



Annual Client Survey

2017

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INTRODUCTION

The Connection at St. Martin's annual client survey is carried as part of its commitment to clients under the service charter. It has the following objectives:

- To determine the views of CSTM users about our services
- To capture the opinions and experiences of clients who may not feel comfortable speaking openly, or who wish to give anonymous feedback
- To develop a longitudinal understanding of our clients' views of CSTM and its services
- To promote well-informed decisions about how best to direct our resources

The questionnaire begins with a brief set of demographic questions, followed by several questions on the length of contact with CSTM and present accommodation. The questionnaire then cycles through each of the services: Day Centre, Night Centre, Outreach, Advice & Housing, Workspace, Groups & Activities and finally the Café. It concludes with open questions on clients' overall impressions of the organisation.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted over a week by volunteers who had responded to our requests via What Week, a recent initiative for rough sleepers which was conducted in conjunction with several of our partners in the homelessness sector; or who had responded directly to our website volunteer vacancy. We also had volunteers from several corporate partners, including Annington Ltd, Baker & MacKenzie, and Berkeley Group Homes. The survey took place from the 13th to the 17th of February 2017, with the Night Centre specifically targeted on the 16th. The responses were anonymous to encourage people to be open with their answers. Our survey sample of 128 respondents represents 45% of the people using the services that week.

The demographic data of the sample was compared with the preceding 12 months. The sample was found to be largely representative across age, ethnicity, and gender, of the overall population, militating against weighting responses.

In previous years, there has been an over-representation of long-term service users in the survey. This was assumed to be due in part to their familiarity with the service and staff, and feeling more comfortable in participating in activities like the user survey. Last year it was decided to try and address this issue by targeting newer clients. This was a priority again for this year, but due to high levels of vulnerability during the survey week, specifically with new women, there were fewer newer clients than would have been wished.

As in previous years, a draw for vouchers was used as an incentive for participation.¹

To aid in analysis and to capture all valid responses, comments from respondents that did not have an accompanying scored response, but whose comment clearly matched an option within the question's rubric had their comment converted into a scored response (e.g. a respondent who indicated that they use the art room, but who did not tick this option in the list of answers, had their comment converted to a box tick.) In cases where there was no clear fit, the comment was not converted but left for qualitative analysis.

¹ The draw was for three £20 vouchers for Tesco supermarket.

The structure and content of the survey is reviewed following each deployment to assess its effectiveness and accuracy, however there is a conscious effort to maintain continuity as much as possible to permit comparative analysis with previous years.

Wyn Newman and Sonja Ashbury held three briefing sessions with volunteers to talk about the survey and our organisation. Two of these were in-house, and one was with Berkeley Homes Group at their offices on Horseferry Road. Service managers were invited to review their respective sections, and Sonja and Robert Barrett reviewed the survey structure and presentation, aiming to improve clarity and accuracy. Several members of staff in the Day Centre, Workspace and Night Centre were tasked with assisting surveyors and recruiting clients during the survey week.

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to all those listed below who volunteered to interview clients. Thank you.

Rhian Clugston	Carrie Clark	James Hamand	Preeya Vadgama
Ryan Camps	Laura Kennedy	Stephen Tonkin	Bridget Luff
Brett Perrett	Robin Morley	Vicky Oram	Eleanor Irwin
Hazel Attua	Susanna Winter	Thomas Banks	Fiona Lomax
Clare Quinn-Waters	Karol Cizek	Lisa Maxen	Grace Marien-Osborn
John Moriarty	Brooke Armstrong-	Lucy Goddard	Totka Spasova
Rebecca Band	Bartrum	Victoria Bland	Andy S.
Sorin Flotin	Rosie Thomas	Luke Dorking	
Willetta Smith	Alicia Dudack	Adam Louth	

Survey Participation Rate ²			
Year	No. of clients attending during period of survey	No. of surveys completed	Percentage of clients surveyed
2009	475	152	32%
2010	592	136	23%
2012	328	82	25%
2013	240	86	36%
2014	261	86	33%
2015	308	101	33%
2016	313	141	45%
2017	283	128	45%

² It is important to note that the eligibility for accessing our service was changed in 2012, hence the substantial drop in the number of clients attending in the survey period.

GENERAL

The demographic profile of the respondents was largely representative of all clients accessing the Connection at St. Martin's in the previous twelve months across age, gender and ethnicity.

When asked whether respondents claimed benefits, 70% (89 clients) reported that they were eligible for benefits, but of those, only 59% (53) indicated that they claimed. In the future it may be of interest to ask what possible barriers clients are experiencing in accessing their welfare entitlements, e.g. sanctions.

As with the previous year, the highest scored response on where people were sleeping was on the streets. The Night Centre and hostels were the next two highest. It is worth noting that government data on rough sleeping in the England has indicated a continuing upward trend from the previous year.³

On the question of what are the reasons for using the service, the responses have historically shown that practical concerns (food, shelter, etc.) lead over advice and support services (Workspace, Advice & Housing, etc.) There has been a slight increase in those indicating that the reason for accessing the service is for advice and support, but the main change is a 10% climb in clients saying that they are attending for health services.

Finally, respondents were asked to suggest ways that we could better support them. Fifty-nine clients responded, with ten responding that they felt the organisation was already doing what it could. Several clients commented that they were receiving support in each of the areas that they needed, with one client stating that, through the Connection, they were able to resolve issues with their documentation, access legal advice, and receive help with courses. A second client expressed satisfaction that everything they asked for help with was resolved by staff. Another client stated that nothing else was needed, and they felt that they could always ask for help if something came up.

One client did express frustration at having to repeat their situation several times: *"Having one point of contact would save a lot of time. Very repetitive to have to explain the situation. Workspace is very well coordinated. Downstairs less coordinated so become more hesitant to talk to people."*

Of the remaining forty-nine comments, three main themes emerged: changes to services (18), request for more support (18), and support around housing (11).

On services, six clients wanted access to the Night Centre to be relaxed and periods of stay extended⁴, six clients requested extending Day Centre hours, and expanding weekday services into the weekend. Four further clients asked for more support around education and employment, two suggested food should be free, and the final client argued that there needed to be more foreign languages speakers available.

Requests for various forms of support received seventeen comments, split across requests for general support (4), one-to-one support from staff around listening, and emotional support (4), opportunities for peer to peer support (2), and more specific support for women (1). Other individual requests covered support around opening bank accounts (1), fitness (1), follow-ups for

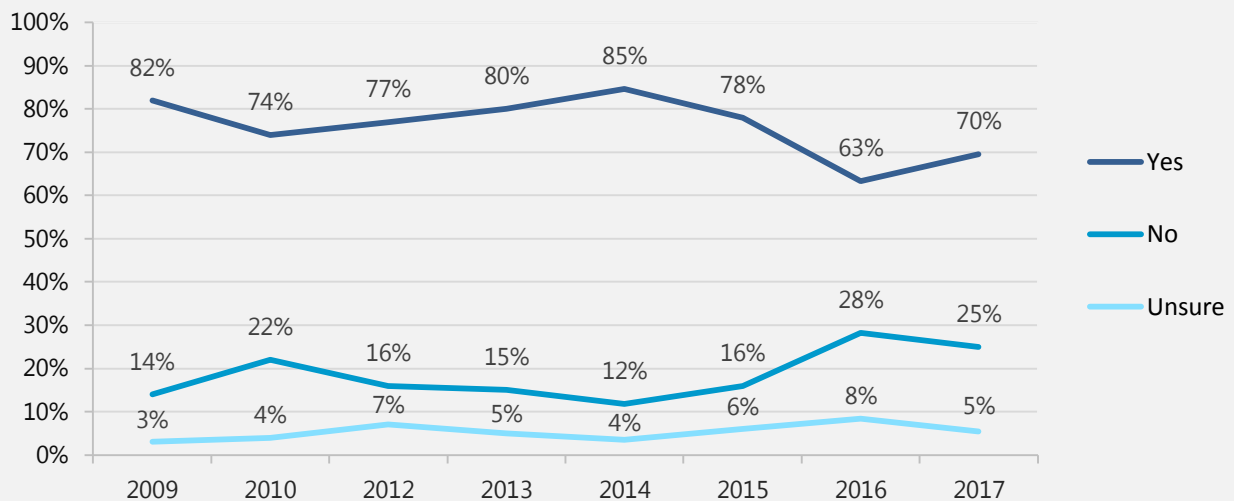
³ The latest figures from DCLG on rough sleeping claim a 16% increase in England – *'Rough Sleeping Statistics Autumn 2016, England'*

⁴ The request for longer access to the Night Centre was a recurring issue in this year's survey, suggesting that the reason for the limit of stay might need to be better explained to clients.

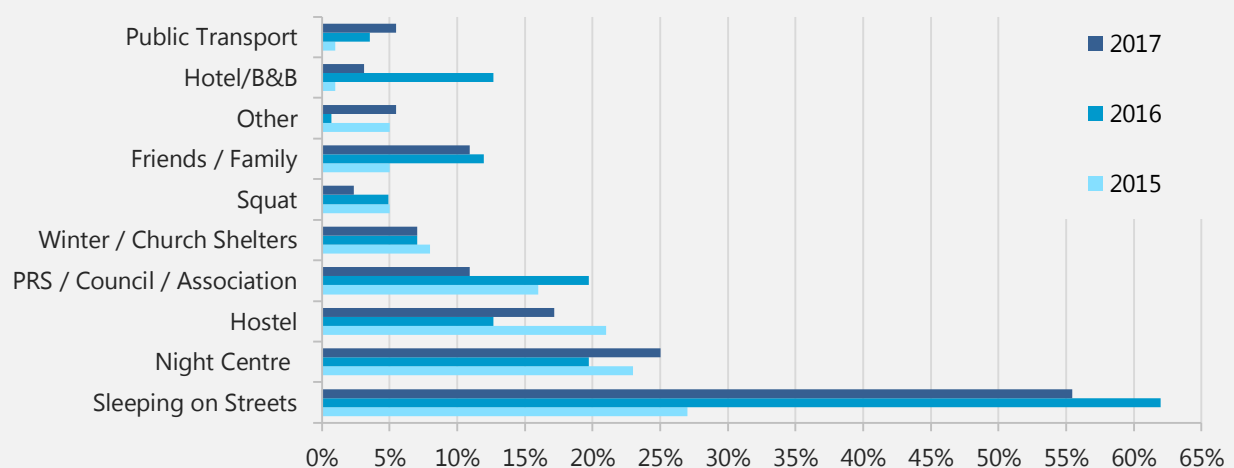
clients who have left the service and find it difficult to ask for help (1), assistance with clothing (1), and finally a request to check with clients if they understand the explanations that they are given (1).

Finally, eleven respondents requested more support around housing, expressing some frustration with the difficulty in finding accommodation.

Are you eligible to claim benefits? (n - 128)⁵

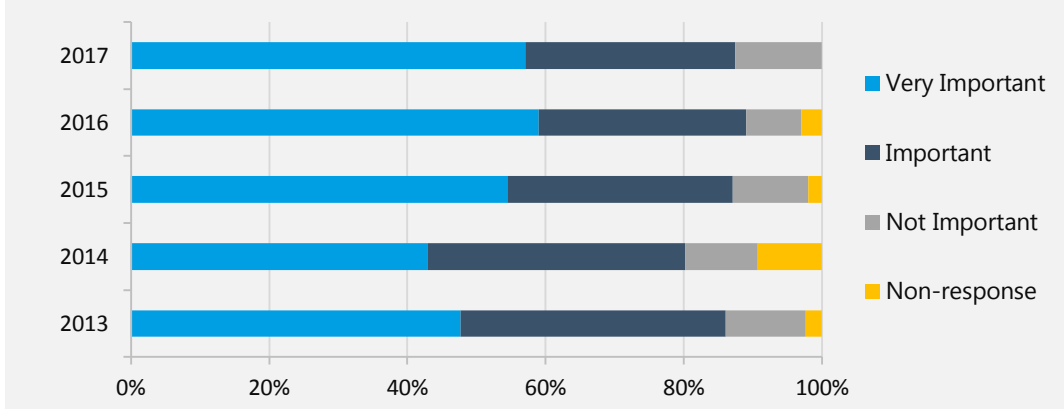


Where have you slept at night in the last 4 weeks? (n - 128)

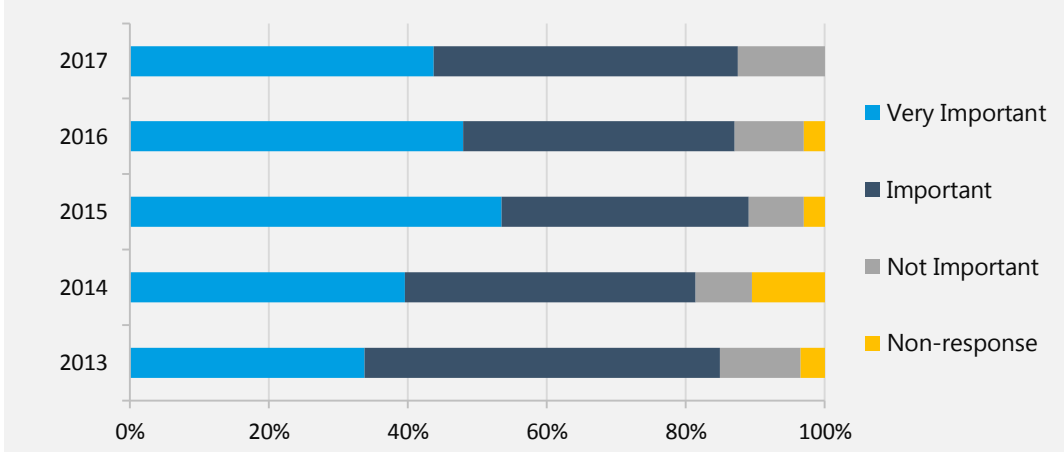


⁵ The figure following the n is the number of clients who responded to this question, e.g. n-41 indicates that forty-one of the clients who participated in the survey answered the associated question.

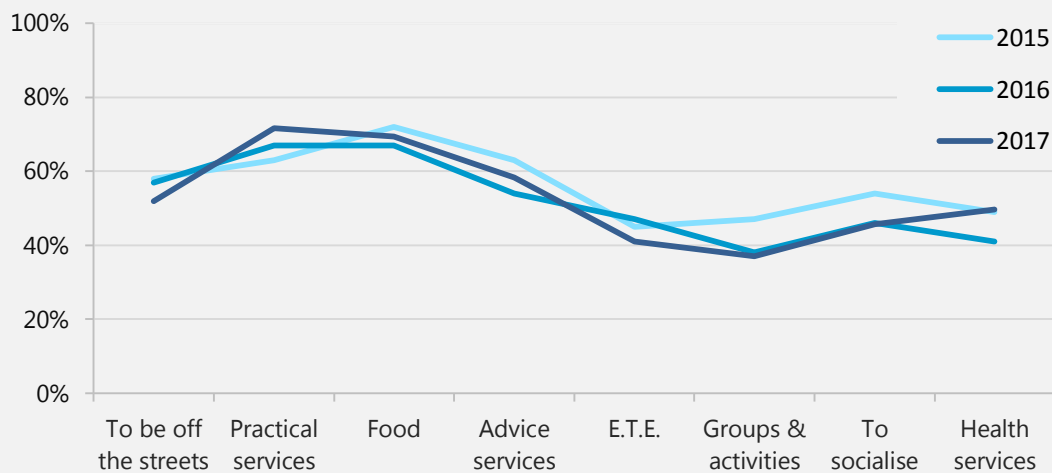
How important is it to be given support and advice on personal issues? (n - 128)



How important is it to be given support and guidance around choices and decisions you have to make? (n - 128)



What are your reasons for using the service? (n - 127)



DAY CENTRE

While respondents indicated greater concerns around safety this year, they expressed confidence in staff and volunteers, and continue to feel welcome in the day centre.

As in previous years, the principal services used by clients were food, showers and laundry. Responses given as 'other' were predominantly ICT-related (information, communication and technology), however three clients did specifically identify the health service, and two the volunteering opportunities in Day Centre.

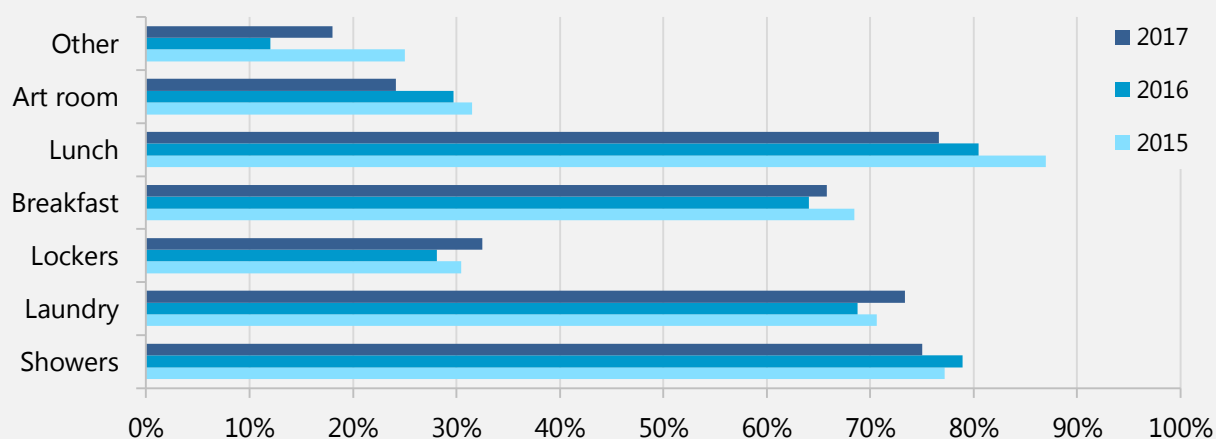
The percentage of respondents who report to feel safe in the building is less than previous years, with a ten percentage point decrease in positive agreement with the statement, and a 9% increase in those feeling unsure. Several clients mentioned that they felt intimidated when using certain facilities (TV room, and the showers), and mentioned that the absence of security inside the building was something that contributed to feeling unsafe.

Despite this, respondents were very positive about the Day Centre staff's level of approachability, with 91% of clients agreeing, or strongly agreeing with the statement that day centre staff are friendly and welcoming, the highest positive response since the survey began. Of those who disagreed with the statement, three responded that they felt only some of the staff were good.

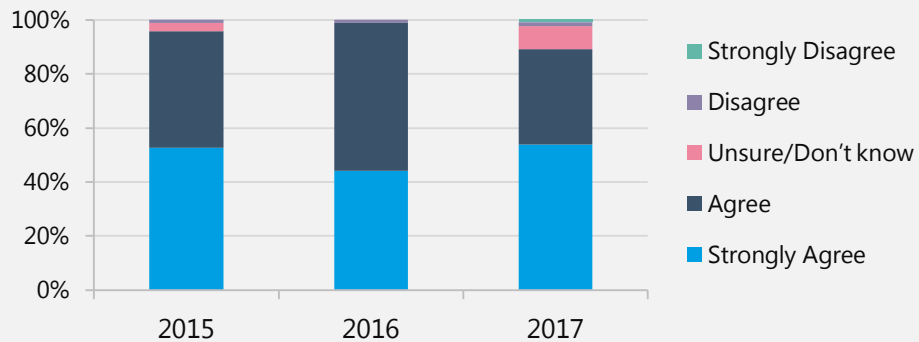
This year saw an increase in positive responses for levels of trust for staff and volunteers (80% to 86%). Four people left comments, two of which said they had trust issues in general, one who indicated that they felt staff talk down to clients at times, and one who believed there were confidentiality issues with staff.

There was no change with last year in staff knowledge of support services (86%), however a larger proportion strongly agreed with the statement (32% to 52%), showing an improvement. Of the five who disagreed with the statement, the predominant sentiment was that staff did not listen, did not understand homelessness because they lacked personal experience, or simply did not want to help. Each of these five clients reported that they were long-term users of CSTM services (over one year).

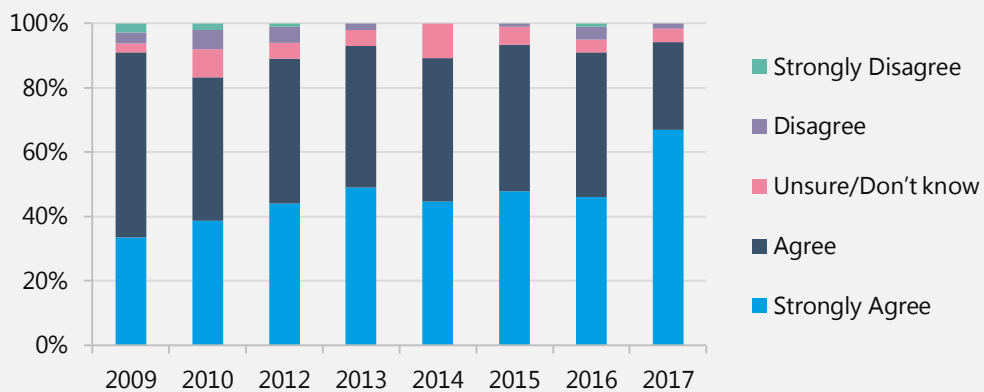
What Day Centre services do you use? (n - 120)



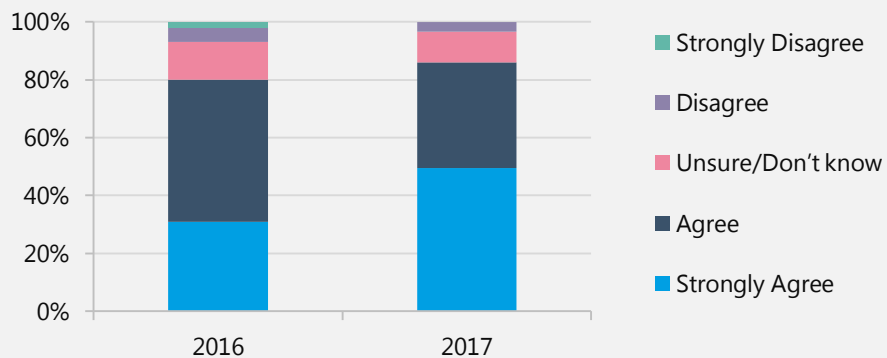
I feel safe in the building (n - 128)



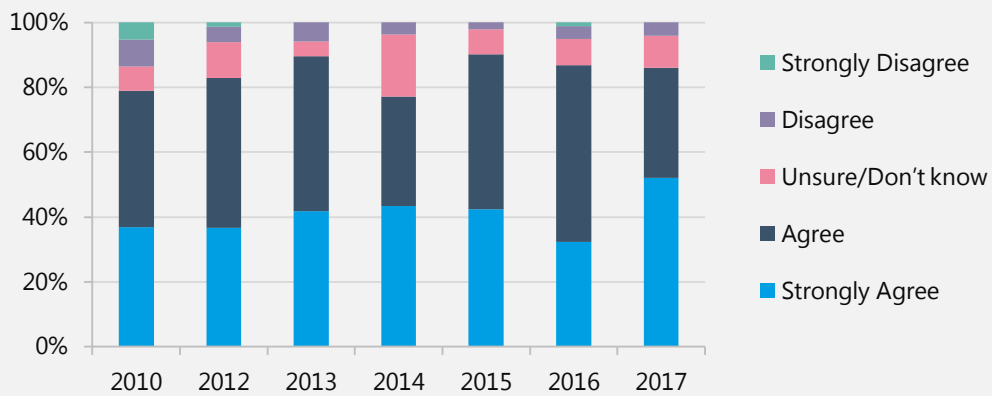
I find the staff in the Day Centre friendly and welcoming (n - 121)



I feel I can trust staff and volunteers in the Day Centre (n - 121)



Day Centre staff have a good knowledge of services available to me (n – 121)



NIGHT CENTRE

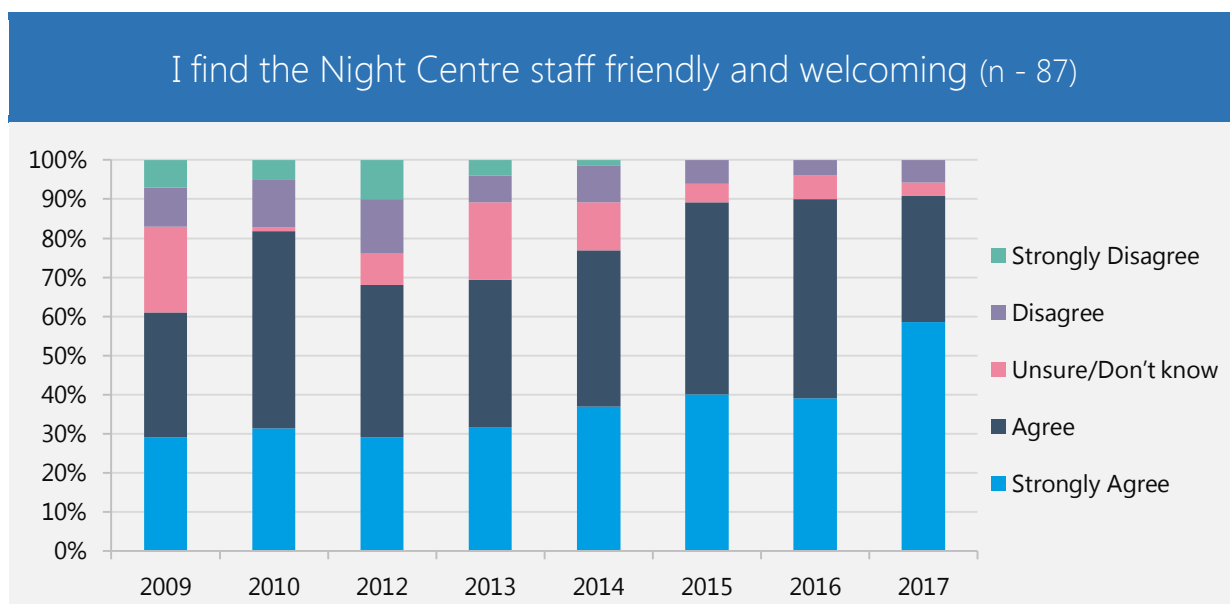
Eighty-seven respondents indicated that they attended the Night Centre at some point in the past.⁶ On the question of feeling safe in the Night Centre, there was a three percentage point drop in respondents holding a positive view, with those disagreeing accounting for 11%. Of the comments left, several stated that they felt unsafe due to other clients' drug and alcohol usage, with one respondent suggesting clients should be searched on entering. Two other clients stated that they felt on edge when clients walked around during the night and did not settle down.

On the friendliness of staff there is a positive score as in the previous year. The comments left by clients who disagreed noted that some staff were less friendly than others. However it is important to bear in mind that the Night Centre is more likely to have to deal with more difficult behaviour and instances of intoxication than other building services, making positive results all the more significant.

Finally, on the question of Night Centre staff knowledge of services, the responses for 2017 show a fall on the previous year (89% to 80% agreement), with the score for disagreement rising 6 percentage points. Those disagreeing were long-term clients (over one year), and several commented that staff do not understand homelessness.

Questioned on the food service in the Night Centre, the majority of respondents, four out of five, were happy with the service, with a few suggesting that they would appreciate more variety. Several respondents did mention an incident of uncooked chicken.

As with several other responses in this year's survey, clients recounted small things that staff did that meant a lot to them. One client left such a comment regarding their experience in the Night Centre – *"When I stayed there I had a job, so they woke me up when I needed to get up and they were really helpful. It was nice."*

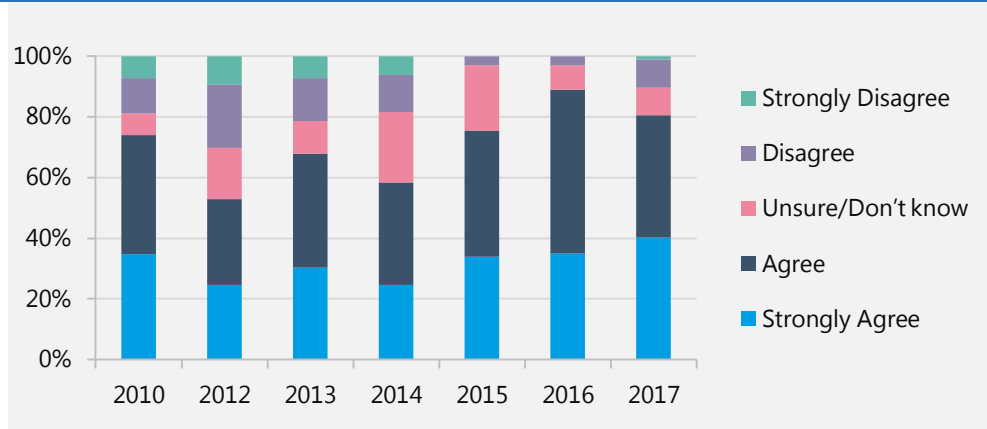


⁶ In the future it might be better to set a time limit in the question so that responses reflect the service provided in the last 12 months; some comments suggest people are reporting on experiences from several years ago.

I feel safe in the Night Centre (n - 87)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Strongly Agree	35%	41%	40%	46%	38%	47%
Agree	42%	45%	45%	45%	51%	39%
Unsure/Don't know	9%	5%	5%	6%	6%	3%
Disagree	4%	4%	8%	2%	4%	11%
Strongly Disagree	12%	5%	3%	2%	1%	0%

Night Centre staff have a good knowledge of services available to help me (n - 87)



WESTMINSTER CAS

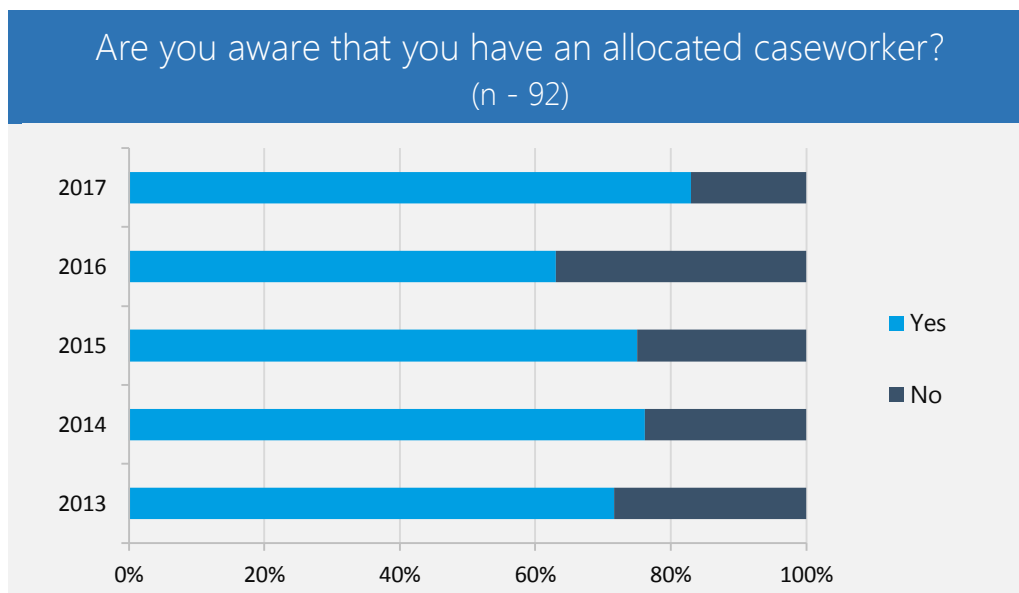
Westminster CAS has seen an increase in its scores across approachability, the clients' sense of support, workers' knowledge of support services, and client satisfaction with the service's explanation of available housing options.

The comments associated with the negative responses expressed frustration with the restriction on the number of nights available in the Night Centre, requested more support around money management, and complained about the lack of support available for non-UK nationals.

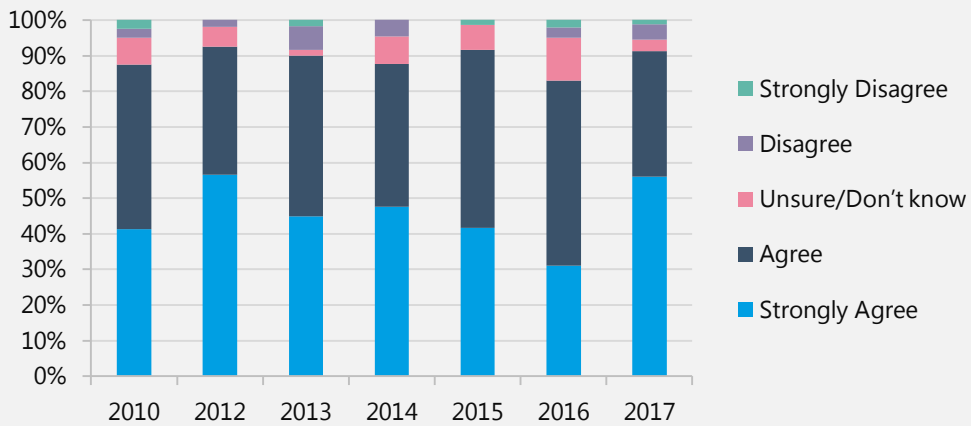
Twelve clients disagreed that their housing options were clearly explained to them. Ten of these were long-term users of the service, and eight of them were in receipt of benefits. Comments gave the impression that clients were frustrated with the limited range of housing options available, and the costs faced in the private rented sector. Several clients felt that workers were not adequately aware of housing options.

83% of clients responded positively to the question of whether they were aware of their caseworker, however on giving the caseworker's name, it was clear that they were including workers from other CSTM services, and not just outreach workers.

Four respondents left comments regarding their unhappiness with the level of support received from the outreach team, with one stating that he was frustrated with the level of support, and that he only wanted to get a job and to get back on his feet.



Outreach workers are friendly & approachable (n - 91)



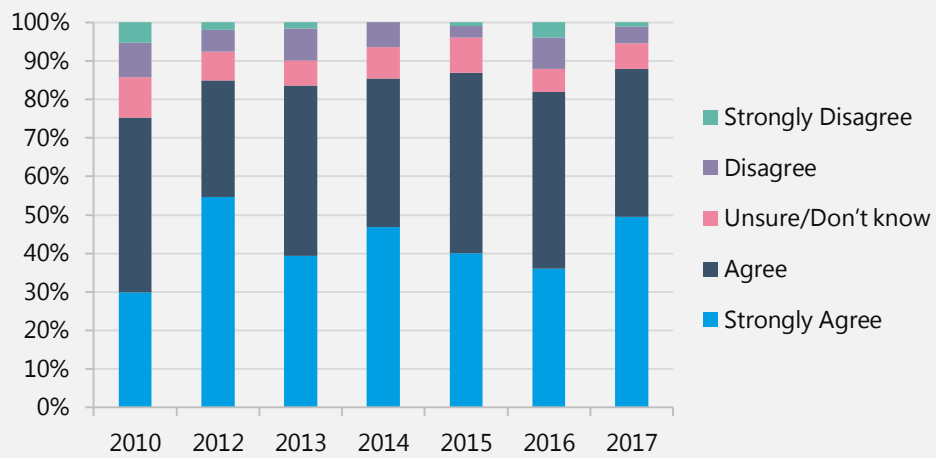
Outreach workers have a good knowledge of the support services available (n - 91)

	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Strongly Agree	33%	41%	58%	40%	44%	40%	31%	55%
Agree	35%	45%	28%	52%	44%	47%	49%	31%
Unsure/Don't know	19%	7%	12%	3%	7%	11%	10%	7%
Disagree	8%	7%	2%	2%	5%	1%	7%	6%
Strongly Disagree	5%	0%	0%	3%	0%	1%	3%	1%

The different housing options available to me and how to access them were clearly explained (n - 89)

	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Strongly Agree	26%	58%	30%	26%	31%	19%	39%
Agree	42%	28%	51%	38%	51%	45%	34%
Unsure/Don't know	13%	12%	10%	18%	11%	19%	12%
Disagree	14%	2%	7%	15%	4%	13%	12%
Strongly Disagree	5%	0%	2%	3%	3%	4%	3%

I am happy with the support received from the Outreach team (n - 91)



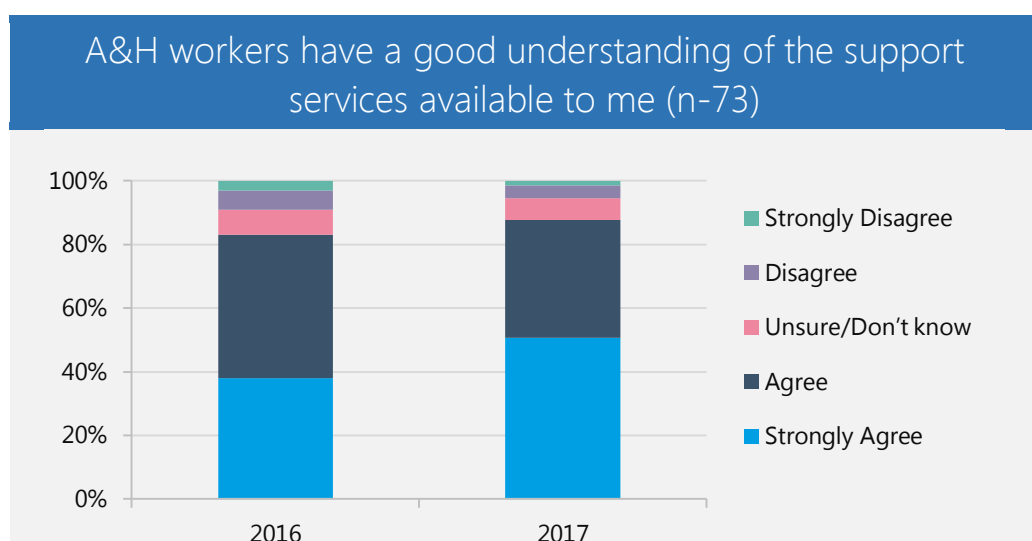
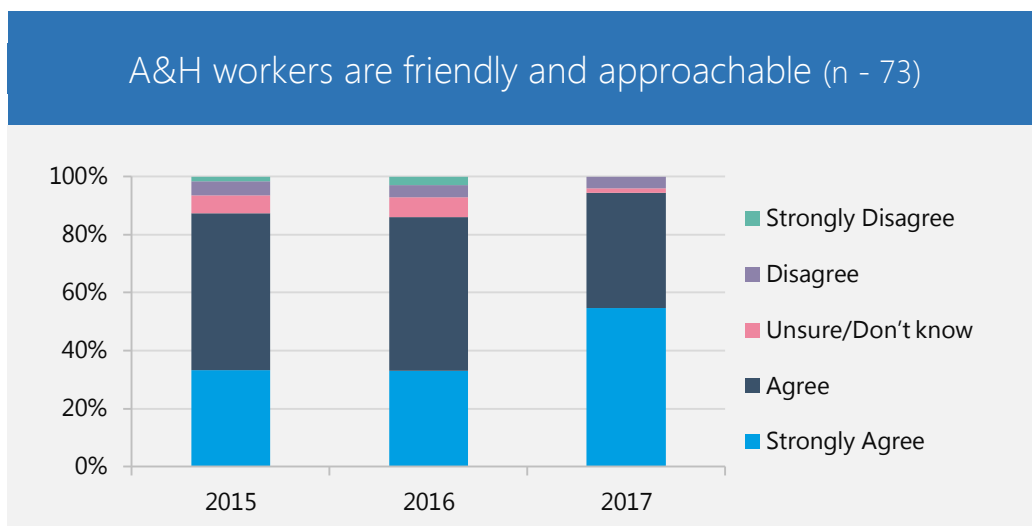
ADVICE & HOUSING

In keeping with previous years, the Advice & Housing team have received positive responses from those surveyed, with 95% of respondents indicating that they felt that the team was friendly and approachable, and 88% indicating that they felt that the team had a good understanding of the support services available to clients.

With regards to the team’s explanation of housing options to clients, 83% of respondents felt that it was done clearly, up seven percentage points on 2016, however there was also a greater level of disagreement recorded – 12% in 2017, against 8% in 2016. Looking through the six comments explaining why clients were unhappy, it was a mix of frustration with documentation, perceived misinformation, and a lack of understanding from workers.

The areas of support offered by Advice & Housing were largely in keeping with previous years, with accommodation, benefits and identification, and help accessing other services the top three.

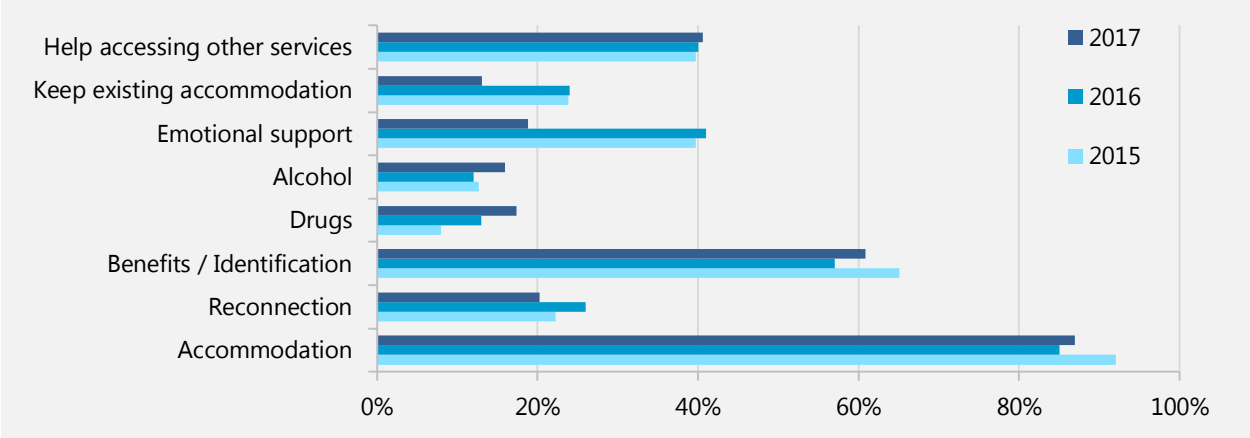
Two additional things to note – the percentage of clients surveyed who indicated that they received emotional support from the service fell to 19%, from 41% in 2016, and 40% in 2015, and clients receiving support around retaining accommodation fell to 13%, from 24% in 2016, and 2015.



The different housing options and how to access them were clearly explained to me (n - 73)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Strongly Agree	33%	33%	37%	27%	30%	49%
Agree	44%	37%	41%	61%	46%	34%
Unsure/Don't know	9%	22%	6%	4%	16%	5%
Disagree	12%	8%	9%	6%	7%	11%
Strongly Disagree	2%	0%	7%	2%	1%	1%

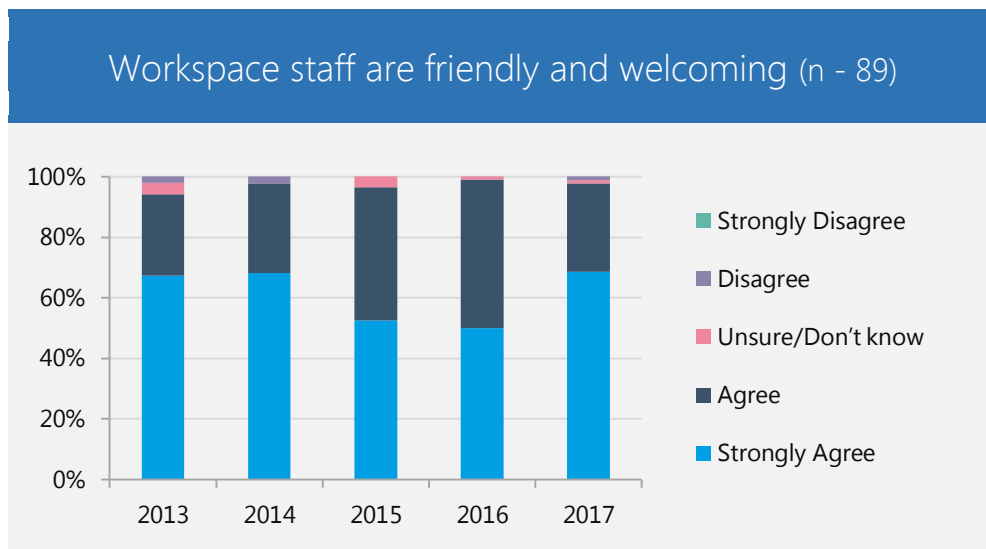
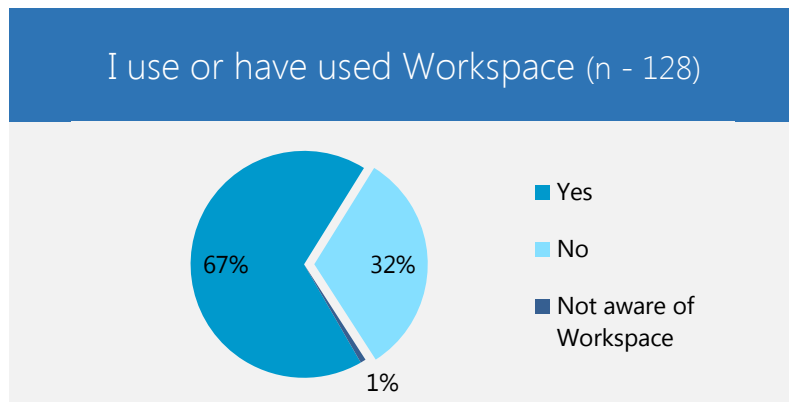
Please indicate the areas of help you are, or have, received from Advice & Housing (n - 73)



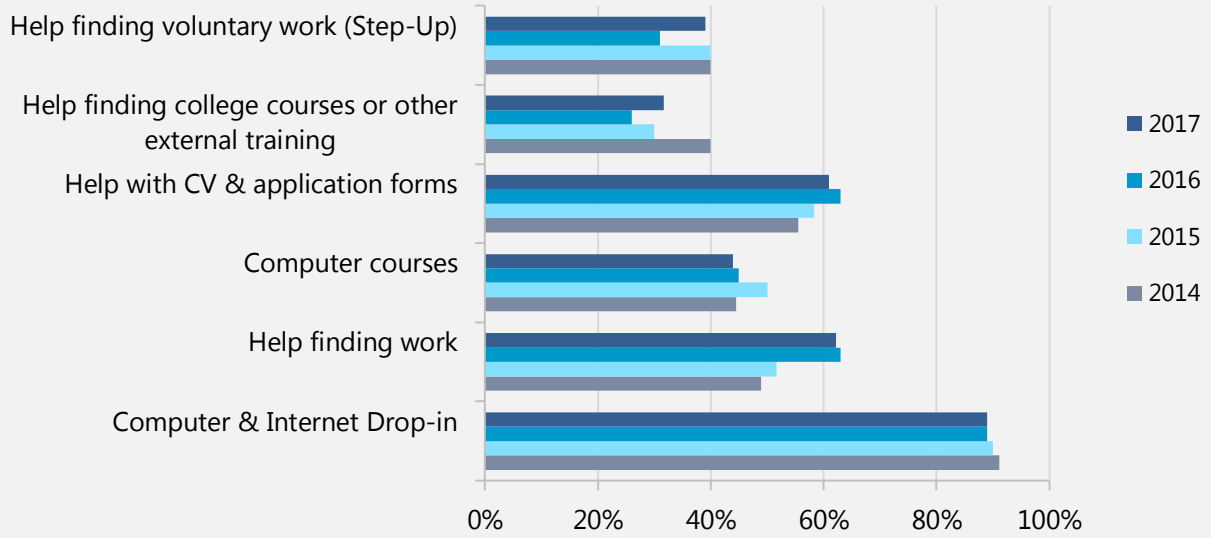
WORKSPACE

The Workspace team continues to receive positive scores for their friendliness with respondents in the annual survey. There was a slight drop - five percentage points - in the level of agreement respondents held on how Workspace had given them a better idea of the options available to them, regarding work, training, or voluntary work, but the majority, 82%, felt that Workspace did help them to better understand their options.

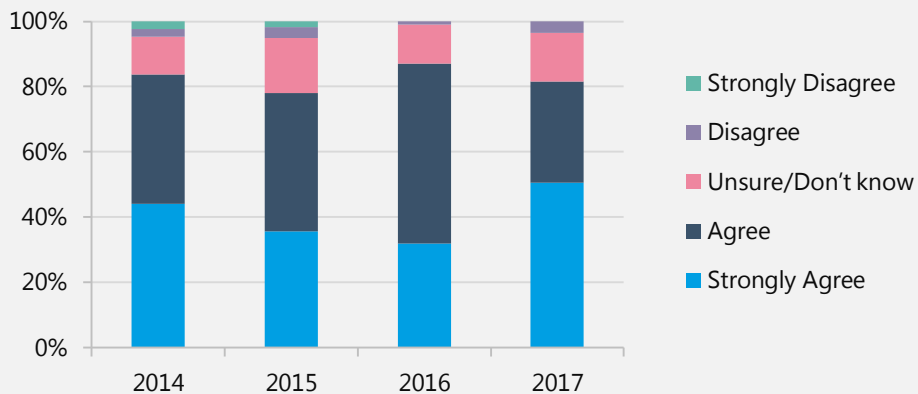
Computers & IT Drop-in continue to be the primary draw for respondents, but as in 2016, over 60% of respondents indicate that they are accessing Workspace for help with their CV and job applications.



What Workspace services do you use? (n - 82)



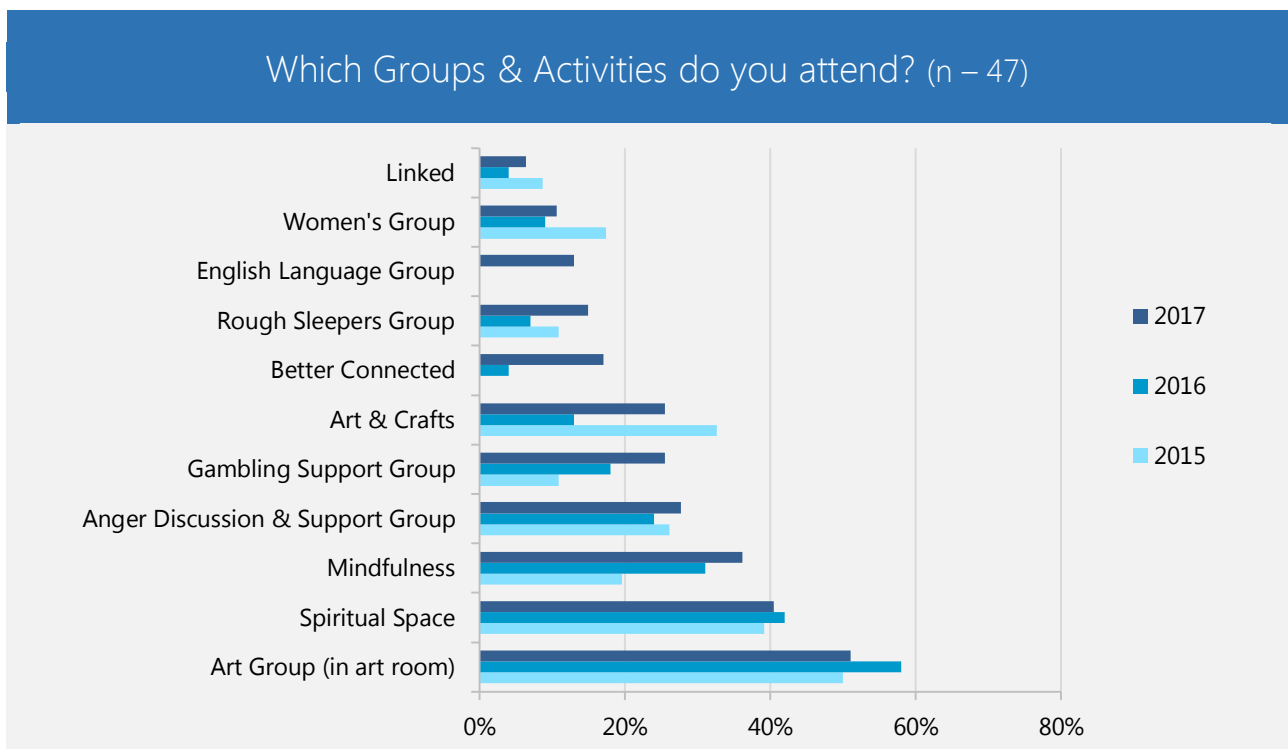
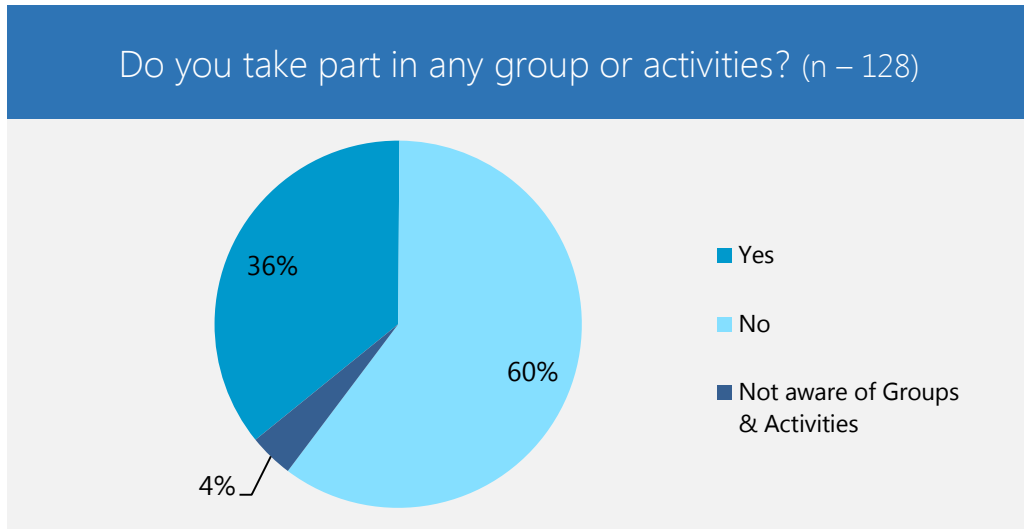
I have a better idea of the options available to me for work, training or voluntary work (n - 87)



GROUPS & ACTIVITIES

Over a third of the clients participating in the survey report that they have participated in Groups and Activities. When asked what particular activities they were involved in, the art room was by far the most popular, with spiritual space, mindfulness, and the anger discussion and support group the next three most popular.

Satisfaction with the groups is very high, with very few reporting dissatisfaction with them (only 2%). When asked what reason they attended groups, the highest responses from clients were around improving their wellbeing, and socialising with others.



If you attend any of the above groups, how satisfied are you with them? (n - 43)

	2015	2016	2017
Very Satisfied	54%	50%	51%
Satisfied	42%	50%	44%
Unsure/Don't know	4%	0%	3%
Dissatisfied	0%	0%	2%
Very Dissatisfied	0%	0%	0%

What is your reason for attending groups? (n - 44)

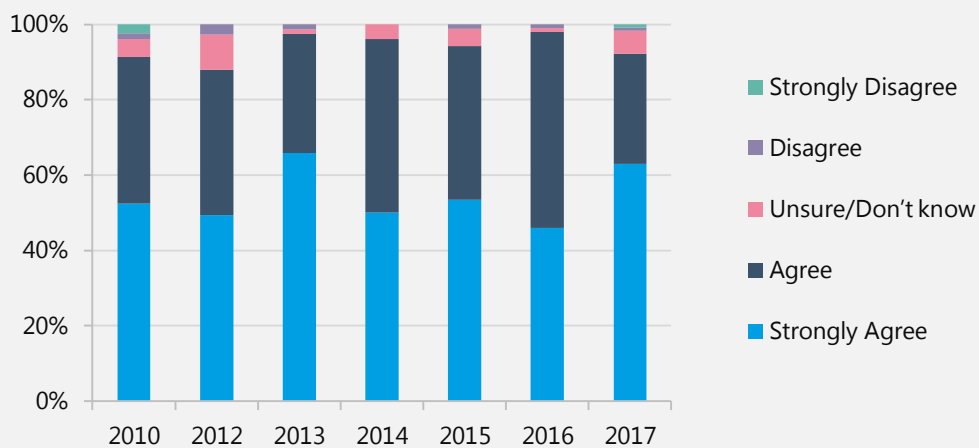
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Learning something new	59%	41%	54%	67%	60%	70%
Socialising with others	56%	43%	59%	74%	62%	59%
Help and support	38%	45%	49%	50%	51%	64%
Improves my wellbeing		48%	46%	76%	72%	68%

CAFÉ

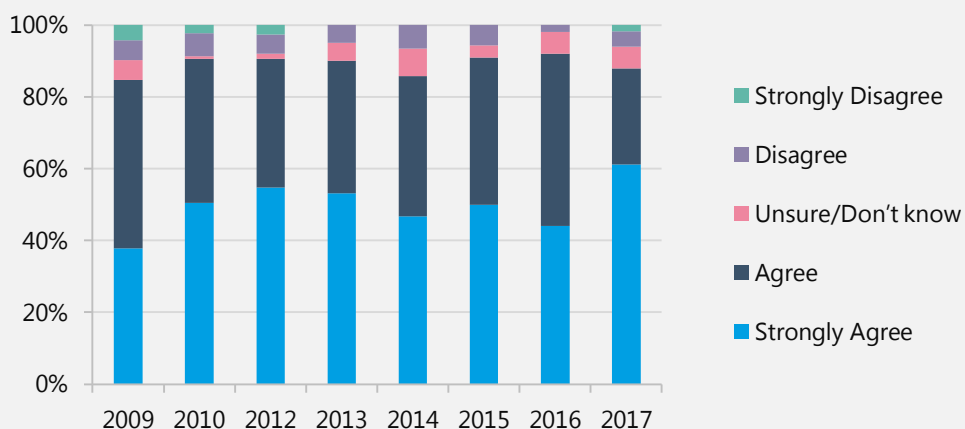
The Café continues to receive positive scores in their responses however it is worth noting that the friendliness of café staff and volunteers was slightly lower than in the previous four years. One client commented that they felt this was due to some of the volunteers being less willing to engage than others. This could simply reflect that new volunteers learning how to serve could be more focused on the task, than with connecting with clients.

As in other years, several respondents stated that the choices on offer were limited, or that the food should be cheaper, or offered for free to those without money.

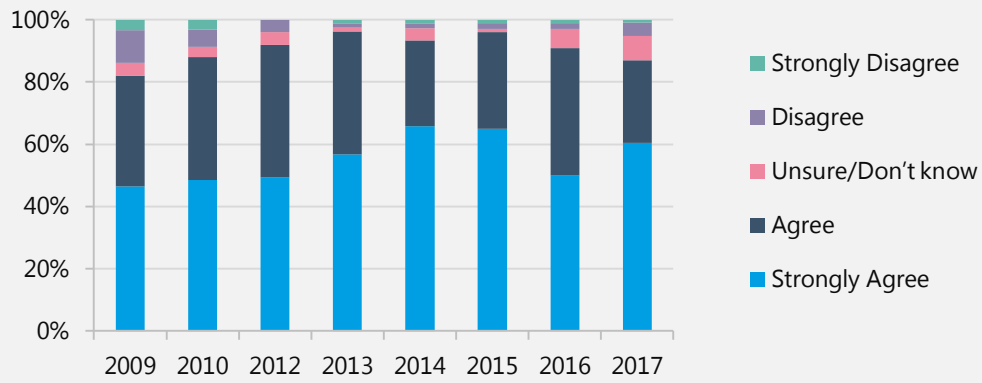
The Café staff are friendly and welcoming (n - 116)



The Café provides a good choice of food (n - 116)



The food in the Café is good value (n - 116)



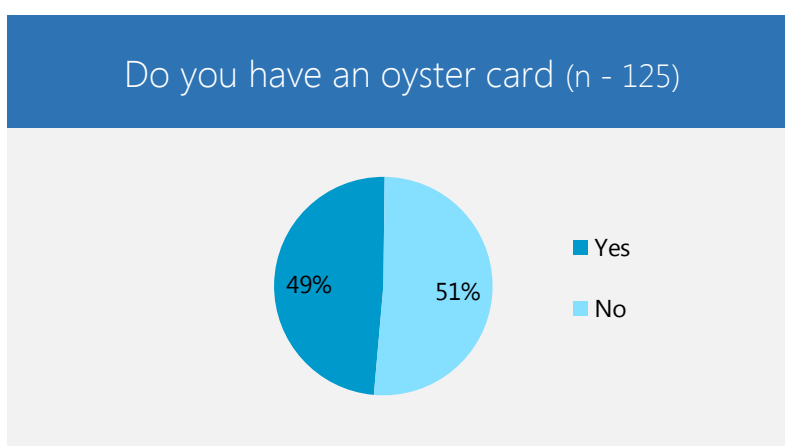
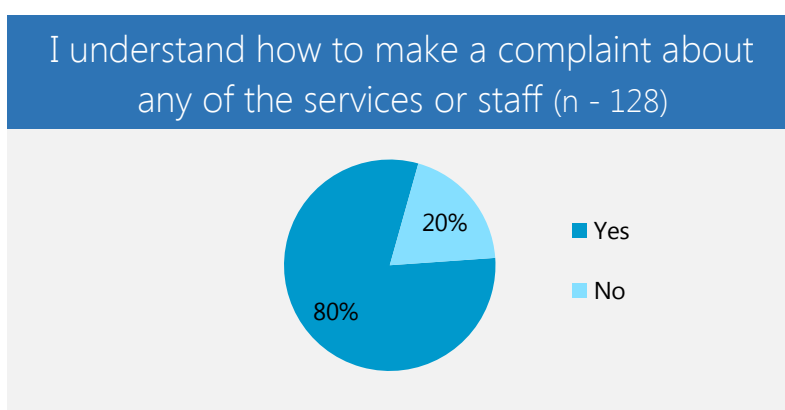
OVERALL SERVICES

The percentage of respondents who indicated agreement with the statement that they understood how to make a complaint was four to one, which is an improvement on the previous year of three to one.

The cleanliness of the building continues to receive mainly positive responses, but as in previous years the showers and toilets continue to attract the majority of negative comments. One suggestion to improve the toilets is to consider replacing the paper handtowels, which can be strewn on the floor, with hand-dryers.⁷

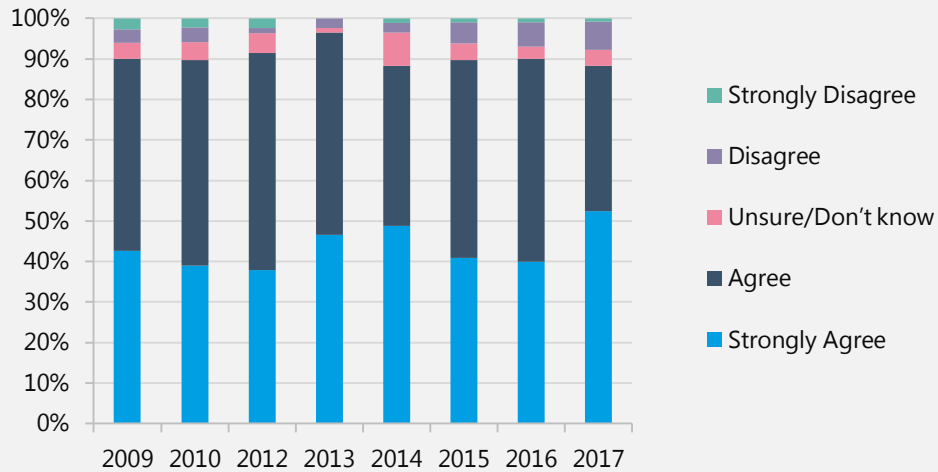
The two statements added in 2016 regarding practical and emotional support from staff received similar scores in 2017, with the second – *'Connection staff have supported me to feel more positive about my future'* – resulting in several clients making clear that they already had positive dispositions and needed no such support from the Connection. Several others suggested that they felt support was inconsistent.

This year a new question asked whether clients had an Oyster Card. To this, almost half indicated that they did, with several highlighting the fact that their age made them eligible for a 60+ Oyster Card/Freedom Pass.



⁷ At the beginning of February two dryers were installed to address this issue.

The building is clean and well maintained (n - 128)



Connection staff have given me practical help to make positive changes to my life (n – 125)

	2016	2017
Strongly Agree	35%	46%
Agree	48%	36%
Unsure/Don't know	7%	9%
Disagree	9%	7%
Strongly Disagree	1%	2%

Connection staff have supported me to feel more positive about my future (n – 126)

	2016	2017
Strongly Agree	34%	45%
Agree	48%	33%
Unsure/Don't know	8%	10%
Disagree	9%	11%
Strongly Disagree	1%	1%

QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS

Please tell us about the one thing you are least happy with at the Connection at St. Martin's (n - 69)

There were 69 valid responses to this question and these were categorised into four broad areas: services, facilities, staff and support, and other.

SERVICES

The operating hours of the services were highlighted by ten respondents, with a request for longer opening hours of the Day Centre and Workspace (on Wednesdays), and earlier opening times for Night Centre. One client requested that the centre be open at the weekend so they could sleep safely.

Ten clients took the opportunity to highlight issues with other clients. Four respondents mentioned their difficulty with being exposed to drugs. One asked for more information and support around Spice. Four respondents complained about the hygiene of other clients, and finally two others said that they felt uncomfortable sometimes due to tension between clients.

Six clients commented on the food, with five indicating that food should be free or at lower prices, and one stating that they found it upsetting to see food wasted, especially when they had no money.

A further six clients chose to focus on the Night Centre, with four expressing frustration with policies around accessing the service, including time limits and the need for more beds. The two remaining respondents complained about noise, and clients walking around during the night.

FACILITIES

Facilities received 14 comments, with the majority of them (9) expressing dissatisfaction with the level of cleanliness in building, specifically the showers and toilets. Further comments included a request for more charging points for devices (2), more opportunities to do laundry (1), more storage available for clients (1), and one final client who expressed displeasure with 'wonky tables'.

STAFF AND SUPPORT

There were nine comments that complained about the level and type of support received, with three requesting more general support, two requesting more tailored support, two requesting more housing support and two who suggested there was a need for follow-ups with clients, and for women to be prioritised.

On staff, seven clients responded that they were unhappy with the attitude of some staff, with four commenting that some staff attitudes were not helpful, one commenting that they felt pushed into learning computers, one who felt staff needed practical experience in homelessness in order to support clients, and finally one who felt he was being targeted for drinking while others were not when they were under the influence of drugs.

OTHER

There were six comments that did not fit under the headings above: they included requests for more films, complaints about the number of Eastern Europeans accessing services, request for more

security, stating that there was a lack of activities in day centre, a complaint that CSTM does not offer references for clients, and finally that there is no GP on site.

Please tell us about the one thing you are most happy with at the Connection at St. Martin's (n - 118)

One hundred and eighteen clients gave valid responses to the question of what they were most happy with at the Connection at St. Martin's and the responses were categorised into the following: general services and building, facilities, staff, and Workspace.

GENERAL SERVICES AND BUILDING

Forty-seven comments were left that simply complimented the services provided at The Connection at St Martin's, with thirty-one general comments, ten that focused on the food, three on the art room, and two on the night centre. One final client mentioned the importance of being able to use the internet, and to be able to socialise.

STAFF

Forty-two respondents indicated that CSTM staff was the thing that made the biggest difference to them, with friendliness, support, and understanding repeated several times, with several staff being singled out for particular praise. One client drew attention to how a staff member checking on him meant a lot:

"Today a member of staff was friendly and asked me if I need money for breakfast. I didn't, but it was really nice that she asked. It makes a difference."

FACILITIES

Eighteen clients commented that it was the availability of the practical services – showers, laundry, computers, etc. – that made the biggest difference for them. Several clients particularly liked the showers, "happy that there is always hot water and plenty of towels and toiletries". Another client said that the hot meal was the highlight, with the steady routine of the day a close second.

WORKSPACE

The remaining respondents indicated that Workspace was the standout element at the Connection at St. Martins, with specific comments on the approachability of staff, the relevance of workshops and courses, with a particular mention for the short painting & decorating course.