

Homelessness in Glasgow

Survey Report

June 2016





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Homelessness services in Glasgow



What is good about homelessness services in Glasgow?



What needs to be improved and how would you improve it?



Who should be involved in improving homelessness services in Glasgow?



Where is the most important place to start?



How will you know it's been done?

Our Method

A working group was formed with people from a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives including: people with experience of homelessness, people working on the front line of homelessness services, homelessness service managers, homelessness service commissioners, community development staff and more. We designed a survey that was shared widely across all the homelessness services that Glasgow City Council pay for.

For each question, we asked people to tell us their views or ideas. This let us describe a key statement for each of our questions. We also asked people how they would like to be consulted in the future, which has led to a plan to consult people further on the key themes at an event in June 2016 at Renfield St Stephen's Training & Conference Centre.

The Survey

The survey was laid out in a way that was as straightforward and as non-leading as possible, asking seven open questions with space for responses. We used both online and hard-copy versions of the survey in order to gather as wide a range of responses as possible.

We know that sometimes the survey was completed independently, and sometimes a worker helped people to complete it. The survey is included at the end of this report.

Over 150 responses were returned.



What is good about homelessness services in Glasgow?

Homelessness services in Glasgow are at their best when staff are supportive, helpful, knowledgeable and welcoming; offering the kinds of accommodation and support people need quickly and safely.

People told us:

- Staff go out of the way to help you in every possible way, providing support to fit your needs;
- Services can act quickly for people who need immediate help, providing safe accommodation and keeping people off the streets;
- There are places you can go for practical help like food and clothing, but also for advice about what other help is available.

If it weren't for places like this people would be dying
week in, week out...

However, people also told us:

- There is little positive to say about homelessness services;
- Accommodation services are very limited;
- A lot of services are old and run-down and staff are only interested in whether rent is paid.

Well going by past experience of being homeless myself ...
services are limited

[Some services] really try to help the homeless but you feel most of the hostels in Glasgow should be shut down [as they are] too old, run down, and badly kept ... you're only a piece of meat for rent money

“It is good to find access to a front line service which makes you feel welcome, and is non-judgemental”





What needs to be improved and how would you improve it?

Homelessness services will improve when there is more emergency accommodation available when it is needed so people don't have to sleep rough, and when more support is available for people with a range of different needs, including families.

People identified a number of areas for improvement, including:

- There isn't enough high quality emergency accommodation available when people need it;
- People are still staying in poor quality accommodation like the Bellgrove and B&B's;
- People are spending too long in temporary accommodation;
- Services like counselling, which help people better understand their situation, aren't always seen as important;
- Accommodation services don't always recognise the importance of social relationships and have policies that can stop people keeping in touch with friends and family;
- Support not always available for specific needs, or when people have multiple needs, and there is not enough for families;
- While lots of staff are brilliant, there are many who still don't understand what people are going through when they are homeless;
- People often still don't know what services are available and where to go for help when they are homeless;
- The system still doesn't work for people who are told to go to different services who can't help them.

They told me I would have to walk the streets after getting out of jail

... it was only after being homeless for a period of time and sinking more into depression and crime that I knew such a place was available. I didn't know you could self-refer ... it seems to be the same people in these places because they are aware and have been there before and know how to go about getting help

...better communication between services – for instance I was repeatedly told to go to Hamish Allan, however they simply send you away

When asked how improvements should be made people told us:

- Provide more high quality emergency accommodation that is available when people need it so they don't end up sleeping rough;
- Build more, or get better access to, social housing so people don't have to spend so long in temporary accommodation;
- Accommodation projects should be more understanding when it comes to people's social relationships – having more flexible visitor's policies and providing social activities;
- Prioritise services like counselling which can help people deal better with what has happened in their lives;
- Have more people with experience of homelessness working in homelessness services;
- People with experience of homelessness should be involved in improving things because they understand what it is like to go through the homelessness system in Glasgow.

Limit the time in TFFs also have adequate support for people when giving homes as some are put in temporary flats and hostels and forgot about, the amount of cash spent on hostels and B&Bs could be better spent housing the people and better support to enable them to keep their homes

More trained staff with decent attitude towards people's problems



Who should be involved in improving homelessness services in Glasgow?

Simply, everyone should be involved in making improvements to homelessness services: the Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council, Housing Associations, Charities, the Police, Health Services, people with lived experience of homelessness and other local people.

People told us:

- All solutions need to recognise the role that homeless people themselves can play and prioritise this;
- More people with experience of homelessness should be employed in homelessness services;
- Nobody on their own can improve things – working together is important;
- Families and communities are important;
- Do Members of Parliament (Holyrood and Westminster) have a role to play?
- The Prison Service, Health Service and Police are important;
- What about an independent regulator who can close down poor quality accommodation?

I think the council should employ more people who have had experience of being homeless

Everyone from service users to all the helping agencies, voluntary and statutory (social work/GCC)

Local communities [should be involved in making things better] so that there is more acceptance



Where is the most important place to start ?

We need to start by making sure that there is enough accommodation for people, while recognising that preventing people becoming homeless in the first place is the best thing we can do. To do this properly we need to involve people with lived experience of homelessness and make sure enough money is available.

People told us:

- Make sure there is enough money for homelessness services to employ staff;
- Provide accommodation for everyone;
- We need to understand what causes people to become homeless and address that;
- Talk to people with lived experience of homelessness;
- Better education about what homelessness is.

I personally would start with trying to help the issues which led to being homeless in the first place

Getting more housing officers on the street at the heart of homelessness to ask first-hand what people would like to happen with support because lots of people won't ask for help

More money and better places to stay

Getting a roof over everyone's head



How will you know it's been done?

Improvements will be seen when there are less people rough sleeping and more accommodation and support services available. Keeping people informed of changes is also important, through newsletters, meetings, word of mouth.

People told us that they would know that homelessness services in Glasgow were improving when:

- Less people are turned away and more accommodation is available;
- Less people are sleeping rough;
- More services are open;
- Less people become homeless in the first place.

Because we stay here we will see the improvements and we will be involved in improving the project and the activities afterwards

Would be able to see and hear of services had been improved, less homeless persons on streets

You will know because there will be less people being turned away due to lack of accommodation

People also identified ways in which they could be kept informed about changes and improvements:

- A Glasgow homelessness newsletter would be a good way of getting information out to people on the progress that has been made;
- An independent homelessness regulator will tell people when things are getting better;
- More articles about homelessness in newspapers;
- Staff keeping people informed.

Newsletter provided by the council and services

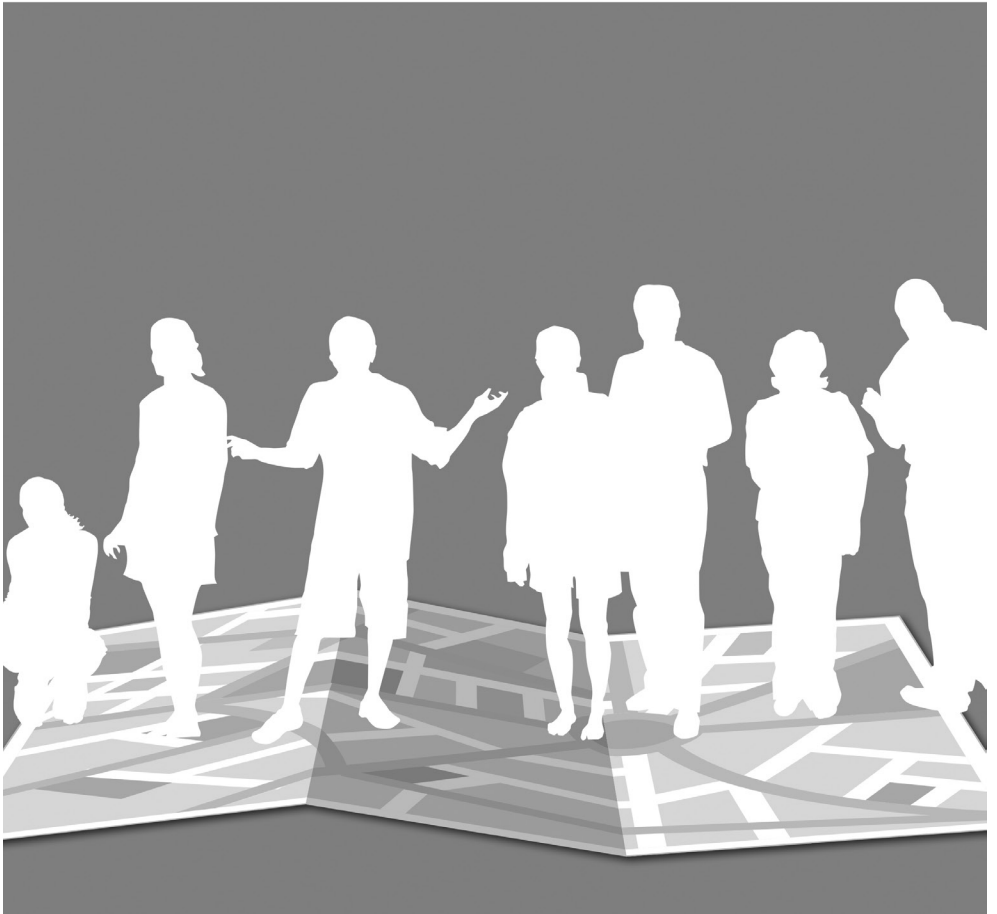
...tell the country what's being done about it, broadcast on TV, radio, newspapers

the workers make an effort to keep us aware of any changes



Homelessness in Glasgow

How do we make it better?





ABOUT THE SURVEY

Glasgow City Council are reviewing the homelessness services that they pay for. They would like to understand the views of people who have experience of using these services to help decide what types of services they should deliver in the future.

Your views and ideas will help to make sure that these services work well for the people who use them - they can be big or small, something that could happen tomorrow or something that will take years. Please answer only the questions that you want to.

HOW DO WE MAKE IT BETTER?

|1| What is good about homelessness services in Glasgow?

|2| What needs to be improved?

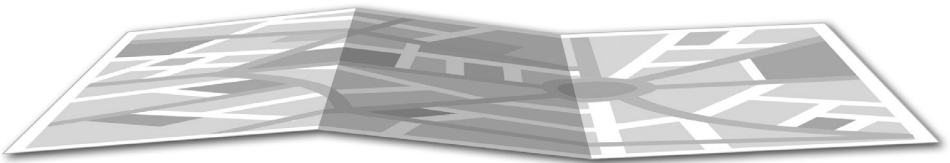
|3| How would you improve it?

|4| Who needs to be involved? You?

|5| What has already been done?

|6| Where would you start?

|7| How will you know it's been done?





How would you like to be involved in the future?

Conversation Cafe Focus Group Survey/Questionnaire

Other _____


How would you like to receive feedback on what happens with your input?

Post Email Text Online

Other _____

Contact Details (if you would like to receive feedback)

 Name: _____

 Address: _____

 Telephone: _____

@ Email: _____

We want everyone to have a safe and secure home

Glasgow Homelessness Network ('GHN') is a charity registered in Scotland (SC0 03453) and company limited by guarantee (SC112361).

Registered Office: Adelphi Centre, 12 Commercial Road, Glasgow G5 0PQ. Director: Margaret-Ann Brünjes





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