



Porchlight
Changing attitudes • Changing lives

NEWS RELEASE

DATE: 19 June 2008

Peter Gilroy puts a spotlight on Porchlight

On Wednesday 18 June Porchlight, formerly East Kent Cyrenians, launched its new name to stakeholders, trustees and the media at Eastwell Manor, Ashford.

Porchlight is one of the foremost charities working across Kent to support vulnerable people and prevent homelessness, something guest speaker Peter Gilroy, Kent County Council Chief Executive, has a lot of empathy for.

Peter spoke of his own experience of being made homeless at 15 years old after the sudden loss of his family, “Services such as those provided by Porchlight could be services for us and not only for other people. All of us could find ourselves in a position where we are excluded or have lost stable relationships.”

Peter was keen to put the services Porchlight provides, particularly in terms of homelessness prevention, in perspective, “Whatever else is going on in our lives these services are part of our civil infrastructure. This time of economic difficulty will have most effect on the most vulnerable. Porchlight supports these people and has a lot to be proud of.”

Following Peter’s speech guests were invited to view a photography exhibition containing work by the charity’s service users. There was also a short promotional film focussing on the values of Porchlight and how service users are involved with their local communities.

The evening was received warmly by guests and the importance of Porchlight’s services in the county and the reasoning behind the re-brand were reinforced. Anne Norris JP, Porchlight Chair, addressed the issue of the name change, “It was essential to reflect the services of the charity going Kent wide. There was also sound rational from our service

users for the change, it was important for us to involve the people who are using the services throughout the process.”

If you would like to find out more about the work of Porchlight and how we can help you or how you can help us, visit our website www.porchlight.org.uk.

--- ENDS ---

Notes to the Editor:

1. Porchlight is a forward thinking and innovative charity, passionate about helping people and communities. Porchlight is a forward thinking and innovative charity, passionate about helping people and communities. We help change lives by working to prevent homelessness, to help find accommodation for vulnerable people, prevent the breakdown of communities and to support independent living. The charity was established in 1974 as Canterbury Cyrenians and now works throughout Kent.

2. In 2007-8 Porchlight helped over 1,400 vulnerable people. Porchlight projects include:

Kent Outreach Service

Our street outreach team work across Kent including working within prisons to help offenders who will be released from prison homeless.

Young Persons Services

This includes a direct access hostel, longer stay hostel and shared house, providing support for a number of years, until each individual is ready to live independently. Specialist support is also available from our Young Person's Mental Health service.

Mental Health

We run the only housing project in Kent specifically for people with enduring mental ill-health. We also have a young persons' mental health service that enables young homeless people with mental health problems to better access the health services they need.

Supported Accommodation

We have hostels in Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and Ramsgate. They range in the levels of support provided from high support needs with staff available 24hrs a day, to medium support with staff available on a 9-5pm basis.

Homelessness prevention

This is a preventative 'floating support' service that provides support to vulnerable people in their own home who are at risk of becoming homeless. Many of these clients have been through the hostel system and are almost ready to live independently but just need a little support every now and again.

Building Skills

We have a team that works with people accessing any of our services and helps them develop their skills and education. We provide tailored training and encourage people to get involved in the running and improvement of their project, or volunteer on a more formal level in the organisation. Porchlight is committed to involving our service users throughout all the activities of the charity. They are actively encouraged to become involved in education, employment, volunteering and service user involvement opportunities.

Community Support

The aim of the project is to ensure that issues and concerns affecting the quality of life in the neighbourhoods are represented and tackled. We aim to achieve this through advocating on residents' behalf to professional services and working directly in the community, ensuring practical support, advice and information is available. The project co-ordinates regular drop-in surgeries, resident group meetings, training and workshops.

For More Information Contact: Mark Parry on 01227 760078 or email

markparry@porchlight.org.uk

www.porchlight.org.uk