

Glasgow's Annual Homelessness Conference

CONFERENCE REPORT 2009

WIDENING THE NET...

key themes

4 recurrent themes collated from delegate's input and interaction throughout the day are:

- Further clarity required on the City Council's strategic objectives and operational intentions for homelessness now that the formal partnership has been dissolved.
- The need to ensure that the ongoing partnership between the Voluntary Sector, the City Council, Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board and the CHCPs is toward the 2012 target; based on an honest and agreed overview of present challenges; and enabled by the shared values of trust, transparency and cooperation.
- That while a Social Enterprise approach offers new opportunities and new markets for the Voluntary Sector, the statutory duty, leadership and overall responsibility for homelessness can not be compromised.
- However, socially enterprising approaches do also increase financial independence and simplify campaigning and lobbying roles. Where partnerships are based on the values as outlined above, it also has the potential to enhance and supplement capacity in meeting statutory duties and the 2012 homelessness target in Glasgow.

evaluation

Nearly 150 delegates attended on the day, of whom 39 returned evaluation forms. The Conference Chair (Jim Strang) received specific support for his facilitation of the Conference. All Panel Members and Speakers received consistently high rating and qualitative comment. Other feedback included:

"It was great to see the number of people who turned up, the speakers were very informative, lots of information and the play was great".

"Discussion groups generated much debate and hopefully the results of these will be taken forward".

"Enjoyable, interesting and stimulating roundtable discussion format".

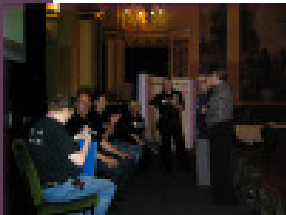
Some areas for improvement were also identified and GHN will endeavour to incorporate your suggestions into the planning for next year's conference. Thank you to everyone who attended, contributed to discussions and completed evaluation forms. See you next year!



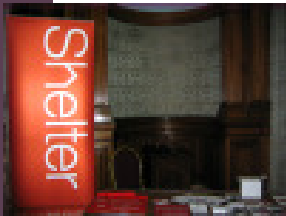
morning keynote sessions



samh exhibition display



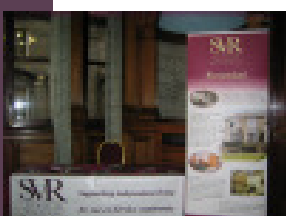
unheard voices warming up!



shelter exhibition display



delegates: a birds eye view!



scottish veterans residences

... ENSURING A DOWNTURN THROUGH THE DOWNTURN



conference aims

This year's conference focused on how Glasgow can best ensure a downturn in homelessness through the economic downturn and increase and widen our efforts, collaboratively, to:

- **Reach** a current and agreed overview of the services and resources needed to prevent and alleviate homelessness.
- When we reach it, how might we attract alternative **resources to tackle it?**
- When we're tackling it, how do we best support **local partnerships?**

The Conference aimed to provide up to the minute information, while inviting interaction to harness the perspectives and priorities of delegates. We concentrated on the pragmatic short-term, with a view to supporting transition through the financial and other challenges and changes affecting homelessness in Glasgow.

format of the day

Two keynote speakers set the scene and four thematic 'prompt' speakers set challenging issues for discussion for the round tables. The Q&A panel session enabled delegates to question panel members who had specific expertise on the topics discussed. The Panel, and the overall Conference, was expertly chaired by Jim Strang, CEO of Parkhead Housing Association.

civic reception

Following the recent review of the Glasgow Homelessness Partnership, Councillor Archie Graham outlined key recommendations pending Executive Committee approval. These included dissolution of the partnership and devolution of community casework operations to CHCP's. He noted the Council's continuing commitment to contract with a strategically aligned set of services to ensure that the rights of people affected by homelessness, and the Council's duties toward them, are met. He also highlighted the cross sector Crisis Response Framework as an ongoing and effective partnership approach.

keynote speakers

- **Scene Setting: National Priorities 2010-11**
Marion Gibbs, Housing Access & Support Division, Scottish Government

Marion Gibbs briefed delegates on the national homelessness policy context and provided a cross-local authority outline of progress toward the 2012 and interim 2009 targets in Scotland. A newly established joint Scottish Government and CoSLA Steering Group has the remit to assess, inform and influence progress towards the 2012 homelessness target. The group will also oversee ongoing and planned work to assess progress against the interim targets set for local authorities and determine the implications for further action needed to meet the 2012 target. Four key areas of work for this group have been identified as: (i) continued leadership at both political and corporate level; (ii) preventing homelessness; (iii) ensuring access to existing stock among PRS and RSLs; and (iv) investing in appropriate areas. Marion also noted an overall increase in homelessness applications at a national level, with an increase in priority need and decrease in non-priority need assessment decisions.

- **Scene Setting: Glasgow Priorities 2010-11**
Catherine Jamieson, Homelessness Partnership Glasgow City Council

Catherine Jamieson provided an outline of Glasgow's priorities for responding to and preventing homelessness over the next 12 months. The current context for this was outlined as being the 'Tomorrow's Council' project; the Social Work Structures Review; the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan; the Scottish Housing Regulator Improvement Plan; and the Prevention of Homelessness Action Plan. She noted that the structures review reflects a desire to further strengthen the role of CHCPs, alongside a centre structure providing strategic leadership in the areas of planning; finance; commissioning and contracting; professional support and advice; and performance and audit. Key homelessness operational priorities include reviewing the use of the Bellgrove; increasing supply of 24/7 emergency accommodation and increasing % of lets by GHA and RSLs to homeless households.

roundtable discussions

Four thematic speakers outlined four key issues for delegate's consideration in tackling homelessness through a recession. Each speaker concluded with a question to prompt roundtable discussion. An outline of each theme, and the collated roundtable discussions, is as follows:

Theme 1:

Trading 'v' Grant Dependency

Prompt Speaker:

Barry Ayre, Chair, Firstport

Prompt Question: How could your organisation embrace a social enterprise approach?

- Non financial trading: marketing your own expertise and identifying expertise within other organisations that meets your needs.
- Does this run the risk of shifting responsibility for homelessness: will local authorities invest less if services generate more income?
- Can we find a way forward for social enterprise, while still keeping an eye on the common goal? The competitive nature of business could inhibit a strategic approach.
- Social Enterprise is a way of thinking - a 'can do' attitude. Many are already thinking this way. We should capitalise on our ability to secure funds to progress social objectives.

Theme 2:

The Case for a Special Case? (Devil's Advocate)

Prompt Speaker:

Claire Frew, Glasgow Homelessness Network

Prompt Question: Could pursuing a social enterprise approach result in a reduced political and financial commitment to homelessness?

- We fought long and hard for homelessness legislation and need to ensure not diluted.
- Runs risk of homelessness being more about profit with a focus on money, not people.
- Commitment needed that self-generated income and reserves are not penalised in grant-making or commissioning decisions taken by the local authority.

- Homelessness is a statutory duty, but social enterprise offers earning capacity to support this duty and target areas of need.
- Can we be assured by those politically responsible that no one in this City will need to sleep rough tonight or on any other?

Theme 3:

Exploiting all Data for Homelessness Planning

Prompt Speaker:

Nigel Sprigings, Director of Housing Studies Glasgow University

Prompt Question: How might you make use of this monitoring pilot (ODM) in the planning for your own homelessness or related service?

- From a planning perspective, more efficient data collection method for local analysis of trends as well as service planning.
- From a provider perspective, a flexible interface with organisation's requirements.
- Service Users not needing to 'tell our story' over again - we are asking services to communicate to prevent this!
- We are all aware of cracks between services. ODM could highlight unmet needs and we can adjust provision accordingly.

Theme 4:

Role of Local Partnerships

Prompt Speaker:

Neil Hunter, Director, Glasgow West Community Health & Care Partnership (CHCP).

Prompt Question: Are partnerships still important and relevant to homelessness in 2009-10?

- How to ensure more genuine equality role for voluntary sector? Statutory leadership has to be united in purpose and vision.
- Effective partnerships should provide better services for clients. Needs to be less tokenistic, more substance, more trust.
- How will we work across 5 CHCPs with differing priorities and structures? And where do centralised, city-wide services fit?
- Competition doesn't help partnerships - why share best practice with competitors...?