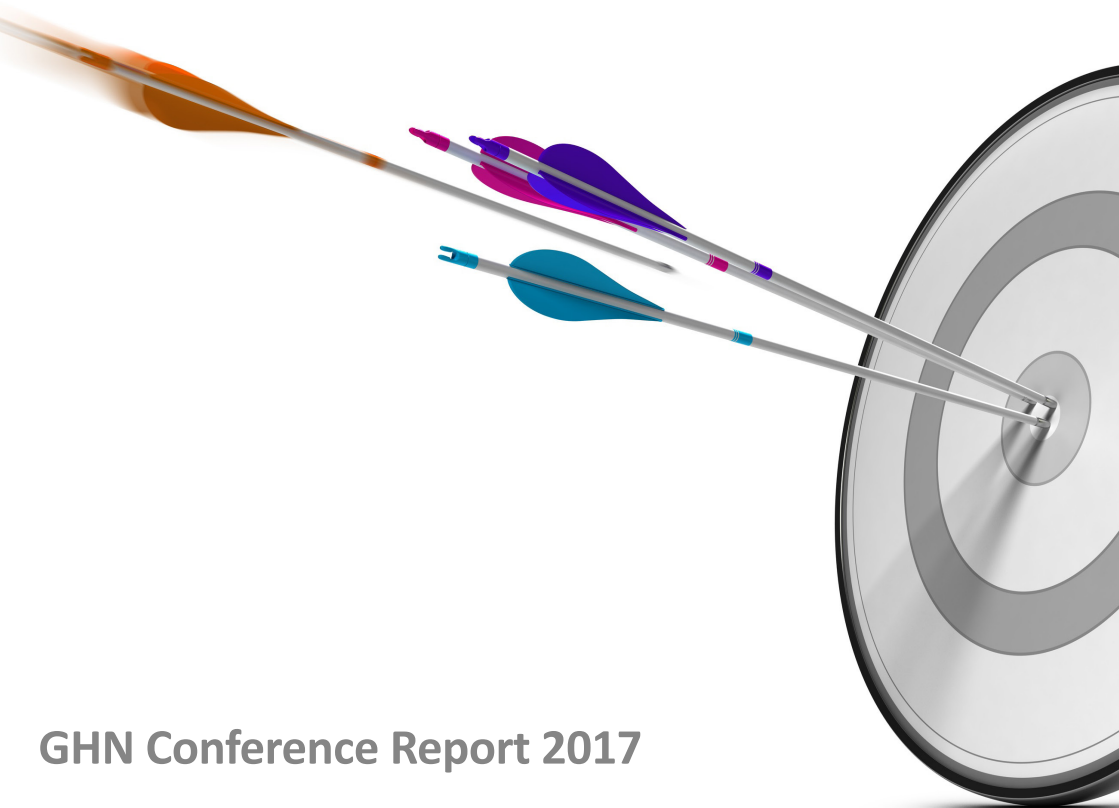# NEW PACT...
NEW IMPACT?

ghn

THE NEW ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS

GHN Conference Report 2017

Rough sleeping inexcusable in modern city like Glasgow - we all agree so let's get it sorted, now.

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Glasgow's Annual Homelessness Conference 2017

Introduction

New Pact … New Impact? was about coming together with all our different perspectives to see how we can change gears; from managing homelessness in Glasgow to ending it.

What needs to change in our strategy and policy? In our structures and systems? In our frontline interventions? In our relationships with each other?

At the heart of our plans for change is the development of a new 10 year Alliance to End Homelessness in Glasgow which will make collective decisions on strategy, action and resources, with guidance and advice from people with lived experience.

Everything it does will be focused clearly on a set of core outcomes that intend to radically change the picture of homelessness in our city – with less people experiencing homelessness and repeat homelessness, no rough sleeping, and less time being spent in homelessness.

Achievement of each of these outcomes will require a rethink of how we currently work (both on our own and with partners), what we currently do, the urgency with which we do it, and who else we need to involve.

Format of the Day

The conference was designed to cover current topics and ideas that will inform the work of Glasgow's Alliance to End Homelessness; presenting research findings and considering how we can use them in practice. Across the day there were:

- Keynote addresses;
- Facilitated sofa session discussions;
- Round table discussions; and
- A series of thematic workshops.

Hearing as many perspectives as possible and debating issues from a broad range of angles is crucial to collectively moving our understanding of important issues forward and creating an environment where everyone could participate.

The conference was expertly chaired by Grant Campbell, Chief Executive of Glasgow City Mission, and attended by over 200 delegates.
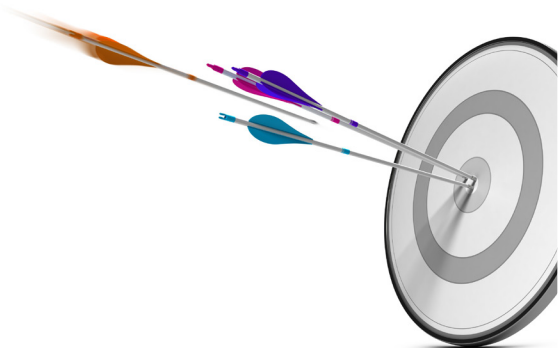
KEY THEMES:

The development of the Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness is significant and ambitious and play a crucial role in achieving the systems change we need:

1. Research evidence points us to the **unequal level of homelessness risk** to help us better target our prevention activity to where it is most needed, without which we are likely to see a notable rise in the number of households becoming homeless in the next 25 years;

2. **Housing First** continues to be the best evidenced solution when tackling homelessness and multiple needs and the support to **upscale in Glasgow** (and across Scotland) is now well established;

3. Working to principles of **"housing readiness"** continues to perpetuate homelessness for people with multiple needs and should be **removed from our considerations**;

4. Continued focus required on delivering services in **"normal" settings** rather than segregating people from local communities and relationships;

5. Embedding asset-based approaches and **moving away from a focus on 'problems' and 'weaknesses'** is core to creating sustainable homelessness solutions that recognise and build on people's ability to create and sustain positive change in their lives;

6. **Poverty** remains at the heart of people's experience of homelessness and responding to poverty is as important as responding to other social and personal needs;

7. Ensuring people with **lived experience of homelessness** are at the heart of finding solutions.

Some fantastic round-table discussions with new connections today at @GHNtweets conference

CIVIC RECEPTION:
Councillor Mhairi Hunter,
City Convener
(Health & Social Care Integration)

Councillor Hunter extended a welcome and acknowledged that each and every experience of homelessness is a crisis in someone's life that must be addressed urgently and represents a crisis we haven't prevented.

Ending homelessness is a priority for the new City Government, with homelessness the theme of the first in a series of summits within the administration's first 100 days. The summit highlighted innovation and progress, but also identified key challenges.

A new Task Force has been established to urgently find and deliver joined up solutions across the local authority, Health and Social Care Partnership and the third, independent and housing sectors.

The establishment of the Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness represents a genuine partnership approach that seeks to keep the best of what we have while building evidence and challenging ourselves to find new and innovative solutions.

Image by GHN

KEYNOTE:

New Pact, New Impact

Susanne Millar, Chief Officer

*Planning, Strategy & Commissioning
Glasgow Health & Social Care
Partnership*

Susanne Millar provided her reflections on tackling homelessness in Glasgow and the signficant journey undertaken to create the beginnings of a new Alliance to End Homelessness. She noted GHN and the third sector's role in getting alliancing on GHSCP's agenda and how it will fundamentally change the nature of the relationships we have with each other.

Learning equally from mistakes and successes over the years, Susanne noted a number of key principles for moving forward together:

Susanne millar#housingfirst. Stop asking are you tenancy ready! Yep! Right on!

- Coproduction with people with lived experience at the heart of everything we do as real solutions can't otherwise be found;

- A clear focus on the ambitious outcomes of less people experiencing homelessness and repeat homelessness, less time is spent in homelessness and ending the need to sleep rough;

- Acknowledging that no single sector or service has all the answers and we must all be willing to listen, learn from and trust each other;

- Not defining people by their behaviour and working with people where they are;

- Move away from 'graduating' through services and systems and lead with the provision of safe, secure homes, leaving behind concepts of housing readiness;

- At all times retaining ambition and aspiration and be willing to take risks.

Continuing to do the same things is not an option, but there is huge encouragement to be found in progress made so far that provides a strong basis for the development of the Alliance to End Homelessness.

What is 'Alliancing' and how will it help?

Lessons from Scotland and UK
Linda Hutchinson, *LH Alliances,*
Graeme Henderson, *Penumbra*

Linda Hutchinson described 'alliancing' as a new way of working developing across the UK to tackle the problem of too many projects being delivered late, over budget and with conflict between partners.

The underpinning principles of 'alliancing' seek to overcome this by focusing on collective responsibility, unanimous decision making, 'best for project' decisions and a culture of no fault and no blame.

With increasing examples of success achieved through 'alliancing' it was noted that at the heart of progress is that change is required by all participating partners to build trust within the alliance to deliver on the core principles.

Graeme Henderson outlined key learning from being a partner in the Future Pathways Alliance that could help in the development of the Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness:

- Focus on your vision at all times;

- The importance of time and support to properly develop roles in the alliance;

- Take the time to build trust between partners;

- Focus on doing things well rather than doing them quickly;

- Ensuring proper support for the full participation of people with lived experience; and

- The important of consensus, keep talking and avoid the word 'but'.

What can an alliance do differently?

Through round-table discussions delegates identified that the Alliance can:

- play an important role as 'vision setters', focusing on values, building consensus and supporting culture change;

- overcome sense of competitiveness and lack of trust through shared budget and pooled required knowledge;

- help create systems change to properly respond to multiple needs and move beyond the 'false categories' in service provision that create barriers;

- take an ambitions, problem solving approach that aims to move away from simply 'managing' homelessness;

- put people with lived experience of homelessness at the heart of systems change.

Can Homelessness Happen to Anyone? Risks and Forecasts

Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick,

Director of Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research,

Heriot-Watt University

Professor Fitzpatrick outlined recent research findings challenging the often-quoted view that homelessness can happen to almost anyone and is too hard to predict, making properly targeted prevention too difficult to deliver.

The research project studying the distribution of homelessness risk across the UK found that, far from any sense of a shared risk of becoming homeless, the chances of experiencing homelessness by the age of 30 are predicted by:

- the experience of childhood poverty (by far the most powerful influence);

- where you live (less likely in rural areas or areas of lower housing market pressures);

- adverse experiences as a teenager, especially being excluded from school, serious drug use and being in care; and

- adverse early adult experiences including leaving education early, experiencing unemployment, renting a home, illness and disability.

These risk factors were illustrated by two contrasting vignettes:

Vignette 1 – white male with relatively affluent childhood in a rural area, graduated from university, living with parents at age 26 with no partner or children.

Predicted probability of having experienced homelessness by age 30 = 0.6%

Vignette 2 – mixed ethnicity female, experienced poverty as a child, brought up by a lone parent, left school/college at 16 and had periods of unemployment, at age 26 lives in rented home with no partner but with children.

Predicted probability of having experienced homelessness by age 30 = 71.2%

As the data analysis shows clearly, it is not a level playing field when it comes to homelessness risk, with the experience of homelessness being far from random. The risks differ significantly depending on circumstances, but for some groups the risks are so high that the experience of homelessness almost constitutes a norm.

So while in theory homelessness can happen to anyone, in all likelihood it won't and the evidence shows that, wherever you live, all forms of homelessness are united by the experience of poverty.

Further research projecting what is likely to happen to levels of homelessness under existing policies and trends has highlighted an expected increase over the next 25 years if we do not change the trajectory.

Professor Fitzpatrick highlighted that while homelessness is predictable it is not inevitable and noted three main priorities for prevention:

- Structural Prevention – through increased availability of, and access to, affordable housing, and brining to an end the cuts to welfare benefits;

- Upstream Prevention – key focus on tackling childhood poverty, responding early to adverse teenage experiences and prioritising the building of supporting social relationships;

- Systemic Prevention – maximise prevention efforts through the delivery of Housing Options and replacing congregate accommodation provision for people with multiple needs with Housing First.

Image by Phoenix Futures

SOFA SESSION 1:
Is Scotland's current action to prevent people from becoming homelessness targeted enough?

James Docherty
Violence Reduction Unit

Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick
Director of I-SPHERE,
Heriot-Watt University

Marion Gibbs
Homelessness Team Leader,
Scottish Government

Peter Kelly
Director, Poverty Alliance

Neil Morland
Housing Consultant
and GHN Board of Directors

- Increased focus on tackling childhood poverty required; if we reduce this we can reduce everything else as it pervades all elements of life;

- Further prioritisation required to prevent the homelessness experienced by young people leaving care;

- While trauma informed practice and policy is improving, it is still not the norm. Better understanding of the impacts of Adverse Childhood (and teenage) Experiences and how we respond to trauma can play a key role in preventing homelessness;

- Place the protection or building of positive social relationships at the heart of our work as their role in prevention is crucial;

- Important to remain ambitious and brave and have a positive vision for change; other countries have achieved a 'functional' end to homelessness (notwithstanding individual episodes of crisis) and we can learn from that.

Best evidence available also shows that people affected by #homelessness should be supported to engage with mainstream #housing and services as much as possible.

WORKSHOP 1:
Housing Ends Homelessness
Sanna Tiivola,
Executive Manager,
Vailla Vakinsaista asumtoa vy (VVA)

Sana described the Housing First approach in Finland which has been central to a significant reduction in long term homelessness and achieving housing retention rates of over 80% for people with multiple needs.

The Housing First developments have seen a human rights approach to housing become embedded, moving away from shelters and hostels towards homeless people being housed and supported in 'normal' surroundings in their own tenancies or in supported housing in congregate settings. Key learning for other cities includes:

- Sticking closely to the principles of Housing First which have been proven to work;

- Ensuring that the approach is properly funded to allow flexible, open ended support;

- Simplifying systems, clearing pathways to housing;

- Ensuring meaningful involvement of people with lived experience of homelessness in the planning and implementation.

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Image by Vailla Vakinsaista asumtoa vy

WORKSHOP 2:
Homelessness System Under Deconstruction

Pat McArdle, *Chief Executive, Mayday Trust*

Pat provided an overview of organisational change in the Mayday Trust to co-produce an asset-based approach to tackling homelessness.The Personal Transitions Service is based on the understanding that with the right interventions at the right time people can achieve and sustain positive change in their lives.

Embedding this approach required a complete deconstruction of their existing homelessness services, rebuilding the new approach on a set of important principles:

• Focusing on weaknesses and problems does not work whereas evidencing achievements and highlighting strengths builds more sustainable change;

• Fixing people does not work as it simply reinforces a sense of past failures and ignores a person's own individual context and motivations;

• Segregation disenfranchises as people only spend time with others who are homeless or people who are paid to be there.

Pat challenged delegates to consider whether, instead of continuing to create an industry that separates people fromlocal communities we need to focus more on delivery in 'normal' settings.

Essentially, to successfully deliver a truly asset-based approach we have to commit to unlearning what we think we know, building a new way of thinking and creating whole systems change.

Presentations from the day are available on our website at: bitly/2AjRzqs

WORKSHOP 3:
Whose problem is it anyway?

David Robinson, *Head of Operations, Evolve Housing and Support*

Dave presented the 'CR Zero 2020' initiative, which, as part of the European End Street Homelessness Campaign, aims to end rough sleeping in the Croydon area of London, aiming to involve the local community in finding solutions.

The campaign collects information from people experiencing homelessness, and Dave highlighted learning from two rounds of research on how to ensure the entire community can get involved:

- Groups carrying out research were made of a mix of professionals, people with lived experience, and community members, and all group members got involved in all tasks, from training, and planning research to planning solutions from findings.

- An active social media campaign ensures information is accessible across communities, especially to engage young people.

- Collated information was processed and reported quickly to maximise community involvement.

Dave highlighted that while there are still lessons to be learned, they have found real value in involving the community in their work which could be of benefit to other cities working to end street homelessness.

WORKSHOP 4:
Have your say on health and homelessness

Lynn McMath and Una Bartley
Crisis Scotland

People came together to discuss what needs to change in health policy to ensure we prevent homelessness, provide a rapid rehousing response and provide a permanent solution to end homelessness.

Suggested ideas and solutions included:

- Training health professionals to identify if a patient's housing may be at risk;

- Promote recovery, harm reduction, social connections and mindfulness;

- Increase awareness of less well known health services such as minor ailments\injuries and advise of right to free prescriptions;

- Deliver outreach services in places where vulnerable people are;

- Deliver more needle exchange programmes and BBV testing;

- Quicker access to mental health support and treatment and work to tackle social isolation.

Tackling Homelessness - the Top 5?

Dr Beth Watts,

Senior Research Fellow, I-SPHERE, Heriot-Watt University

Dr Watts highlighted 5 principles to inform responses to homelessness based on a review of international evidence on policies and interventions that demonstrably improve the prospects of people with multiple needs.

1. Personalisation

Delivering open-ended, persistent, flexible, coordinated support that focuses on the 'whole person' (or family) and takes into account the underlying causes of complex needs.

Successful interventions include psychologically informed environments and trauma informed care, assertive outreach, pro-active support and motivational interviewing, effective navigation of multiple local services and family intervention projects.

2. Deinstitutionalisation

People living in mainstream housing rather than specific, separate institutions.

Achieved through embedding Housing First as a default option for people with multiple needs, rapid access to mainstream housing, interventions such as Nightstop, Supported Lodgings and Peer Landlords, and a presumption against congregate accommodation models.

3. Reintegration

Enabling people to access mainstream employment and other opportunities and engage in 'ordinary' social settings.

In practice this is achieved through partnerships with local employers plus pre-and in-work support, individual placement and support model of supported employment and job coaching.

4. Asset-based

Interventions being built on people's strengths and assets, enabling them to build a meaningful and fulfilling life in the face of ongoing challenges.

Succesful interventions include 'recovery' and 'desistance' models in mental health, substance misuse and criminal justice fields, supporting the development of constructive social networks, and the development of link-worker models and personalised budgets.

5.Poverty-informed

Dealing with the financial hardship that people face, not just their social or personal needs.

Dr Watts concluded by noting that as partners work together to end homelessness, all activity, existing and new, should be examined against these evidence-based principles in order to build sustainable, positive outcomes for people with multiple needs.

SOFA SESSION 2:
Is current action to respond to people who become homeless targeted and urgent enough?

Gary Quinn
Temporary Accommodation Team Leader, Glasgow City Council

Emma Soanes
CEO, Unity Enterprise

Paul Tonner
Housing Association Liaison Manager, Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations

Dr Beth Watts
Senior Research Fellow, I-SPHERE, Heriot-Watt University

Andy Weir
Glasgow Homelessness Involvement & Feedback Team (GHIFT)

Progress is evident against each of the principles, but the progress is not yet systematic;

That while notable progress being made in relation to Housing First becoming an integrated approach, there still exists a practical presumption in favour of congregate accommodation. Significant systems change required to achieve principle of deinstitutionalisation;

While the language of personalisation is well embedded and there is much good practice, there is still progress to make on ensuring we respond properly when people have multiple needs.

There remains a sense that while homelessness can come hand in hand with multiple needs, it isn't always treated hand in hand;

That concepts and practices around developing citizenship can help us meet the principle of embedding asset-based approaches;

Least progress is evident in ensuring that our responses to homelessness are poverty-informed and that directly tackling the material hardship people experience is not as well embedded as support for social and personal needs;

That there remains much room for increased ambition to end homelessness in line with a strong evidence base.

The most important driver of homelessness, in all its forms, is poverty.