

A Solution Shared...

Summary Report of Glasgow Homelessness Network & Glasgow North Community Health and Care Partnership Shared Solutions Workshop

Introduction

Glasgow Homelessness Network seeks to end homelessness in Glasgow and represents the interests of people affected by homelessness. We are also the umbrella organisations for the wide range of individuals and services that provide accommodation and support to people affected by homelessness.

Since 2008 Glasgow Homelessness Network has worked with Glasgow's Social Work and Health Services (known jointly as Community Health and Care Partnerships) to look at ways of involving people affected by homelessness in the planning and delivery of services in their local area.

As part of this process Glasgow Homelessness Network hosted **"Shared Solutions Workshops"** in five areas of Glasgow, one of them being Glasgow North.

What is a Shared Solutions Workshop?

A Shared Solutions Workshop is a community event that aims to bring together everyone involved in or affected by homelessness, from service managers to service users and members of the local community. Working together in small groups people are asked to identify issues relating to homelessness in their local area and then look at ways of solving these issues.

Glasgow North

The North Glasgow Shared Solutions Workshop was held at the Sighthill Community One Stop Shop on 19 April 2010.

51 people attended the workshop representing a variety of services including local housing associations and support providers such as Phoenix Futures and Loretto Care. Glasgow City Council and Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board also attended.

What happened?

When people arrived they were asked to sit at one of six tables, Glasgow Homelessness Network tried to make sure there was a mix of people from different services at each table to make sure there was a broad range of opinions and views during discussions.

Each table was asked to identify all of the issues they felt were important in relation to homelessness in the North, both good and bad. When all of the issues were identified each table had to agree two priorities. Each table's priorities were added to a voting wall.

<u>Priority Issue</u>	<u>Vote</u>	
Better publicise and promote services available in the area	●●●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●●●●	20
Lack of choice of suitable housing	●●●●●●●●	7
Communication and networking between services	●●●●●●	5
Accessing tenancy support for all new tenants	●●●	3
Anti-social behaviour	●●●	3
Glasgow Housing Association Bidding System	●	1
Better access to welfare rights services	●	1
Confusion caused by restructuring service	●	1

Participants were given **one** vote and asked to cast their votes on the voting wall, next to what they believe to be the biggest priority in Glasgow North.

Votes were counted and the **top four priorities** for the day were identified. Each table was then asked to discuss one of the four issues, identifying possible solutions to the issue, and the next steps for putting these solutions into practice.

Priority Issue 1 – Better publicise and promote services available in the area

Participants felt that there were lots of good services in the area but that accessing the right service and getting a quality service could be down to luck. Participants also said the sheer number of services available could make it quite confusing for staff and service users to know all of the services available.

Solutions and possible next steps to the issue of publicising and promoting services were identified as:

- Service should network with each other so that they know what is available for their users;
- Services should be better advertised to the public, using TV, radio and the press;
- Staff across all organisations (not just homelessness services) should receive some training on homelessness services and the rights of people affected by homelessness
- Points of access to homelessness services should be developed across the area e.g. GP surgeries, police stations and hospitals.

Priority Issue 2 – Lack of Choice of Suitable Housing

Participants at the workshop said that there is a serious lack of choice of housing for people who have been affected by homelessness. Participants felt that people affected by homelessness were often offered the poorest housing stock in the poorest areas and said that this lack of choice can cause real problems for people who may be recovering from addictions or illness.

Solutions and next steps to the lack of choice of suitable housing were:

- Build more houses for social rent, not private sale;
- A strategy to provide more appropriate housing across a wider area should be developed for the North;
- The Scottish Government should provide more money to housing associations so that they can build new rented accommodation.

Priority Issue 3 – Communication and Networking between services

Workshop participants said that there was a lack of communication between services and organisations. The changes that take place in services can mean that knowledge is lost and a people don't receive a quality service because new staff aren't as familiar with the services that are available. Participants also felt that more service user involvement activities should be provided to make sure that people using services can have their voices and opinions heard.

Solutions and next steps to improving communication and networking between services were identified as:

- Organisations should commit funding and resources to take part in joint training;
- There has to be meaningful service user involvement opportunities for people, people using services should be given the opportunity to have their voices heard;
- Senior Management within organisations must communicate with each other and commit time to ensure their staff can get to know about other services available.

Priority Issue 4 – Accessing tenancy support for all new tenants

Participants taking part in the workshop said it was very important that everyone who is waiting on a tenancy or have just taken on a new tenancy have the opportunity to access support. By offering support to everyone people will be able to sustain their tenancies and homelessness will be prevented.

Solutions and next steps to ensuring all new tenants can access tenancy support service were identified as:

- Improve the assessment process to make sure people receive the right support;
- Provide training to front line staff about the services available in the area so that they can signpost people to the right support;
- Develop a directory of local services for tenants giving them information on the services that are available in the area.

Everyone who participated in the day was asked to evaluate the workshop. The overall feeling was that the workshop was very informative and people enjoyed the way that issues were raised and discussed.

What we learned

The North Shared Solutions Workshop was very successful and allowed people from different organisations to come together with people using services and discuss issues that they were concerned about. This was a new way of working and proved to be very useful. It also enabled people with different responsibilities to find out about other services and what Glasgow North has to offer.

Participants learned that everyone working to provide services to people affected by homelessness want to provide the best service possible, but also that there are some things that need to be addressed to make sure this happens for everyone, all of the time.

What happens now?

Glasgow Homelessness Network is committed to making sure the issues identified at the Shared Solutions Workshops are taken forward, we will do this by:

- Feeding back the priority issues solutions and next steps to the right people, at Community Health and Care Partnership level, Local Authority level or Scottish Government level.
- Helping Community Health and Care Partnerships to develop action plans to make sure the issues identified are addressed; particularly around improving communication and information sharing.
- Feedback to participants and the wider community on the outcomes of the Shared Solutions Workshops.
- Holding Shared Solutions Workshops on a six monthly basis to review progress in the areas identified and identify new priorities for action.

How Can I Get Involved?

- You can get involved in the next Shared Solutions Workshop, register your interest by contacting Glasgow Homelessness Network on 0141 276 4825.

If you would like more information about Glasgow Homelessness Network, or if you would like a copy of the full North Shared Solutions Report please call us on 0141 276 4825 or see our website at www.ghn.org.uk

For general information about the North Community Health and Care Partnership please contact 0141 201 4213 or see the website at www.chps.org.uk/northglasgow