

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING ACTION GROUP – 15 MARCH 2018

Minute of meeting

Present:

Chair: Jon Sparkes (CEO, Crisis)

Members: David Duke (Street Soccer), Lorraine McGrath (Simon Community/Streetwork), John Mills (Fife Council & ALACHO), Alison Watson (Shelter Scotland), , Maggie Brunjes (GHN), Shona Stephen (Queens Cross Housing Association), Josh Littlejohn (Social Bite), Mike Dailly (Govan Law Centre), Russell Barr (Church of Scotland)

In attendance: Catriona MacKean (Head of Homelessness, SG Better Homes Division), Marion Gibbs (SG Homelessness Team), Stephen O'Connor (SG Homelessness Team), Beth Reid (Crisis), Dr Beth Watts (Heriot-Watt University), Neil Morland (Housing Consultant), Anna Evans (The Indigo House Group), Mandy Littlewood (Heriot-Watt University)

Perth & Kinross Council (Agenda Item 8 only): Councillor Peter Barrett, (Convenor: Housing and Communities Committee), Clare Mailer (Interim Head of Housing), Martin Smith, Elaine Ritchie

Apologies: Suzanne Fitzpatrick (Heriot-Watt University), Susanne Millar (GCHSCP)

1. Welcome

Jon Sparkes welcomed members to the eighth meeting of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group and also welcomed Anna Evans, Beth Watts and Mandy Littlewood, who would provide an update on temporary accommodation and rapid rehousing research and Neil Morland, who would facilitate a workshop session on temporary accommodation. This was followed by roundtable introductions.

Jon highlighted that a key aim of the meeting would be to identify core themes that could start to form the basis for the Action Group to develop question 3 recommendations on “How can we transform the use of temporary accommodation?”. He was clear however that the Group would not be in a position to consider the detail or how to achieve them until the interim findings of the commissioned research was available. Jon also thanked members for agreeing to extend the meeting to receive a presentation from Perth and Kinross Council on how it is tackling homelessness.

2. Question 2 – an update on response and process from here

Jon thanked the Action Group for the excellent work to finalise the 20 Question 2 recommendations on how rough sleeping can be ended for good in Scotland, which were published on 7 March. The recommendations had been accepted in principle by the Scottish Government, who would now work with the Action Group to ensure they are implemented.

3. Question 3 & 4 - Update on the 'Aye we can' lived experience of homelessness programme

Jon Sparkes invited Maggie Brunjes to update the group on the 'Aye we can' homelessness consultation project, co-ordinated by Glasgow Homelessness Network, which had been engaging with people right across Scotland, predominately with people with lived experience of homelessness (the final report can be found [here](#)). The project had provided an open space to share people's experiences, ideas, insights and advice. It had listened to the views of around 425 people, and provided the opportunity to contribute through five consultation events held across the country, on the phone or by on online survey. Some core themes emerging from the consultation were that:

- People wanted more help to keep their home when it was at risk and to be rehoused more quickly, and in a place suitable to them, if the worst happens. People wanted less time in temporary places - and to stop using hostels and B&B.
- People wanted services to work together to help people end their homelessness
- People wanted staff in front line services to be knowledgeable of law, rules and wider services but that they should also be understanding of and respond effectively and sensitively to the realities of people's lives and circumstances
- People were clear that the best way to tackle homelessness was to prevent it happening in the first place e.g. people very often linked their own experience right back to childhood - work should start there and more attention also given to people leaving places like prison, family home, care.
- People wanted to be reassured that we really knew how many people were homeless and sleeping rough.
- We should continue to collaborate with and listen to people with first-hand experience of homelessness, Scotland-wide and locally too.

The Action Group had a detailed discussion and welcomed the important contribution of the project to the Group's work. The Group noted that the views of those with lived experience had both informed and in many ways reflected the recommendations made to date. The Group agreed that collaboration should continue with the cohort of people who have experience of homelessness so that their views remain at the heart of the Group's considerations going forward, as well as during the implementation of recommendations and, importantly, beyond the lifespan of the short-life group. The Group agreed to communicate this to the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group (HPSG) which would take work forward once the Group has disbanded.

ACTION: Jon/Action Group/Scottish Government Homelessness Team to ensure engagement with 'Aye we can' lived experience cohort continues into the work being taken forward by HPSG

4. Question 3 - Temporary Accommodation - what we currently know - definitions, funding arrangements, numbers in different forms of temporary accommodation

Jon Sparkes invited Marion Gibbs (SG Homelessness Team) to present to the Action Group, with an overview of the current temporary accommodation system. Marion provided an overview which covered the definitions of temporary accommodation, legislative parameters, funding arrangements, the impact of welfare reforms and the numbers and characteristics of households in temporary accommodation.

5. Question 3 –Temporary Accommodation - research and consultancy work

Jon Sparkes invited Anna Evans, Beth Watts and Mandy Littlewood to update the Action Group on the latest position on the two pieces of research and consultancy work the group had commissioned to understand in detail the current pattern of use of temporary accommodation and issues around implementing a rapid rehousing transition plan.

Beth and Mandy updated the group on the research looking at understanding the current pattern of use of temporary accommodation. The project aimed to provide a detailed understanding of the nature, intended purpose and use of temporary accommodation across Scotland by examining how it is currently defined; the intended purpose/function; types of accommodation currently used and how it varies locally; the quality and appropriateness of the accommodation stock; the costs and how those vary across Scotland; the experience of individual households in terms of length and patterns of use of temporary accommodation; and what the future shape, nature and function of temporary accommodation should be in Scotland. As part of the work, the project would look at six case studies and drill down into all levels of public and other data sources. The aim was to provide an interim report to the Action Group by the end of March/early April.

Anna updated the Group on the rapid rehousing project. The project would consult widely, including with all local authorities via a questionnaire, and was seeking to help understand the current scale and type of supply of temporary accommodation, define what rapid rehousing means, outline the optimum balance of accommodation options across Scotland, set out the scale of the national gap and an implementation framework on how to close it, and to identify a national policy/system and the cultural and practice change needed. The aim was to complete the consultation work by end of March and report to the Action Group by the end of May.

The Action Group welcomed the update and during the discussion agreed that the focus had to be on ensuring that homelessness is addressed as quickly as possible and to ensure any time in temporary accommodation is helpful and doesn't hinder people's progress.

ACTION: Heriot Watt Research Team to present interim report to the Action Group by end of March/early April

ACTION: Anna to present report of rapid rehousing research project to the Action Group by end of May

6. Question 3 – Temporary Accommodation - workshop session

Jon Sparkes invited Neil Morland to facilitate a workshop session on Temporary Accommodation. Jon highlighted that the objective of the session was, working from a blank sheet of paper, to identify what the Group thinks temporary accommodation should look like to be effective at ending homelessness. Jon stressed that the separate research the Group had commissioned would play a key role in formulating recommendations and that the aim at this point was to identify emerging core themes. Neil invited the Group to consider what currently works well, what wasn't working well and to then identify areas of focus for the further work to develop and agree recommendations on temporary accommodation. Through the course of the workshop the Group agreed that the focus needed to be on ensuring that homelessness is addressed quickly, people are treated as individuals and quickly get the support they need and that any time in temporary accommodation is helpful to their progress. The Group agreed to focus on emerging themes to:

- Minimise the number of people who need temporary accommodation through a combination of rapid rehousing approaches and prevention
- Where Temporary Accommodation is used:
 - ensure appropriate support is in place from Day 1 to stabilise issues contributing to homelessness and to ensure a personalised plan is put in place to help the individual or household move positively towards settled accommodation, employment, wellbeing and positive relationships
 - follow the evidence of 'Aye we can' and ensure a suitable supply to end the use of B&B
 - ensure good quality and standards, backed by effective regulation
- Identify and address the barriers to people moving on from Temporary Accommodation as quickly as is right for them, based on need and choice
- Consider the financial model on Temporary Accommodation and ensure how this could promote (and never prevent) securing the best outcomes for individuals and households
- Reengineering both Temporary and Supported Accommodation so that the right personalised solution is developed for the right person or household (recognising that there needs to be a housing or accommodation solution for everyone, but not everyone will need support)

ACTION: Jon/Action Group to consider work required to move from emerging themes to recommendations, for consideration of recommendations at 9th meeting of HARSAG on 26 April

7. Question 3 – agree next steps

The Action Group agreed to take these themes emerging from the workshop session on Temporary Accommodation to the next stakeholder event in Glasgow on 27 March for a discussion there on how to move towards developing specific recommendations to transform the use of temporary accommodation.

ACTION: Jon to present and invite feedback on the emerging themes at the 3rd stakeholder event in Glasgow on 27 March

8. Experience in Perth and Kinross

Jon Sparkes welcomed Perth & Kinross Council to the meeting and invited Councillor Peter Barrett, Housing and Communities Convenor, and Clare Mailer, Interim Head of Housing to present to the Action Group with an overview on the homelessness situation in Perth and Kinross, including the success of the Council's homeless prevention activities and Home First rapid rehousing project, which works on the principle that, wherever possible, homeless households move directly into settled accommodation avoiding the stigma, cost and uncertainty of temporary accommodation.

Next meeting – 26 April 2018.