do need to hold onto the fact there are some good people in the world who want to make a difference and that’s got to be the starting point. |
| MARK BIGNALL | I would just like to say that in the 17 years I’ve been at Hamoaze and maybe even 30 years that I’ve worked on and off in adult social care, that there have been significant improvements and changes and there is a spirit and a willingness to step away from the kind of asylum thinking and work that has gone on previously and a huge commitment and desire to try and improve services for people accessing them. I think there has got to be some kind of cultural change and I think it’s very political in many ways and difficult for us to sit here and come up |
with simple kind of solutions, but I’m just never going to join whatever that is and I think if we all not join whatever that is and do the things that we know to be right, if we all did that, then we would see the culture change, we would see some things different. That’s my kind of plan.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM

ED WHITELAW

So many new avenues and [inaudible]. I think the only other thing to say is it’s been a very useful, interesting and constructive use of a few hours actually to sit with the range people I don’t get to see as often as I would like to and to share a set of views and to give me a new set of things to think about that I might do slightly differently tomorrow, which is quite useful. So, thank you.

JUDITH ROWBOTHAM

Can I thank those of you in the audience who’s contributed, particularly our three service users and can I ask you to thank the panel for putting up with me during the last two-and-a-bit gruelling hours. Thank you.

END OF RECORDING