



END OF YEAR BRIEFING



DECEMBER 2021



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As we draw to the end of the year the Change Team continue to discuss priorities connected to the 4 New Direction to End Homelessness:

PEOPLE FIRST

Taking a more person-led approach to supporting the social, mental and physical wellbeing of individuals, giving them more choice and control.

AT HOME

Everyone has a right to settled, good quality, mainstream housing as quickly as possible

NO WRONG DOOR

Stronger coordinated working between different services, with clearer pathways for those most at risk and no-one being turned away

GOOD VIBES

Focusing on people's strengths and abilities, creating positive environments in our services and helping others to understand and be compassionate about people going through tough time



CONTINUED EFFECTS OF COVID

Front line workers have noticed an increase of workload with a sense that things have reverted back to how they were before the outbreak of Covid.

The good practice adopted by services at the beginning of the pandemic, in terms of being more person led and building better relationships, has not been sustainable due to staff being stressed and overworked.

People who are rough sleeping have seen a reduced amount of support since restrictions have eased.

WELCOME CENTRES IN EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW

The Change Team discussed the Welcome Centres in Edinburgh and Glasgow, praising their design as being inclusive and accessible for anybody, with a few exceptions, to be able to present or be referred to.

In general Change Leads have heard positive feedback about the Welcome Centres, being a good service especially in helping people to avoid rough sleeping. Some are however concerned that people are being referred to hostels by the Welcome Centre in Edinburgh due to unruly behaviour, without clear explanations. They suggest that more training in tolerance of visitors might be needed.

One Change Lead thinks that more 24/7 temporary accommodation is needed, saying that people have felt safer and more settled when curfews were removed, and they were able to come and go as they pleased.

Some Change Leads are seeing that people are choosing not to present at the welcome centres in favour of finding more permanent accommodation.

HOMELESSNESS AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Change Leads are interested to find out about how Homelessness was tackled in Scottish cities during big international events such as COP26. Although nobody had heard of any negative behaviour towards people who were rough sleeping during the events in Glasgow this year, they questioned whether this was always the case. Change Leads had examples of people being treated badly in the lead up to the Edinburgh Fringe and it was noted that temporary accommodation was particularly difficult to find in Edinburgh during COP26.

REFLECTIONS ON HOUSING FIRST

Doug Gibson from Homeless Network Scotland, who has been involved in evaluating the Housing First pathfinder, updated the change team about its progress.

Change Leads have seen that the transition of Housing First responsibilities from pathfinder organisations to local authorities have been unclear and the trust and relationships built between Housing First tenants and their support worker during the pilot have been broken. Some Change Leads think that Support Workers recruited for Housing First need specialised skills, enough capacity and pay to be able to advocate on the behalf of a person.

It is thought that more attention is needed to create a bigger supply of accessible housing so that Housing First tenancies can be offered to people with disabilities and that Housing First should be available to all people who present as homeless or are at risk of homelessness, if it is the right option for them.



RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION AND DRUG DEATHS

David Pentland, who has been a member of the Residential Rehabilitation Working Group and is now seconded to Scottish Government as Policy Officer in the Homelessness unit, spoke about the group's commitment to sourcing good practice when it comes to pathways to rehab. This included the need for more resources out with the central belt and better links between homelessness, criminal justice and addiction services by ending siloed operations, both in government and on the ground.

Members of the Change Team agree that better joined up support for people with addictions is needed. An example is given where someone was offered an empty flat one hundred miles away from his friends and family, with no money and no methadone prescribing available. Feeling unsafe in their new surroundings, they often spent nights sitting in A&E. This shows the importance of connecting homelessness, housing and addiction issues, and that services need to be able to pay more attention people's needs and values.

The team were pleased to hear that Scottish Government's Drug Deaths Taskforce has grown and now includes someone focusing on homelessness. They hope to link in with this work as it develops in 2022.

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CHANGE

THE CHANGE TEAM | KEEP IN TOUCH

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NEWS | HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION DUTY CONSULTATION

The Change Team has been heavily involved in designing the new Homelessness Prevention Duty by feeding into the Prevention Review Group and recommending how the duty would be best implemented.

On 20 December the Scottish Government launched a consultation on the new Homelessness Prevention Duty. Specific questions have been included in the consultation which are aimed at people with lived experience of homelessness, to make sure that these perspectives are not lost in what is a very long and broad consultation.

The Change Team were asked to review these questions to ensure that the right things were being asked. These questions ask people to consider whether the new duties would have benefited them when they were experiencing homelessness.

The Change Team will issue a response to the consultation in the coming months.

THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF THE PREVENTION REVIEW GROUP ARE:

- 1 Homelessness is a shared public responsibility.
 - 2 Interventions should be available as soon as possible while retaining choice and control for people.
 - 3 A legal duty to prevent homelessness should be extended to other services (health, children's services, social work etc.) who will ask and act on identified risk.
 - 4 No one should be discharged from an institution into homelessness.
 - 5 Prevention should start up to six months before homelessness – reasonable steps to prevent homelessness will be laid out and clearly defined.
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