

Glasgow City Council

Cuts to homelessness services 2019/20

May 2019

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KEY POINTS

- Shelter Scotland helps over half a million people every year struggling with bad housing or homelessness through our advice, support and legal services. And we campaign to make sure that, one day, no one will have to turn to us for help. We're here so no one has to fight bad housing or homelessness on their own.
- Shelter Scotland has been delivering advice and support in Glasgow for over two decades and our Glasgow Hub helped over 3000 people in the city last year.
- This briefing provides an overview of recently announced cuts to homelessness services by Glasgow City Council as well as a snapshot of the current situation and the concerns that Shelter Scotland has.
- On 8th May 2019, Glasgow City Council's (GCC) Integration Joint Board approved £2.6million of cuts to homelessness services in the city in its 2019/20 budget.¹ These cuts will come into force on 1st October 2019.
- Further service efficiencies of £500,000 have been identified for "redirection".
- These cuts affect 970 temporary properties managed by commissioned service providers across the city, and will equate to the loss of 99 beds along with mental health support services across the city.
- Glasgow City Council states that these cuts have come into place in line with the city's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP),² which includes the commitment to reduce the temporary accommodation in the city, improve the quality of temporary accommodation used, and expand the use of the Housing First approach.
- Housing First is one part of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, and the delivery of this has already begun, with 29 new tenancies being achieved by March 2019.
- Some consultation with service users has taken place on a rolling basis since 2016 in line with Glasgow's homelessness transformational change agenda. This was carried out by The Scottish Homelessness Information and Engagement Network (SHIEN), hosted by Glasgow Homelessness Network (GHN).
- Given our long-term grave concerns about those who are denied homelessness services and temporary accommodation across the city (the practice known as "gatekeeping"), these cuts suggest a worrying direction

¹ GCC IJB (2019) [Homelessness Services Savings 2019-20](#)

² GCC Health and Social Care Partnership (2019) [Glasgow Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/20-2023/24](#)

of travel and Shelter Scotland has serious concerns about how existing challenging statutory duties will be met with diminishing resources.

Homelessness in Glasgow

Glasgow has a unique homelessness problem in comparison with other Scottish local authorities. The city has the highest number of applications in Scotland, an acute lack of temporary accommodation, and there is a systemic practice of gatekeeping taking place in GCC that Shelter Scotland has raised over a number of years.³ GCC has also stock transferred all of its properties, including temporary accommodation, to housing associations and support organisations.

- In 2017/18 there were 5,204 homeless applications in Glasgow – a 4% decrease on the previous year.⁴
 - There were 2,150 households in temporary accommodation in Glasgow on 31st March 2018 – a 4% increase compared to the same point in 2017.
 - Of the 2,150 households in temporary accommodation, 810 contained children or pregnant women – a 9% increase on the previous year.
- Shelter Scotland works regularly with individuals who have been turned away from the local authority’s homelessness services and denied their legal right to support.
- Glasgow City Council failed to provide temporary accommodation 3,025 times to households to whom it had a statutory duty in 2017/18 according to official figures submitted by the council to the Scottish Government.⁵
- Glasgow’s Winter Night Shelter (GWNS) had 691 unique guests in 2018/19, which is an increase of 16% compared the previous year and represents a four-year high.
- Figures from GWNS’ database show that of the 691 individuals, approximately 250 advised “Yes” when asked on their first night there, “Have you presented as homeless to Housing/Homelessness officers?”⁶
- The Scottish Housing Regulator highlighted that Glasgow City Council loses contact with around a quarter of people who are homeless while they wait for a home, and attributed this partly to the length and complexity of the homeless process in Glasgow.⁷

Shelter Scotland is aware that Glasgow City Council already fails to meet its statutory duties in providing homeless households with temporary accommodation

³ Shelter Scotland (2018) [Evidence of Gatekeeping in Glasgow City Council](#)

⁴ Scottish Government (2018) [Homelessness in Scotland 2017-18](#)

⁵ Scottish Government (2018) [Homelessness in Scotland: 2017-2018](#)

⁶ Note: 70 of the total 691 guests may have come from a different local authority area and GCC’s duties may not extend to them.

⁷ Scottish Housing Regulator (2018) [Housing people who are homeless in Glasgow](#)

on a daily basis. Any cuts to existing services risks exacerbating an already extreme problem with dire consequences for the individuals impacted.

Current homelessness provision in Glasgow

Glasgow City Council states that current net expenditure on homelessness services is £46 million.⁸ Current temporary accommodation make-up in Glasgow is 2,899 properties⁹ – of these, 970 (33%) units are managed by commissioned service providers.

Due to GCC's stock transfer of all its properties, which includes temporary accommodation, registered social landlords and the third sector are integral in providing homeless accommodation and support services. Shelter Scotland has raised concerns for a number of years that people experiencing homelessness in Glasgow already face a lack of support and available accommodation and our caseload shows that this issue has not substantively improved over the past few years, despite challenges from across the housing sector.

There is concern across the housing sector in Glasgow that the council is not upholding its legal duty to house those who are entitled to temporary accommodation. In 2016/17 the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) found that GCC had a duty to make an offer of temporary or emergency accommodation to households on 10,350 occasions but made an offer in only 60% of these.¹⁰ In March 2019, SHR set out an engagement plan to address the Council's continued failure to house people quickly enough. The SHR will:

- “continue to monitor Glasgow’s performance on key aspects of its services to people who are homeless and meet with Glasgow at least quarterly;
- visit the Council to directly test its performance, following which we will determine what further action we may require to take;
- review our engagement with Glasgow when it has finalised its Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.”¹¹

Glasgow has a joint funded Winter Night Shelter hosted by Glasgow City Mission open from 1st December – 31st March each year. We know that people using the night shelter have often been turned away by the council due to a lack of temporary accommodation before turning to the shelter, which is reflected in the figures from GWNS which stated that over 250 night shelter guests had approached their council for assistance. We acknowledge however that up to 70 guests may have a local connection to an area outwith Glasgow.

⁸ GCC Health and Social Care Partnership (2019) [Glasgow Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/20-2023/24](#)

⁹ Note that this is not beds – often these properties are hostels made up of a number of beds.

¹⁰ Scottish Housing Regulator (2018) [Housing people who are homeless in Glasgow](#)

¹¹ Scottish Housing Regulator (2019) [Engagement plan: Glasgow City Council](#)

Cuts approved by Glasgow City Council: May 2019

The stated aim of the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) in relation to Homelessness Services Savings (2019-20) is to minimise the time people are spending in these specialised services and to support them to move on to mainstream services and tenancies with additional support if needed.¹² The IJB cites the decommissioning of Clyde Place as an example of the “significant positive impact this can have for service users”.¹³

In March 2019, the IJB approved Homelessness Service savings of £2.6 million (with an additional £500,000 of efficiencies due to be reinvested) which it had previously agreed in 2018.¹⁴ The recommendations, then approved by the Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) on 8th May 2019, affect 99 bed spaces across the city including supported accommodation, as well as cuts to mental health support. The results of this will be seen in the decommissioning of 9 residential and further outreach-based services in Glasgow. The IJB has indicated that this will “result in a reduction of 99 residential placements but that these placements are “no longer fit for purpose”.¹⁵ The stated rationale for this is to reduce the amount of time people are spending in Homelessness Services and support a transition to rapid rehousing, including Housing First approaches. See Appendix 1 for a breakdown of these cuts.

In its Interim Equality Impact Assessment, the IJB has outlined the consultation process carried out, which involved discussing the impact of the above cuts with the service providers to be affected:

“The purpose of bringing forward this report at this stage with an implementation timeframe from 1st October is in order to provide a maximum reasonable timeframe in order to enable provider organisations to minimise the impact on their affected workforces and absorb such impact through natural turnover processes wherever possible that happen routinely in all social care organisations.”¹⁶

GCC announced that a significant consultation was also carried out through The Scottish Homelessness Information and Engagement Network (SHIEN), facilitated by Glasgow Homelessness Network. This involved discussions and a survey with people who had prior and current experience of accessing services and resulted in a report which was published in 2016.¹⁷

¹² GCC IJB (2019) [Homelessness Services Savings 2019-20](#)

¹³ GCC IJB (2019) [Homelessness Services Savings 2019-20](#)

¹⁴ GCC IJB (2018) [Financial Allocations and budgets for 2018/19](#)

¹⁵ GCC Health and Social Care Partnership (2019) [Homelessness Service Savings 2019-20 Interim EQIA](#)

¹⁶ GCC IJB (2019) [Homelessness Services Savings 2019-20](#)

¹⁷ Glasgow City HSCP, GHN (2016) [Homelessness in Glasgow: Service Report](#)

However, the IJB decided that as plans were not yet approved at consultation stage, those who would be directly affected by the cuts to these services would not be engaged until this approval had been given:

Careful consideration was given to the most appropriate time and approach when engaging with the people affected. Therefore, if the Homelessness Saving Plan is approved by the IJB on 8th May 2019 a detailed decommissioning plan will be in place, with support from the Glasgow Homelessness Involvement & Feedback Team (GHIFT), hosted by GHN.¹⁸

In order to mitigate the potential negative impacts caused by these cuts, the IJB states that the Homelessness Management Team, Glasgow Homelessness Involvement & Feedback Team (GHIFT, hosted by GHN) and Purchase Providers will complete a “robust decommissioning plan.” This should identify “more appropriate secure housing alternatives with assertive support if required”. The plan is to be completed by the implementation timeframe of October 2019.¹⁹ Those directly affected by these cuts should have “appropriate move-on plans created for them [which will] primarily consist of Housing First tenancies with intensive support, mainstream tenancies with support if required, or appropriate supports secured via alternative care group resources”.²⁰ GHN will again be central to involving service users in this transition.

Rapid Rehousing in Glasgow

Glasgow City Council has described these cuts as part of a “transformation” of its homelessness services in line with its Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) – a programme of work across all local authorities led by the Scottish Government aimed at transforming and improving temporary accommodation and homelessness support in Scotland.²¹

GCC’s RRTP states that a “shift in the funding of temporary accommodation provision over time, will enable further housing support funding options to be identified”, alongside the implementation of a five-year budgeting tool. GCC’s RRTP sets out a five-year plan to tackle homelessness in the city²² and acknowledges that the plan requires considerable front loading of funding in its first stages of transition. To facilitate this, GCC has applied to the Scottish Government for £18 million of the five-year £50 million Ending Homelessness Together Fund.

GCC has begun implementing parts of their RRTP in that a total of 29 Housing First tenancies were in place by March 2019.²³ This is below the target of 39

¹⁸ GCC Health and Social Care Partnership (2019) [Homelessness Service Savings 2019-20 Interim EQIA](#)

¹⁹ GCC IJB (2019) [Homelessness Services Savings 2019-20](#)

²⁰ GCC IJB (2019) [Homelessness Services Savings 2019-20](#)

²¹ GCC Health and Social Care Partnership (2019) [Glasgow to reduce emergency accommodation](#)

²² GCC Health and Social Care Partnership (2019) [Glasgow Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/20-2023/24](#)

²³ Glasgow Homelessness Network (2019) [Housing First Tracker Report March 2019](#)

tenancies set. Given that GCC are already not meeting their 2018/19 targets, it is unrealistic to expect that the people affected by the 99 beds being cut will be transitioned straight into Housing First tenancies or other supported alternatives.

Concerns

Shelter Scotland has a number of concerns about these cuts, which seem inconsistent with the city's transition to a model of rapid rehousing:

1. Transition plans for the individuals using these services up to 1st October 2019

GCC states that the people currently residing in services identified in this report will have appropriate move-on plans created for them which will primarily consist of Housing First tenancies with intensive support.²⁴ At present there is little detail on what this move-on plan would entail, or what support would be provided to the people who would typically use these services after the closure date of October 2019. In addition, not everyone using these services would meet the criteria to qualify for Housing First – nor can GCC's Housing First targets for 2019/20 Q1&2 (93 in total – including the 29 already in tenancies) account for the additional 99 people who will lose support in October 2019.

2. Anticipated impact of these cuts

There is little information available on the scale of impact these cuts are expected to have. There is very little detail on how new applicants post-October 2019 will be supported in the absence of these services. Another point to consider is how this will affect the use of the Glasgow Winter Night Shelter in 2019/20 – these closures will correspond with the shelter's opening and could lead to increased use of the shelter.

3. £50million Ending Homelessness Together Fund

There is no timeframe set out for the allocation of grant funding from the Scottish Government. GCC has put in an application for £18million of the £50million but it is unclear how the fund will be allocated, or how local authorities will be prioritised.

²⁴ GCC IJB (2019) [Homelessness Services Savings 2019-20](#)

4. Consultation

Shelter Scotland has concerns that this consultation was not extensive enough. This brings into question the robustness of the survey findings.

In addition, rapid rehousing will take significant time, indeed several years to implement in each of the pilot cities, more so in full across Scotland. The intention was never for local authorities to switch from temporary accommodation to a model of permanent supported accommodation such as Housing First overnight.

Conclusion

Shelter Scotland appreciates the scale of challenge that a transition to rapid rehousing poses to all local authorities – particularly in a climate where funding is increasingly limited, and where this is a lack of clarity on the allocation of funding from the £50million Ending Homelessness Together Fund. It is possible that in the absence of answers from the Scottish Government, some local authorities are seeking to address these funding challenges on their own through sudden and considerable cuts to their current homeless services.

That said, the scale of these cuts is significant. Almost 100 beds lost across the city – when too many people are already told there is no accommodation available – could pose serious challenges to those using these services. Particularly going into winter, with the city’s Winter Night Shelter seeing its busiest year in four years in 2018/19.

Rapid rehousing will not and is not expected to happen overnight and making cuts of this significance must be backed up by considerable evidence, transition plans and solid consultation with those using these services. Shelter Scotland believes that without a greater understanding of the impact of these changes and a lack of answers for how people will be supported post-October 2019, the approved cuts to homeless services are sudden and not in line with a steady transition to rapid rehousing.

Appendix 1

Provider	Service	Contract value	Total Savings
Simon Community	Simon Community Tollcross	Funding Withdrawal	£272,831
Simon Community	Simon Community Newlands resettlement and MH outreach	Funding Withdrawal	£554,743
Aspire	Aspire Purdon Street	Funding Withdrawal	£287,772
Aspire	Aspire Copland Rd	Funding Withdrawal/redirection	£200,000
Scottish Christian Alliance	Scottish Christian Alliance The Arch Project	Funding Withdrawal	£142,318
SAMH	SAMH Rathlin	Funding Withdrawal	£355,065
Mungo	Mungo Foundation Fairstart	Funding Withdrawal	£221,868
Penumbra	Penumbra MH supported living outreach	Funding Withdrawal	£411,611
CSG	CSG – Mediation Service	Funding Withdrawal	£100,000
Ypeople	PRS	Service efficiencies	£100,000
Talbot	Eskdale	Service efficiencies	£60,000
SAMH	SAMH Community Directions	Service efficiencies	£300,000
Marie Trust	Marie Trust	Service efficiencies	£100,000
Talbot	Belmont	Funding withdrawal	£256,341

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We're here so no one has to fight bad housing or homelessness on their own.

Please support us at shelterscotland.org

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