

Theme 4: Employability
Prompt Speaker: David Coyne, Glasgow Works

Prompt Question: Describe two changes to the way publicly funded employability services are delivered which would increase the impact on homelessness.

- Important to focus on apprenticeships as training programmes are often not 'real'
- Homelessness transience: needs consistent provision of services across the city
- Mentoring projects to support people into, and to stay in, employment
- Ensure funding for services at all stages of employability pathway
- Employability services cannot tackle employability in isolation from housing crisis
- Who will tackle supported accommodation charges which is the real homelessness related barrier to work?

Theme 5: Money & Legal Advice
Prompt Speaker: Jim Cunningham, GCC DRS

Prompt Question: How can financial inclusion services help us to discharge homelessness prevention duty?

- Importance of financial education programmes for young people
- Better referral links between advice agencies and housing support services
- Raising the profile of welfare rights workers and services within CHCP areas
- Readily available information on financial implications of entering employment
- Staff in advice services recognising and acting upon wider vulnerabilities
- Enough 'professional' financial advisers to negotiate with mortgage lenders

Theme 6: Tenancy Sustainment
Prompt Speaker: Suzie Scott, GHN

Prompt Question: How do you measure the impact of homelessness prevention work?

- Regularly gather and analyse service user feedback through a variety of methods
- Set baselines of what you expect progress to look like and monitor against them
- Importance of focusing on 'soft' outcomes e.g how people feel in their new tenancy
- Promote mechanisms for tenant feedback
- Share in the learning of other organisations
- Carry out longitudinal studies
- Regular engagement with relevant support providers working with tenants

key themes

Throughout all contributions to the day two key factors in homelessness prevention were recurrent by participants:

- The importance of structural factors such as the provision of affordable housing and access to services; and
- Addressing personal factors such as confidence building, personal resilience and raising expectations

It was an aim of the conference to ensure that all elements of homelessness prevention were open for discussion and one of the overall conclusions of the day was the importance of both of these agendas complimenting each other to ensure that hard work and valuable lessons are not lost.

evaluation

Many people attending the conference provided positive feedback on a range of issues including both the content and structure of the day and the overall importance of homelessness prevention. 42 completed evaluation forms were returned at the end of the day, with 62% of respondents representing the voluntary sector, 31% from the statutory sector and 7% from people affected by homelessness.

The majority of keynote speeches and round table discussion themes were well received and positive feedback was again received on the format of round table discussions and the opportunities provided to engage with a range of different stakeholders. A range of comments from the feedback included:

"Interesting, useful, informative, good networking, good discussion"

"Enjoyable day ... enjoyed roundtable discussions"

"Very good ... great mix of people"

"Very worthwhile"

"Good speakers and presentations"

A number of areas for improvement were also identified and GHN will endeavour to incorporate the suggestions into the planning for future conferences and events. Thank you to everyone who attended, contributed to discussions and completed evaluation forms. See you next year!

Glasgow's Annual Homelessness Conference

CONFERENCE REPORT 2008



East or West:
a home is best

Preventing Homelessness: a role for all local services?

conference aims

GHN's annual conference for 2008 focused on the integral role of homelessness prevention in Glasgow; looking at prevention from the perspectives of service users, homelessness services and other local services with a smaller stake in homelessness. The Conference worked from a definition of **key preventing** factors, in addition to local housing supply, that can 'protect' people from homelessness. These are:

- Our social network of family and friends;
- Meaningful occupation - be employed, or in training, volunteering or learning;
- Our access to a relevant range of advice and information;
- Sufficient financial resources or reserves;
- Our levels of personal resilience to crisis

Taking into account these factors, the aim of the conference was to identify the role of mainstream services in preventing homelessness.

format of the day

With the aim of creating a positive balance between the provision of current information and the opportunity for wide ranging discussions, the format of the day followed the recent trend of three keynote speakers and six thematic 'prompt' speakers to set challenging issues for discussion for the round tables. The day ended in the traditional style of a Q&A panel session with a range of stakeholders with a key role in the work to prevent homelessness in the city.

keynote speakers

The conference was opened by Councillor Elaine McDougal, the Glasgow City Council Executive Member for Social Care, who welcomed the opportunity to contribute to wide ranging discussions of the day in order to reach a common purpose and direction as part of the continued pursuit of ambitious plans for addressing homelessness in the city.

- **Challenges: Old and New**
Catherine Jamieson,
Head of Glasgow Homelessness Partnership

Catherine noted the positive developments in the city over the past 5 years, highlighting significant reductions in both overall homelessness presentations and cases of repeat homelessness. In terms of current challenges, Catherine noted the importance of increasing the number of permanent lets achieved for homeless households and the importance of joint working with the aim of improving upon prevention activities with housing associations and private landlords. When thinking of the anticipated challenges that may arise over the coming years, Catherine gave specific mention to the introduction of Section 11 of the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003, the widening role of the private rented sector within homelessness, the development of a new service delivery mechanism for legal, money and housing information and advice across the city, and, the importance of better integration with mainstream services on prevention, health and employment.

- **Preventing Crisis: Collated Service User Views**
Claire Frew, Development Coordinator,
Glasgow Homelessness Network

Claire Frew presented the initial findings of a homelessness prevention study carried out by GHN in September 2008. People affected by homelessness answered a series of questions about accommodation and personal factors that contributed to their homelessness and what they felt might have prevented it. It was noted that these collated views form a particularly important part of our intelligence around homelessness prevention as they are provided solely from the perspective of those who have experienced it. One of the many lessons to be learned from the findings of the study was the continual expression of low expectations held by the many people who believed that nothing could have prevented them from becoming homeless, and those who claimed sole responsibility for their homelessness with harsh judgements of their own past choices. It was concluded that account should be taken of these perspectives in order for the full potential of prevention activity to be achieved.

- **The National Prevention Agenda**
Julie Hunter,
CoSLA secondee to Scottish Government

Julie Hunter placed the local prevention agenda within a national context of work being undertaken by the Scottish Government. Julie paid particular attention to the development of new guidance being produced on homelessness prevention, based on demand expressed by local authorities across the country. Work is currently ongoing to develop the 'Scottish Ethos' of homelessness prevention and define who prevention activities are aimed at, what the prevention activities are, and, equally importantly, what they are not. These issues, alongside other key themes such as the importance of recording and monitoring, will be reflected in the new guidance to be available in the new year.

roundtable discussions

6 delegates with expertise on a number of issues central to homelessness prevention were invited to present a 'discussion prompt' for wider round table discussions. These 6 themes were:

- Personal Resilience
- Role of CHCPs
- Private Rented Sector
- Employability
- Money and Legal Advice
- Tenancy Sustainment

An outline of the collated discussion as follows:

- Theme 1:** Personal Resilience
Prompt Speaker: Lesley Stenhouse, SSNF

Prompt Question: When adversity looms, how can we judge if individuals have the resilience to resist?

- The importance of needs assessment to capture personal history and vulnerability
- Such personal information will only be shared if level of trust exists

- Use of positive language to affirm and re-awaken skills learned through adversity
- Need to take account of all contributing factors and experience of trauma
- Peer relationships important in identification of resilience
- Repeat homelessness as an indicator of low levels of resilience

- Theme 2:** Role of CHCPs
Prompt Speaker: Mark Feinmann, East CHCP

Prompt Question: How can CHCPs work better to prevent homelessness and ensure tenancy sustainment?

- Sufficient resources to work to build people's social networks and address isolation
- Better promotion of access routes into CHCP services and improved communication
- Ensure appropriate accommodation is available in all CHCP areas
- Work with police at local level to address anti-social behaviour
- Development of early warning systems for people without 'homelessness label'
- Intensive work with people in arrears with rent payments
- Improvement in care management

- Theme 3:** Private Rented Sector
Prompt Speaker: Brian Corrigan, Shelter

Prompt Question: What is required to ensure PRS makes an effective & positive contribution to the 2012 target?

- Need to tie in with LHA rates to ensure rents are as affordable as possible
- Improvements in security of tenure within to protect people's rights
- Clarification needed as to who would pay costs of required adaptations
- Remove single room rent so those under 25 can access the sector
- Importance of regulation and inspection
- Need to ensure physical quality of properties
- Homeless households may find it difficult to pay deposits required by private landlords
- Might suit larger families who are struggling to access appropriate social housing