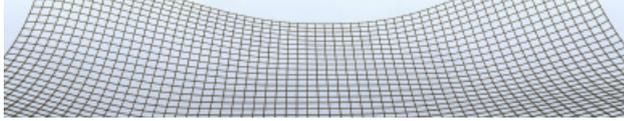




Annual Report & accounts | 2012-2013

Welfare Reform: missed opportunities



Glasgow has long dealt with the consequences of a UK welfare system that isn't fit for purpose. A system that, conversely, was too complex to navigate but relatively easy to beat - and where actually getting work could be a financially risky prospect for you and your family...

So there are very few people that would argue against the idea that an overhaul of the benefits system was long overdue. Across the homelessness network in Glasgow, we already knew about the stark correlation between homelessness and unemployment – and that the homelessness system served to further exacerbate people's fate with a number of 'benefit trap' situations. For example, some accommodation options reduce any practical possibility for work due to the rent costs that would become payable, creating a no-win situation for both the providers and users of those services.

It is these very types of benefit anomalies and traps that we might reasonably have expected a new welfare reform act to address. A relevant and timely set of reforms to support the people – and areas – most disadvantaged by economic recession and weakened labour markets. Areas such as Glasgow, which has now overtaken Liverpool as the workless capital of the UK with one in three of our households having nobody in work at all.

But instead, by applying caps and sanctions on our benefits and taxes on our bedrooms, the welfare reforms behave as if there was a group of people who are on benefit and a group of people who are not. Rather, evidence shows that people frequently move in and out of work and a non-punitive welfare system should respond flexibly and sensitively to life's changing circumstances.

So now we are dealing with the disappointment of a missed opportunity, as well as the consequences of welfare reform – with frontline service and housing providers also dealing directly with people's anxiety, stress and anger. At the time of writing, the Scottish Government has increased the discretionary housing fund to local councils by £20m. This represents direct cash to support households facing difficulty as a result of the bedroom tax and, ultimately, it is hoped that this extra help will prevent evictions as a result of rent arrears arising from this particular reform. It is also hoped that Glasgow can receive a suitable and proportionate allocation of this budget.

During this year, GHN facilitated a series of consultations on welfare reform with our member organisations and with the people who rely on their services. This was with the purpose of establishing how prepared people are for the changes. We spoke with over 200 people and the collated information highlighted 3 key problems:

- Many people who are homeless or in housing need are unaware of how changes to welfare benefits will affect them and are concerned about their ability to cope, for example in relation to budgeting skills, online applications etc;
- Many people who are homeless or in housing need identified the importance of additional support to reach specialist advice and information services (e.g. welfare rights and money advice);
- Homeless service providers expressed concern at their lack of capacity to fully support people to understand the implications of welfare reform or to engage with specialist advice and information services.

And going forward, GHN will continue to brief on this policy and work across our network to secure resources and solutions that can respond in some way to these new needs and challenges.

about *ghn*

GHN: a Scottish Charity and membership organisation

We want to end homelessness in Glasgow...

...and improve options for people in housing need

We work with and for people affected by homelessness and the services they need

Glasgow Homelessness Network ('GHN') is a Scottish Charity (SC003453) registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and a Company Limited by Guarantee (SC112361).

We are a membership and voluntary organisation, with a Board of Directors elected by our members at our AGM.

We want to end homelessness in Glasgow and improve options for people in housing need. We aim to maintain a long-term perspective of homelessness in Glasgow so that we remain true to our purpose despite changing circumstances.

Working with and for people experiencing homelessness, we work to connect the knowledge and expertise of all our partners to help Glasgow achieve positive policies, practices and perceptions about homelessness.

We ensure that our understanding of and approach to homelessness is evidence-based. So we work to build our own reputation as a contemporary and expert 'knowledge base', while connecting our perspective with that of front-line practitioners, service users, academics and other experts to strengthen and verify our information and responses.

We are proud to meet the business improvement standards set out by both Investors In People (IIP) and Investing in Volunteering (IIV).

What difference do we want to make?

Policy & Planning

An integrated policy environment which prevents homelessness, never creates or exacerbates it and guides effective responses where it has not been averted.

Practice & Partnership

An integrated provision and transition of support characterised by innovation, service quality and early mainstream interventions.

Perception & Prejudice

Where people living, working and using services in Glasgow understand homelessness and have opportunities to share ownership of its prevention and alleviation.

Evidence & Information

The availability of accurate and connected information that describes, informs and progresses the prevention and alleviation of homelessness in Glasgow.

Organisational Development and Improvement

We are a participatory and learning organisation where our people build on success, manage risk and demonstrate confidence and a commitment to improvement.

influencing policy



We have continued to support national and local developments in key areas:

- **Housing Options:** this new approach has created new opportunities for partners to work together in a different way. The local pilot has evaluated positively and we will assist a roll out that continues to respect and harness the array of approaches to housing choice and homelessness prevention already undertaken by housing associations.
- **Welfare Reform:** we continued to brief and consult with service users and providers. We worked to define as many mitigators as possible against the distress and harm that implementation of this UK policy will cause local people and families, as well as seriously impacting on how the City provides accommodation and services to homeless people.
- **Scottish Housing Regulator:** We facilitated communication between our membership and the regulator, in response to key issues following the initial inspection report in 2009.
- **Probationary Tenancies:** we worked with a range of partners to encourage a rethink of this proposed policy. We were delighted when Scottish Government decided against introducing a policy which would, in our view, discriminate against new social housing tenants and introduce an unnecessary level of tenancy insecurity.
- **Affordable Rented Housing:** we responded to this consultation recognising the value in creating flexibility in allocations for social landlords, while ensuring that the rights and urgency of need of homeless households is considered.
- **Community Empowerment & Renewal Bill:** we responded to this Scottish Government consultation with our support for coproduction approaches to local service delivery and for the introduction of a duty on the public sector to engage communities.
- **Single Outcome Agreement:** we were delighted that a housing need strand was incorporated, and have been working with partners to develop a practical work plan.

We continued to measure the impact of welfare reform on homeless services and the people using them

We were delighted when the Scottish Government chose not to pursue a probationary period for social tenants

The community empowerment and renewal bill offered real opportunities for community participation

We implemented a new programme of work that will now monitor and report on homelessness and rough sleeping

ghn | practice & partnership

Building capacity with partners to provide tenancy sustainment programmes

We supported the development of the Total Home project, due to launch soon!

We piloted a peer mentoring approach to support recovery from substance misuse

And facilitated a range of thematic and special interest groups to harness the expertise of our members

The links we have to homeless services informs our work. This year we facilitated a range of third, cross-sector and special interest groups, including:

- Homelessness Mandate
- Employability
- Monitoring & Research
- Welfare Reform
- Shared Solutions
- Voluntary Sector Forum

And contributed through the local planning structures of the:

- Homelessness Planning & Implementation Group
- Glasgow Housing Options Project Board
- West of Scotland Housing Options Hub
- Local Housing Strategy Stakeholder Group
- Vulnerable Households & Essential Connections
- Third Sector Interface: Executive Committee
- Poverty Leadership Panel
- Glasgow Single Outcome Agreement

We continue to deliver a partnership approach to tenancy sustainment. '4-Front Learning (Keys to Learn)' is a partnership between NG Homes, Anniesland College (now Glasgow Clyde College) and Glasgow Regeneration Agency. It supports previously homeless households through a programme of learning opportunities in their local area. This develops life skills such as basic DIY, budgeting and cookery.

During this year, we have supported the development of the Total Home project. Total Home is a new partnership which aims to provide a speedy and practical response to help new tenants turn their house into a home. Focusing on supporting people who have been re-housed after a period of homelessness, the 'Total Home' package provides furniture, carpets and domestic appliances to help sustain tenancies. The project pilot is led by Connect Community Trust, delivered by Second Opportunities, Fresh Start, Spruce Carpets and Impact Arts and supported by GHN and Glasgow City Council.



Total Home developed and ready to pilot...



ghn | perception & prejudice

Our 'perception and prejudice' outcome is about working within and across communities to dispel myths and stereotypes about people who experience inequality, exclusion and homelessness.

It is also about creating opportunities for local people to become involved in action and advocacy that supports and includes people.

This year we developed a new project that invites local people - peer advocates - to stand up for people who are homeless or in housing need.

This new independent advocacy project - HOME (*Housing Options Made Easy*) Peer Advocacy - has been developed with Glasgow Housing Association to provide a wraparound support for Glasgow's Housing Options pilot. It is for people who may otherwise find it difficult to participate fully and equally in discussions about their housing need or worry.

We also piloted a community participation approach in the North West area of Glasgow, in partnership with Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS and the North West Community Health Partnership. Our Community.. *Shared Solutions* invited people living, working and using services in the area to help define local health services that are fair, friendly and sensitive to the different forms of inequality.

Over 100 people participated in Shared Solutions and their views are now informing the local plan. A second workshop will follow soon.

Also this year, our national participation network SHIEN (*Scottish Homelessness Involvement and Empowerment Network*) has continued to enable a wide range of homeless service users and professionals to be involved in influencing national policy developments on the themes of supported accommodation and Housing Options.

Due to a growing interest in Scotland, we have also focused our work on peer based approaches (*for example, research, mentoring, education and advocacy*) to help develop local responses. We will continue this work over the coming year.

We enhance all this work by making available training and consultancy services through our social enterprise *I.E. (Involving Expertise)*. This has become a growing and successful venture regularly commissioned by public and third sector organisations across Scotland.



Local people standing up for local people

HOME is a new project where local people support people with a housing need or worry

Peer approaches have also been the focus of SHIEN, our national involvement network

We use the term *involvement* to mean many participatory methods and concepts...

... including co-production, participation, empowerment and engagement

ghn | our people

Board of Directors

GHN's Board of Directors are elected annually at our AGM and bring a relevant mix of perspectives from across the housing, homeless and academic sectors. The Board regularly review and refine the direction for GHN and are focused on finding real solutions to the big questions about housing and homelessness in Glasgow.

GHN's non-executive Directors during 2012-13 are:

Patrick McGrath CONVENER Southside Housing Association	Nigel Springs VICE CONVENER University of Glasgow
Damian McGowan TREASURER Gowrie Care	Sean Cussen Greater Easterhouse Alcohol Awareness
Sandy Farquharson The Marie Trust	Norman Fitzpatrick New Gorbals Housing Association
Suzanne Fitzpatrick Individual Member	Ian Irvine Turning Point Scotland
Patrick McKay Blue Triangle HA	Margaret Taylor Individual Member

Membership Organisations

GHN are proud to umbrella a diverse range of organisations who share our vision for ending homelessness in Glasgow. We offer our continued thanks for their support, advice and guidance.

And our staff team and volunteers have continued to inspire and motivate while never losing sight of what's important! GHN is only as good as its people and we thank them for their daily innovation and determination during challenging times.

Leadership & Support

Director: Margaret-Ann Brünjes
Finance Manager: Murray Mair

Development Coordinators

Claire Frew	Janice Higgins
Martina Johnston-Gray	Pauline McColgan
Stephanie Plotnikoff	Paul Turnbull

Development Workers

David Kidd	Pauline McColgan
John Niven	Johanna Speirs

Information & Resources

Liam McDonald	Aileen O'Halloran
Natasha McLaughlin	Lisa Sen
Mathew Morbey	

Our Volunteers

GHN's volunteers make an important contribution to our work; our warmest appreciation and thanks for their continued time, expertise and loyalty.

People with experience of homelessness hold a unique perspective and so some of our volunteering activity borrows from this expertise (for example, Unheard Voices, Peer Advocacy and Mentoring). Our volunteers, peer advocates and mentors are:

Andy	Geri	Tracey
Billy	James	Ian
Craig	John	Sarah
David	Kevin	Derek
Mags	Margaret	Shona
Ed	Maureen	Steven
Sonny	Irene	

ghn | financial information

Funders & Supporters

We acknowledge with thanks the funding and other support given during 2012-13 by:

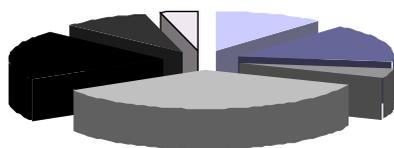
The Big Lottery Fund
Oak Foundation
Scottish Government
Glasgow Housing Association
Glasgow Social Economy Development Fund
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
Ecorys Grundtvig
Glasgow City Council
Glasgow Community & Safety Services
Youth Employability Partnership

During the year, many individuals and organisations assisted GHN to meet our objectives. We would like to make special mention of Sue Laughlin, Jim Kearns, Louise Montgomery, Alan Davidson, Jim Strang, Kath Gallagher, Gail Reid, Archie Fairley, Shivali Fifield, Susanne Millar, Catherine Wilkie, Katie Lambert, Tom Golcher, Stephen Thacker and our 4Front Partners.

However we do so in full acknowledgement that there were many others.

Income 2012-13

income: £ 496,658

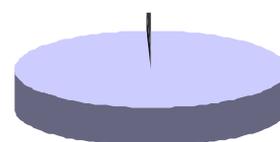


- Glasgow Housing Association
- Oak Foundation
- Glasgow City Council
- Big Lottery Fund
- Grants/Donations/Fees/Other
- Scottish Government
- NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

Expenditure 2012-13

expenditure: £ 496,093

- Direct Charitable Expenditure
- Other administration expenditure



Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013. Published by Glasgow Homelessness Network ('GHN') in September 2013. GHN is a charity registered in Scotland (SC0 03453) and company limited by guarantee (SC112361). Registered Office unit 16a, Adelphi Centre, 12 Commercial Road, Glasgow G5 0PQ, Director: Margaret-Ann Brunjes.