

Residents' pets at St Mungo's hostel the stars of the show

Residents of homelessness charity St Mungo's and their pets were filmed recently for a programme featuring the work of The Mayhew Animal Home.

Harvey, 57, who's been living in a St Mungo's hostel for two years, is the proud owner of a shy Alsatian bitch called Kia. Fellow resident Mark, 48, who has been with St Mungo's since January, looks after a boisterous two-year-old Rottweiler-Shikoku cross called Snub.

Both dogs were given a simple health check-up by Mayhew Animal Home Animal Welfare Officers Carly Webber and Zoe Hubbard. This was filmed for a BBC 1 TV programme, Animal 24:7 due to be broadcast in October.

Carly Webber, said: *"We give the dogs worm and flea treatments and a basic check-up but we are not vets. If we, or the pet owners, are concerned in any way we refer them to a free vet service."*

"We also give the owners donated food for their pets and a new collar and leash if they need it. Most of the owners we see at hostels like St Mungo's are good owners. They take care of their dogs well. If we had any concerns about a dog's welfare we would take further action but happily that very rarely happens."

Kia and Snub live with Harvey and Mark at a St Mungo's hostel in south London. The charity is one of the few that allows homeless men and women to keep their pets with them in its hostels.

Radha Sanhaie, deputy manager of the south London hostel, said: *"We take dogs at St Mungo's because often they are the resident's best friend and they help in their recovery. A lot of clients would not take up a hostel place if their dogs couldn't come and that would leave them unable to access many of the services available to them."*

"Clients do have to accept our 'dog contract'. This ensures the animal is fed and walked regularly and that another resident is nominated to take care of the dog should its owner be unable to."

Harvey said: *"I've given up places to stay because of Kia. She means the world to me. On the street there may be the camaraderie but it is not the same as having your own pet. She lets me know when people are coming and wards off anybody she doesn't like. I couldn't live without her."*

About the services he receives from The Mayhew, he added: *"The people at The Mayhew are really good to us. They do a fantastic job. They save me pounds in animal feed and worm and flea treatments, otherwise I'd have to fork out money I just don't have."*

ENDS.

Notes to editor

- **57 of St Mungo's 98 hostels or housing projects allow residents to live with their pets.**

- **For more information please contact Audrey Thompson, St Mungo's media officer, on 020 8762 5570 or email Audrey.Thompson@mungos.org**
- **For more information about The Mayhew contact Sarah Dickinson, media officer, on 020 8968 2443 or email sarah@mayhewanimalhome.org**
- **St Mungo's opens doors for homeless people. Mainly based in London and the South, we provide emergency accommodation, support towards recovery and helping to prevent rough sleeping. We run over 100 projects and help thousands of people make life changes every year.**