



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2004 – MARCH 2005



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BUCKINGHAMSHIRE EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM ANNUAL REPORT

April 2004 - March 2005

Introduction

This report outlines the nature and functioning of the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) of Buckinghamshire Social Services and is set out in the following sections:

1. The team, its composition and the various ancillary workers to whom the team turn for assistance.
2. The work of the team.
3. Ways in which this work is enhanced and improved.
4. Ways in which the team seeks to raise awareness of the work it undertakes.
5. The aims of the team for the oncoming year shown by way of performance indicators.

1. The Team

The staffing establishment for the Buckinghamshire EDT is for one team manager working full time, one full-time administrator and eight full time equivalent social work posts. The team manager works part of their time while the daytime offices are closed and the remainder in daytime hours in the week.

There are currently two men and five women working full-time on the team with an average of 23 years experience. All work as Approved Social Workers under The Mental Health Act 1983. We are aided in our work by nine sessional workers, recruited from day time teams, who assist team members at times of peak demand or to help cover gaps arising from sickness and holidays. As well as addressing the practicality of filling a shift, this arrangement has the advantage of advancing mutual understanding and knowledge. The sessional workers become aware of ways in which the teams they come from can best work alongside EDT and EDT members become aware of current issues and concerns faced by daytime colleagues.

The work of EDT is also enhanced by a number of service support workers who attend interviews conducted under The Police and Criminal Evidence Act on behalf of the team. These workers will also help provide transporting and escorting facilities. In addition, they perform a variety of other tasks that help support vulnerable service users at times of need.

The team often has students on placement. These students are undertaking their Diploma in Social Work Course or Approved Social Worker training. A number of other people have contacted the team to see and experience the work undertaken and if you would like to arrange this for yourself please contact a team member to discuss this possibility.

2. The work of the team

The team works from a base on the outskirts of High Wycombe. As we do not see service users at the base, the address is not made available to them for security reasons. A service for the whole of Buckinghamshire is provided from this base.

The team covers the hours when daytime offices are closed. This amounts to at least 131 hours out of a 168 hour week and more when there are bank holidays. One EDT member begins duty on a weekday evening at 5.00pm (4.30pm on Fridays) so that there is a half-hour overlap period before daytime offices close. This provides an opportunity for daytime colleagues to pass on information and share concerns relating to known service users and issues.

A second EDT member arrives for duty at 6.00pm. The two workers then discuss and prioritise work that has come in so far. It is unlikely that any worker will leave the office base to make a visit much before 6.30pm on any evening.

The worker who began duty at 5.00pm finishes at 11.00pm. The worker who began at 6.00pm remains until 9.30am the following morning. All work is written or typed by the workers on shift and faxed to the relevant worker/team/office, and the half hour overlap available in the mornings gives daytime colleagues the opportunity to raise any issues with the EDT worker that they may like to discuss.

Information relating to work undertaken by the team for the period of this report can be found later in this report. Details of a customer satisfaction survey providing feedback on the team's performance from colleagues is included.

Team members provide a back-up support role for one another to promote safe working practices for occasions when the person on the overnight shift needs to leave the office to make a visit.

The Team's **policy statement** is:

'To respond to social work emergencies which need addressing outside normal office hours and which cannot wait until the next working day'

Whenever possible the team will attempt to hold situations until daytime services can respond to referrals. However, this is not always possible.

3. Enhancing and improving the work of the team

The team members meet together every fortnight. As this is the only time when we see one another altogether these meetings are extremely important. As well as discussing day to day issues affecting the work of the team, we also invite colleagues from other teams/services to promote mutual knowledge and understanding of one another's work.

We also use part of some team meetings for a group discussion when issues of importance are aired, thought about and discussed. These discussions provide a type of group supervision, which is a useful compliment to the individual supervision and appraisal provided for each team member.

Because the EDT remains a generic social work team working with all service-user groups, it is necessary for team members to keep up to date with developments in legislation, policy and procedures. All team members have recently attended Approved Social Worker and Child Protection refresher training. We have also benefited from other training with colleagues and neighbouring EDTs.

There have been no formal complaints about work undertaken at EDT throughout the course of the year. Complimentary responses to the Team's involvement have been made known to the complaint's officer.

4. Raising awareness of the work of the team

The value of the sessional workers in helping to raise awareness of the work of the Team has already been mentioned (1. above). Another particularly valuable way of raising awareness has been to offer students on qualifying courses a placement with the team. The EDT has now provided placements for 35 qualifying students over an eleven year period. Over the course of this year team members have supervised four Diploma in Social Work students.

Each member of EDT has a liaison role with regard to a particular service-user group or other agency. In conducting this liaison role team members will attend team meetings of child-care, youth offending teams, adult disability, mental health and older peoples teams within the department. We also have links with The Police, The Benefits Agency, housing officers and hospital staff as there are times when we deal extensively with these services.

5. Aims of the team

The aims of the team are expressed both in general terms and as performance indicators:

<p>EDT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</p> <p>APRIL 2005 – MARCH 2006</p>

- **Primary Task:**

To maintain a specialist emergency support outside office hours for the county.

Indicator	Action required
1. Ensure that members of the public and statutory agencies have speedy direct access to help & support out of office hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain effective systems to continue meeting this requirement in the face of increasing service demand. • Maintain telephone equipment in good repair. • Continue rolling promotional programme
2. Maintain good communication with other out-of-hours services and the day time services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain active involvement in ESSA forum. • Maintain system of liaison roles within team
3. Monitor the ethnic origin of all service users that team members visit/see in accordance with departmental policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue regular monthly checks on gathering information • Sustain patterns of analysis and recording
4. Conduct, analyse and act upon customer satisfaction surveys, which detail the views of professional colleagues and service users regarding the team's responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain regular surveys of service users and colleagues. • Develop cultural sensitivity in provision of EDT service to all sections of the community.
5. Monitor and review safe working practices in accordance with best value principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all team members undertake work place assessments • Maintain safety as a standing item in fortnightly team meetings, in individual supervisions and in group supervision as appropriate.
6. Maximise opportunities for individual team members to make a contribution to the dynamic work of the team as a whole, while maintaining consistency of high professional standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain bi-annual team training • Maintain case-recording monitoring system • Sustain 'group supervision' to ensure that training, research findings etc. cascade effectively.
7. Contribute to departmental objectives re. prevention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain commitment to as 'instant' as possible access to telephone support from EDT – to include exploring technological means of measuring the number of failed calls when both lines are engaged • Contribute to minimising emergency admissions by providing effective and appropriate support. • Minimise relapse, particularly for mental health clients living in the community, through immediate & direct access to ASWs & services.

Martin Smith. April 2005

6. General aims of the team for 2005/06

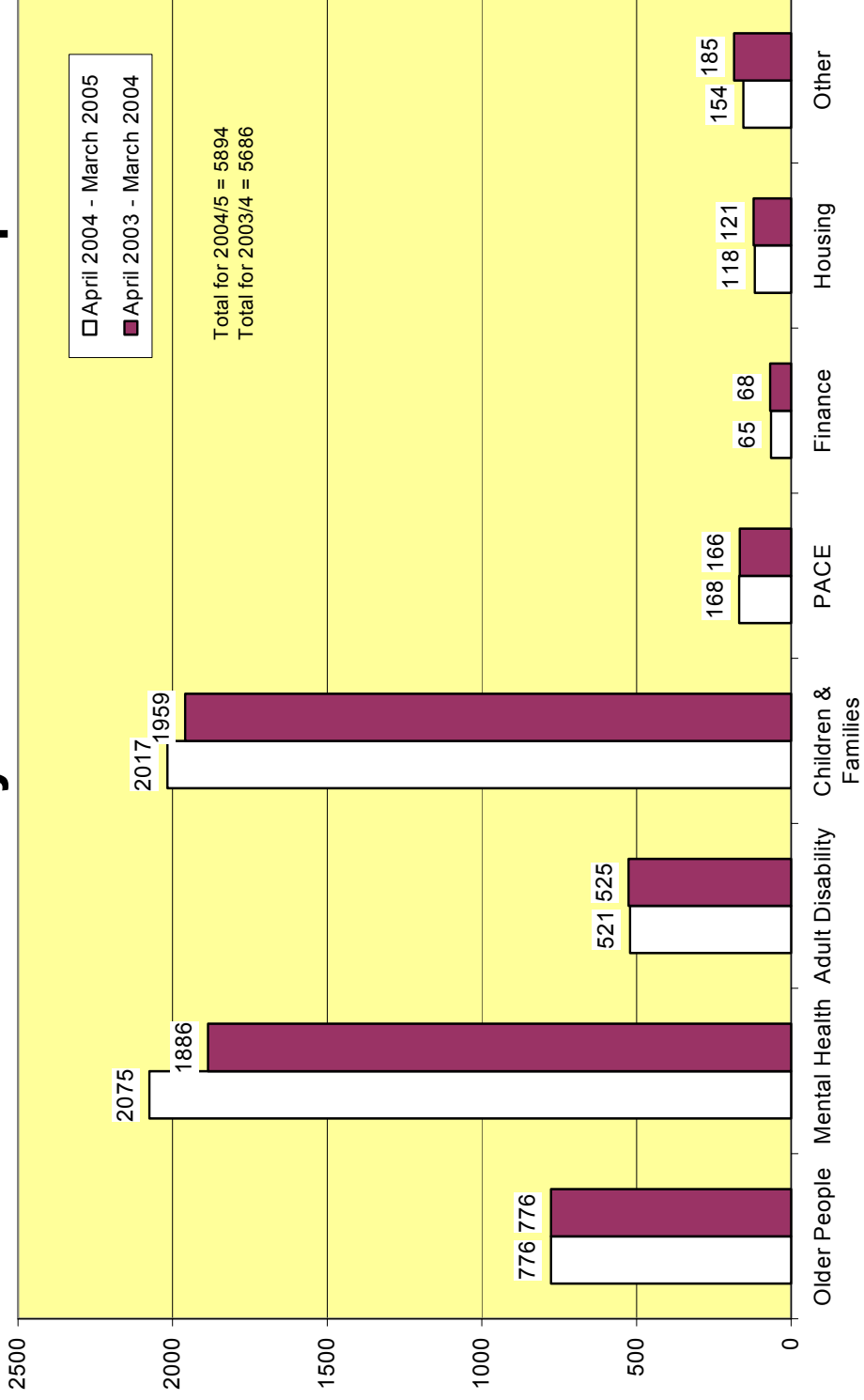
Generally:

To work towards achieving top performance by concentrating on staff care, customer satisfaction and innovation.

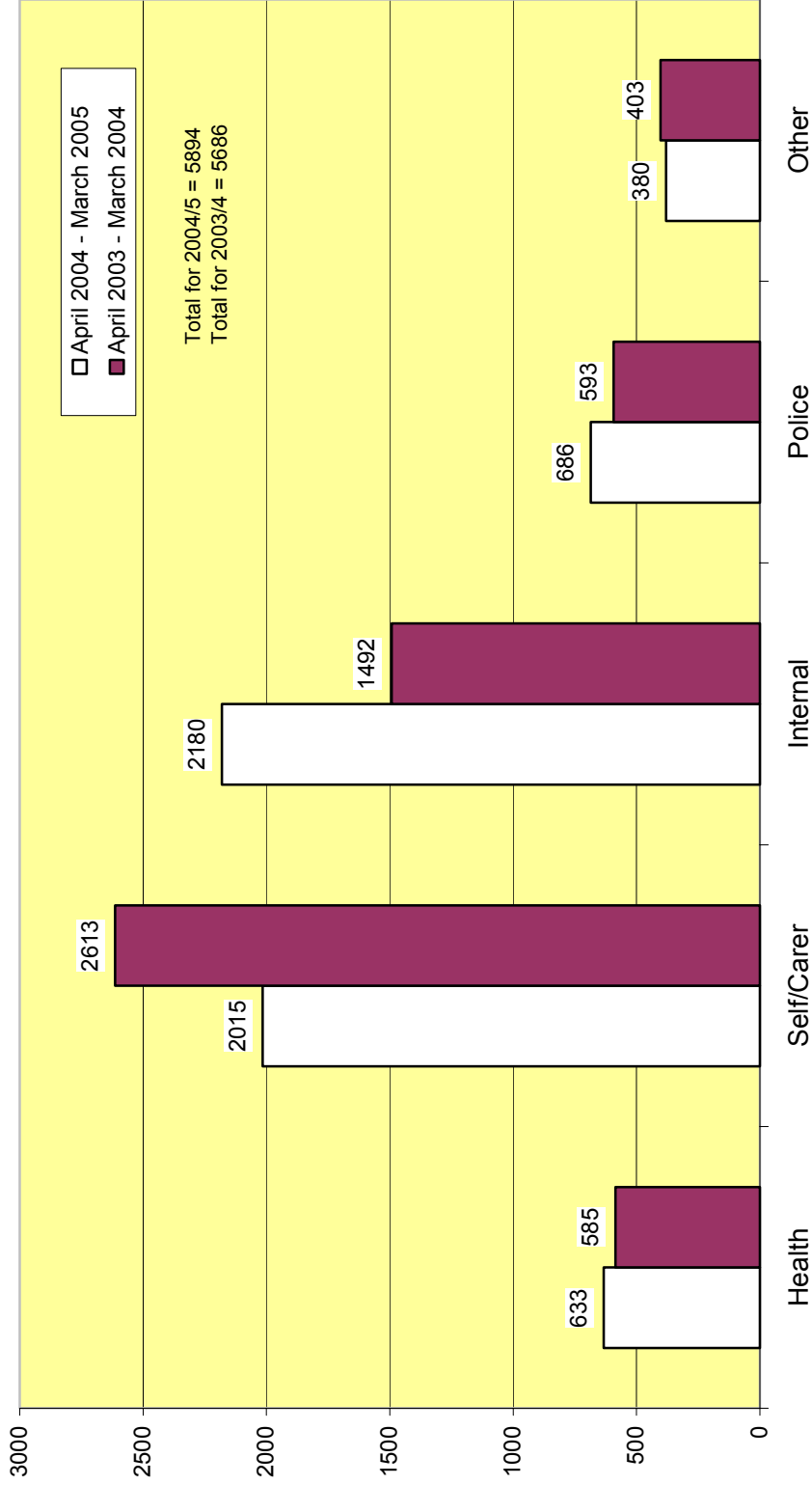
Specifically:

1. To consider conducting and analysing another customer satisfaction survey.
2. To contribute to an independent review of the team, which will include consideration of the unsocial hours enhancement paid to Bucks EDT workers (comparatively low with neighbouring EDTs).
3. To monitor and review a support worker scheme established to support the work of the team in January 2005. This scheme provides a support worker on duty to assist the team from 1700 to 2400 every night and, additionally, 1000 to 1700 on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays. This scheme has enabled the team to provide improved and enhanced response to service users and colleagues.
4. To work with child care and mental health services to consider what crisis responses are appropriate for these service user groups out of hours. In particular to evaluate the recommendations from the Climbe inquiry and Mental Health National Service Framework and integrate EDTs responses with those of the recently-formed mental health crisis intervention teams.
5. To continue to promote a 'learning culture' within the team so that workers are qualified in essential respects to offer a comprehensive and appropriate generic response to crises in need of attention outside of office hours.

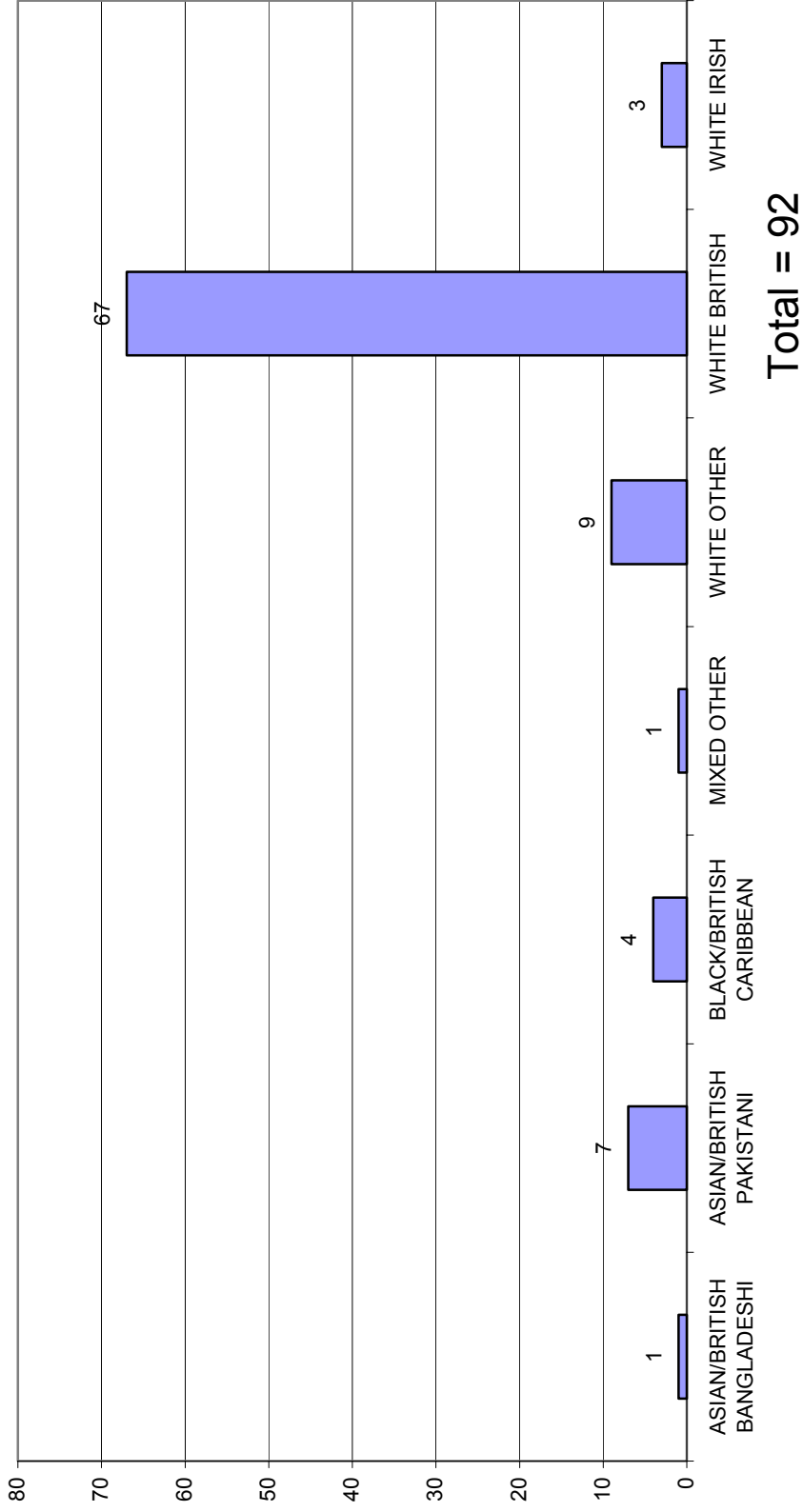
Referrals by Service User Group



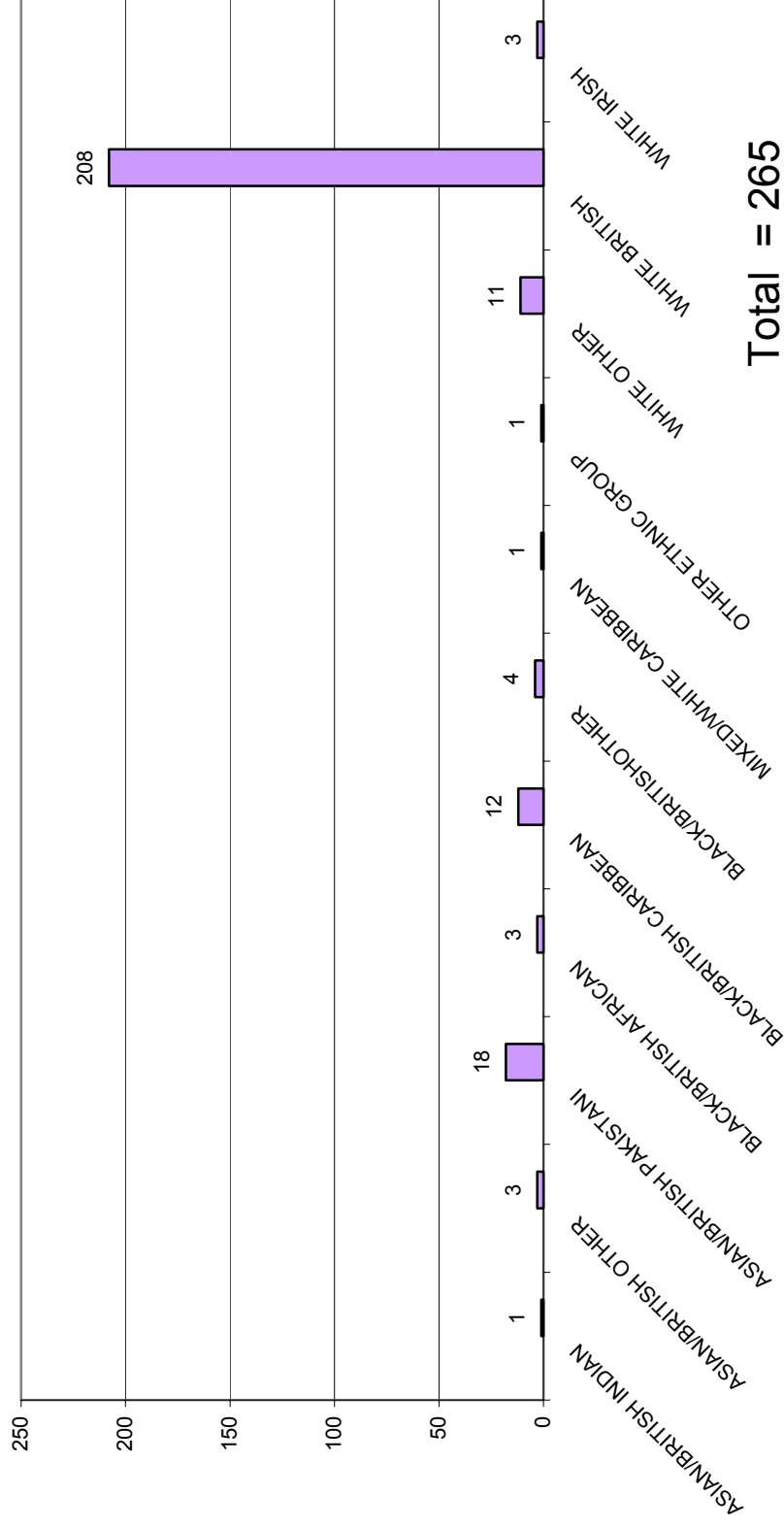
Referrals by Source



Ethnic Origin of Young People interviewed in Police Custody

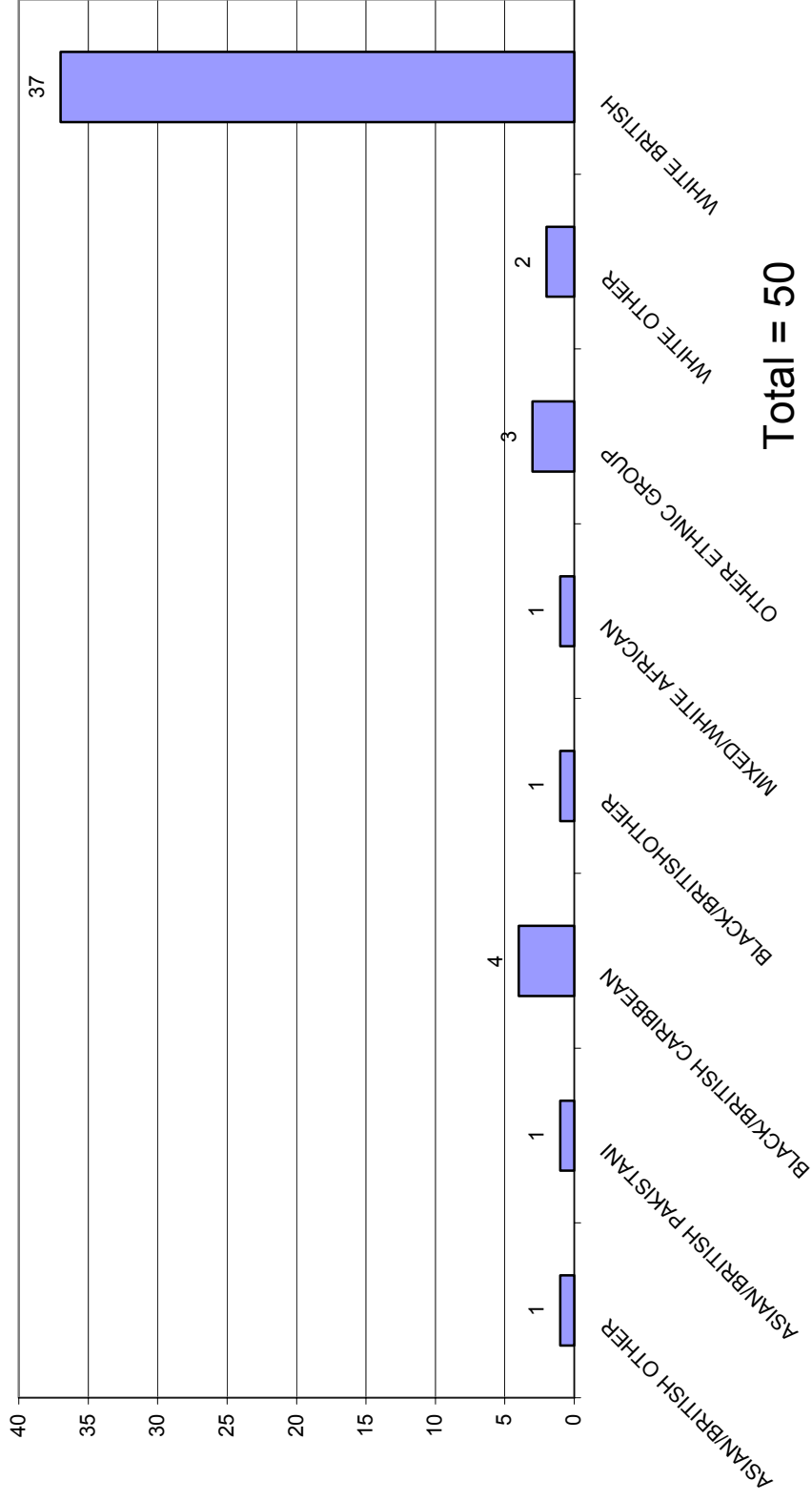


Ethnic Origin of People Assessed under the Mental Health Act 1983



Total = 265

Ethnic Origin of Children Visited



TELEPHONE CALLS ANSWERED IMMEDIATELY

April 2004 - March 2005

MONTH	Total Calls received	% answered immediately	Calls waiting:						Total
			1 - 10 minutes	11 - 30 mins	31 mins - 1 hour	1 hour plus	2 hours plus		
APRIL	468	96	5	5	2	2	3	17	
MAY	597	96	9	2	3	6	1	21	
JUNE	438	94	4	5	6	7	2	24	
JULY	485	94	9	6	4	0	7	26	
AUGUST	516	90	3	19	2	8	16	48	
SEPTEMBER	466	92	6	10	8	7	5	36	
OCTOBER	458	93	8	7	4	4	9	32	
NOVEMBER	516	93	4	12	7	9	1	33	
DECEMBER	530	94	5	9	5	6	4	29	
JANUARY '05	466	94	3	8	7	5	2	25	
FEBRUARY	446	96	2	9	4	3	1	19	
MARCH	508	95	6	8	3	4	2	23	
TOTAL	5894	Average = 94%	64	100	55	61	53	333	

Customer Satisfaction 2004 - Colleagues

Having conducted customer satisfaction surveys with service users in recent years (see previous annual reports) in 2004 EDT conducted a survey with colleagues both inside and outside of Social Care. Colleagues were interviewed face-to-face or by telephone as follows:

Child-care workers (social care):	4
Disabled children workers (social care):	4
Mental health workers (social care):	3
Team for older people workers (social care):	2
Adult disability workers (social care):	2
Youth offending service:	3
Police custody sergeants:	6
Benefits agency:	1
Housing officers:	2
TOTAL	27

Each person was asked the following 5 questions:

1. What do you think EDT do / exist for?
2. What have been your experiences of using EDT, good or bad?
3. What have you heard others say about EDT, good or bad?
4. How do you think EDT could improve on what it does?
5. Any other comments?

The answers to questions 1-3 are shown in table form. The answers to questions 4 and 5 are quoted directly from respondents who responded to them.

	Good	Average	Poor	Total
1. Understanding of EDT's purpose / function	21	5	1	27
2. Personal experience of using EDT	23	3	1	27
3. What heard about EDT from others	15	7	5	27

4. **How do you think EDT could improve upon what it does?**

- Personal contact with teams and individuals
- Continue to produce informative contact sheets that are faxed to the day team the following day
- Liaison role helps. It's useful to know what EDT can and cannot do
- The service could improve on time scales for responding but this is very much linked to having access to more workers and funding
- It would be good to do more assessments together
- Given the economic constraints it operates under I am struggling to think how you could improve without more staff
- Personally and professionally I find that handing over to a person at EDT who 'seems willing' to act if necessary more satisfying than when I'm handing over to someone who 'seems unwilling'
- Provide literature about the service
- It is helpful that young people are actually seen by a social worker prior to coming into care. This does not always happen, particularly when young people have been admitted to care from a police station. It would be good to review the whole service offered at night and look at ways we can communicate better together
- EDT's forms need to be updated. There is usually not enough information
- Like a lot of services within Social Care I expect EDT is not staffed adequately
- There are sometimes delays in providing appropriate adults but this is to do with lack of resources
- It would be helpful for the police to be able to contact appropriate adults directly
- EDT needs more staffing and resources
- More staff might improve the ability to attend promptly
- Liaison between EDT and the police so that the police could develop a better understanding of the social work role
- I would prefer to talk to someone regarding referrals faxed through to EDT and, at times, when EDT is busy, this is not possible

- I would like acknowledgement of information I send to EDT and for EDT to record directly into service-users notes on the internal social care computer system (mentioned three times)
- Prior to the EDT worker making a referral I would like to see more information collected about the individual (mentioned three times)

5. Any other comments?

- Have two teams to cover North and South of the county
- I'm not clear about EDT overlaps with the mental health crisis intervention team
- It would be good to forge stronger links with EDT
- I feel we work well together. We need to look at formalising this
- Wonderful job! – Keep up the good work!
- I appreciate the service and hope that its development maintains a clear profile while all the organisations that refer to it are changing
- I'm not sure if managers and social workers realise the type of work EDT deal with
- It would be good if there an EDT office in each major town
- EDT does a good job
- More staff would help
- Closer liaison would be helpful (mentioned three times)

APPENDIX

The Heart of the Night

In 2004 Martin Smith, a co-author of this report, published the first book length study and review of Social Services Emergency Duty Teams. Fuller information concerning this book and details of how to obtain it follow for those readers who might like to know more about out of hours crisis intervention in health and social care.

The heart of the night

Out of hours crisis intervention in health and social care:
the work of Social Services Emergency Duty Teams

By Martin Smith

Emergency Duty Teams are at the forefront of providing and coordinating health and social care services out of hours. They typically deal with the most intense challenges in the most difficult circumstances. Too often, however, EDT work is given little, if any, thought in training programmes and departmental policies and procedures; and there is a dearth of writing on what they do, how they cope, how they struggle. Working mainly in the hours of darkness, they have been out of sight – out of mind.

This book changes that. From the experience of EDT working, it brings into the light a wealth of **good practice lessons for existing workers and managers**, as well as for **students** on qualifying and post-qualifying courses in health and social care. To workers who have often been undervalued, it also gives **recognition**.

For prospective and existing practitioners there are chapters on working with:

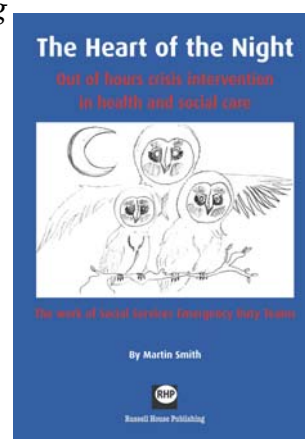
- *children*
- *people with mental health problems*
- *vulnerable adults*

For managers there are practical ideas and recommendations on:

- *training*
- *health and safety*
- *support for workers.*

Two crucial issues in health and social care work today are addressed:

- *partnership working*
- *customer satisfaction.*



The book is for two main readerships.

Students. Out-of-hours services offer rich learning opportunities for those undertaking qualifying and post-qualifying courses. EDTs have developed:

- effective partnerships with other agencies
- finely honed assessment skills
- the flexibility and confidence to respond quickly, effectively and safely
- the skill of thinking 'on their feet'
- the ability to distinguish the genuine emergency from the spurious

These are all crucial skills for students to gain. This book will help them on an important journey of discovery.

Experienced workers and planners. For those interested in developing the work of EDTs, or building on it in other fields, it offers a clear template for strategic development within the business planning culture, and is relevant to the current debates about the organisation of social work. EDT workers have been providing high quality, efficient and effective responses to people in distress for decades. The value of their work has often gone unrecognised. This book not only goes some way to acknowledging the contribution made by EDTs and others who have provided out of hours services over the years; but also draws out the contribution these workers can make to the wider debates about what *works* for people in need.

Large format paperback 144 pages Available now. 1-903855-30-6 £15.95

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR. Martin Smith is team manager of the Buckinghamshire Social Services emergency duty team (EDT). He has also been the regional chair of the Thames/Anglia Branch of the Emergency Social Services Association and founder of an EDT training collective. In addition to working as practitioner, manager, supervisor and mentor he is also a trainer and visiting lecturer on social work courses. His research interests include fear, stress and violence in social work and he has published widely in this field.

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