

ALL IN FOR CHANGE

CHANGE TEAM BRIEFING



JULY 2022

IMPROVE AND REDUCE THE NEED FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

This month we invited John Mills, chair of ALACHO and co-chair of the Temporary Accommodation task and finish group to provide context and explain the focus of the task and finish group. The key questions to be answered by the group are:

How do we help people who are stuck in temporary accommodation to move on?

How can we ensure that experiences of temporary accommodation are as good as can be?

And specifically for the change team to consider:

How do we avoid using temporary accommodation?

Are there innovative alternatives to B&B and hostel accommodation?

The task and finish group will deliver interim recommendations in October and are looking for new ideas and innovation. There is a particular struggle in the central belt with accessing temporary accommodation and then helping people to move on to permanent settled homes. John highlighted that the number of void properties available to local authorities is decreasing massively due to impacts of Covid-19, and all of this is compounded by the duty on local authorities to support Ukrainian refugees. However, John was clear that issues with temporary accommodation existed long before the Ukrainian refugee crisis, all local authorities have a statutory duty to house people experiencing homelessness – that is not a choice.

The Change Team discussed their own experiences of temporary accommodation looking to answer the questions raised by the task and finish group. The number of people in who are having to stay in temporary accommodation in Scotland is unacceptable. We must start to reduce the number of people being accommodated this way.



ALL^{IN} FOR CHANGE

THE CHANGE TEAM | KEEP IN TOUCH

16a Adelphi Centre, 12 Commercial Road
Glasgow G5 0PQ

0141 420 7272

changeteam@homelessnetwork.scot

www.homelessnetwork.scot

Homeless Network Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland (SC0 03453) and company limited by guarantee (SC112361).
Registered Office: Adelphi Centre, 12 Commercial Road, Glasgow G5 0PQ.
CEO: Margaret-Ann Brünjes

What is required to improve and reduce the need of Temporary Accommodation?

- 1 Being provided temporary accommodation should always have a positive impact on someone's life. There should be a standard framework for when temporary accommodation is the only option which promotes person led values and supports a strength-based approach, focusing on upholding rights and providing trauma-informed care, making each person's experience a positive one.
- 2 Everyone has the right to be supported through homelessness with dignity and respect, adequate housing and choice and control. All temporary accommodation should feel like home, with access to the things that we all take for granted – a tv, access to internet etc.
- 4 More options for shared accommodation are needed, this could be a steppingstone for people towards the accommodation of their choice. This is not however going to suit everyone and could be detrimental for people with high support needs. People need to be able to choose whether shared accommodation is the right option for them.
- 6 Local Authorities are under pressure to do more with less. In East Ayrshire, they are working to transform outdated hostels into trauma informed flats. Councils should have a culture of care and that includes training staff to be able to support people's needs.
- 3 There needs to be more social housing available and better legislation which helps to alleviate short term holiday lets, especially in Edinburgh.
- 5 If people accommodated in temporary furnished flats have settled in the community and built networks, it's not unusual that they would want to continue to live there. In that case these properties need to be "flipped" to mainstream properties quickly, and have furniture replaced in line with the tenants choice. This is key to individuals and families being able to stay in a place they have grown to feel at home, being part of the community and giving them a better chance of getting on with their lives. Equally, if a household is not settled in a temporary furnished flats (TFF), their stay should be measured in months not years, with a focus on finding a suitable settled home as quickly as possible to minimise the damage it causes.
- 7 We can avoid people going into temporary accommodation in the first place for example, when people are released from prison. More care needs to be taken, earlier in the process, to consider people's needs and choices so they are matched with a property which best suits them, avoiding the need for temporary accommodation. Could digital elements be incorporated, so that people in institutions can view properties before they are released into the homelessness system?

POSITION STATEMENT

Being provided temporary accommodation should always have a positive impact on someone's life.

Focusing on finding permanent housing options for people experiencing homelessness as soon as possible would resolve many of the problems

We would have fewer people in temporary accommodation, we would be able to provide high quality temporary accommodation when it is absolutely necessary – and we would prevent further transitions and trauma for people in the homelessness system.