

## **Written submission from Grassmarket Community Project**

I'm not sure how much you know about the Grassmarket Community Project, but in short we are a project working with individuals 16+ using education and 'craft' based activities to address social exclusion and individual's emotional and social deficits. As Jackie mentioned, we've seen a large change in our client group which has historically been individuals branded as homeless. Over the past 9 months or so, we've been seeing a steady increase in young people and formerly middle class individuals who, for what I think are ideological reasons, have not yet gone to the Job Centre for support and have been relying on savings, family and/or going back to university as temporary stop gaps to keep them from homelessness. They are however beginning to manifest many of the traditional support needs individuals face after long periods of unemployment and isolation. As of September, 25% of the 174 people we worked with last year were between the ages of 16 and 24.

We're also piloting a programme with St Thomas of Atquins School to provide placements for young people for whom school is not working. In this relationship, they come in to our workshops and are mentored by one of our own supported volunteers who have been through what they potentially will face if they fall out of the system. So far it has proven very successful.

I should also mention that we are commissioning Edinburgh University to perform a piece of research over the next few months into these hidden groups locally (i.e. those not presenting as homeless or unemployed). I hope that the results of this may assist in your work.

Josiah Lockhart  
General Manager  
Grassmarket Community Project  
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