

Calls from the Frontline

to end homelessness in Scotland





Hello!

Frontline workers have a unique insight into what works and what doesn't to tackle homelessness. So, it is important we hear those voices to share good practice and build positive solutions through their expertise.

The Scottish Government's Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group (HRSAG) recognised that too. Through their collaboration with people with lived experience, they kept hearing that the impact frontline workers have on people's day, optimism and confidence is huge.

This report presents the knowledge and ideas gathered from 75 frontline workers from across Scotland, while attending two networking events in Glasgow and Edinburgh during April 2018.

What's this all about?

To provide you with a clear and true understanding of what this report entails, we will provide an overview from the beginning.

The Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group (HRSAG) was brought together by Scottish Government in October 2017 to help create solutions to tackle homelessness and end rough sleeping in Scotland. A final report will be made to Scottish Ministers in May/June 2018.

The Scottish Government will develop a new 5-year approach using these recommendations, approaches and fresh insight. They will also fund an extra £50m over the 5 years to help make vital changes in how we tackle homelessness, along with an extra £20m for alcohol and drug services.

The Action Group has been collaborating widely to reach the right recommendations. So far, this has included 3 large events with multi-agency partners, a series of smaller roundtable discussions on specific themes and collaboration with over 400 people with lived experience of homelessness.

Frontline workers have a unique insight into what works and what doesn't. And will be at the very heart of creating change in Scotland over the next 5 years. The Action Group wanted to learn what's most important to frontline workers and build solutions together.

Your Call... from the Frontline

Cyrenians and St Martins in the Field already collaborate with frontline workers in Scotland through the Frontline Network. Perfect! On behalf of HRSAG, the Homelessness Network (GHN) collaborated with the Frontline Network to co-facilitate two half day events in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Your Call... from the Frontline sessions were a success; frontline workers were forthcoming with their views and were happy to learn that they will be at the heart of creating change in Scotland over the next five years. Thanks to everyone for coming and giving their time.

Thanks to Lesley Anderson (*Cyrenians*) and Kelly McQuarrie (*GHN*) for preparing this report. For more information about the Frontline Network in Scotland, please contact:

Cyrenians
Norton Park
57 Albion Road
Edinburgh
EH7 5QY

Tel: 0131 475 2435
Email: admin@cyrenians.scot

The Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group Recommendations...so far



On the frontline

Housing Options at the heart, with new flexible and outreach approach in partnership with the third sector. All frontline workers to be trauma informed and the places people use psychologically informed.



Prevent it

Make any legal adjustment needed. Some groups of people are more at risk and a multi-agency plan should be in place for each. This must include greater protection for people with no recourse to public funds.



Rapid Rehousing

A settled home more quickly, with less time in temp accommodation. Housing First for people that need it most. A new framework to help local authorities create Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans by December 2018



Housing Supply

Ensure amount is adequate and targeted in the right places with the right types and sizes. Agree a definition of 'affordable'. Access to advice & advocacy for choice based letting systems as standard.



Help & Guidance

To scope and develop a real-time and cross-sector data monitoring system to better understand trends and patterns in homelessness and rough sleeping. To update the Code of Guidance on Homelessness.



Learning as we go

Changes made this winter to be adopted or adjusted. Test and develop national 'menu' of frontline approaches that work best and customise for local needs. Learn from local action to create a national response to street begging.



The only place where **change** happens is on the ground. The rest is words on paper...

On the Day

There was a broad range of workers from different services providers, along with Scottish Government officials who were keen to hear more:

- Aspire Housing and Development Services
- Barlinnie Prison Throughcare
- Criminal Justice Social Workers
- Crisis
- Cyrenians
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Frontline Fife
- Glasgow Care Foundation
- Gowrie Care
- Homeless Network (GHN)
- Homes for Good
- Linstone Housing Association
- NRS Scotland
- Scottish Refugee Council
- Shelter
- Simon Community Scotland
- Social Bite
- St Martins Frontline Network
- Street Connect
- Street Soccer Scotland
- Streetwork
- Tomorrows Women
- Turning Point Scotland
- Quarriers

Amanda Bennett from St Martins in the Field provided information about the Frontline Network, and about funding available that can be used to hold 'Frontline Worker Events'. There were many discussions during breaks about the benefits of attending networking events.

Both events had some information presented, followed by round table discussions.

Maggie Brunjes, Director of Glasgow Homelessness Network is also a member of the Homelessness Rough Sleeping Action Group (HRSAG). She provided an update of the group's work, including:

Statistics of homeless applications and rough sleepers in 2016/2017

- **34,100** total homeless applications in the year
- **28,247** households accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness
- **25,125** households where the local authority has a duty to find settled accommodation
- **2,620** households sleeping rough at least once in the last 3 months
- **5,000** people sleeping rough across a year (Scottish Household Survey)
- **5,025** households are likely to have multiple and complex support needs

Explanation of the four questions the HRSAG are looking to answer

- How to reduce rough sleeping this winter (2017-18)
- How to eradicate rough sleeping in Scotland
- How to transform temporary accommodation
- How to bring about an end to homelessness in Scotland

The Questions

After the presentation frontline workers were invited to discuss the following four questions;

1. What is your biggest daily challenge
2. What usually works well
3. What do service users need most
4. What do you need most

The responses are on the page opposite.

Calls from the Frontline...

Many thanks to Lorraine McGrath from Simon Community Scotland and Oscar Del Rio from Cyrenians for introducing and explaining the discussion sessions, which explored:

Personal budgets

- **Your experience:** do you have any experience or knowledge of personal budgets that you can share?
- **Your advice:** how do we help make this approach the new normal - as a worker do you have any anxieties/worries?
- **Your call:** How do you think personal budgets can change working relationships? How can you help?

No wrong door approaches

- **Your experience:** in this new phase for ending homelessness... what and who do we mean by frontline? What are the right skills and attributes for promoting?
- **Your advice:** How do we create the best environment for frontline leaders to lead? Coproduce? Share learning?
- **Your call:** what actions can HRSAG recommend to help frontline workers do more of this?



We need more frontline leaders emerging in **starring roles over the next phase to help create and put in place recommendations**

1

Lack of Engagement from people who lead chaotic lives due to long-term trauma – creating complex needs and various addiction issues

Lack of funding for resources and adequate staffing levels. There is productive engagement when there is consistent trained staff

2

Having a good relationship with client to achieve good outcomes. This takes trust, patience and understanding – using person centred approach

Communication; between worker and client; community resources and inter-agency collaboration with police, hospitals, care managers, prisons, all voluntary/statutory sectors

3

Basics First! 'Maslow' needs. Life skills, knowledge and education. Longer term tenancy sustainment support beyond 8 weeks

Compassion and support - from housing casework teams, prison/after care workers, hospitals and mental health care workers

4

To be part of the decision making, this makes me feel valued as a professional skilled worker. Acknowledged with recognition - preferable in a clinical supervision

Flexibility and more inter-agency working – improve communication. More funding and resources

The calls from the frontline are:

1. Transparency: Policy into Practice

Implementing **new policy initiatives** into practice has been highlighted as a daily challenge for frontline workers. The swift roll out of changes have impacted on their role to deliver frontline services, for example, welfare reform. During the round table discussions frontline workers highlighted many staff are currently feeling overwhelmed and apprehensive due to so many policy changes happening. The only place where change happens is on the ground; therefore, we need to equip frontline workers as leaders and agents of change.

Frontline Suggestion

- It is important that frontline workers are consulted and updated throughout the next five years, while changes are being implemented
- Success can be achieved by building interagency relationships and increasing transparency about policy changes
- Frontline workers are a key asset in tackling homelessness and housing issues in Scotland

2. Access

The ability to access **funding and resources** to meet the needs of individuals have been highlighted as priority for frontline staff - supporting clients on their journey of change is the overall goal of ending homelessness. For example, supporting those leaving prison into settled accommodation, employment and/or further education. However due to several external competing factors such as housing options; welfare support, funding and waiting times to access services can hinder progress for those who need it most.

Frontline Suggestion

- Create an online database of all homelessness services across Scotland, outlining what support they could provide
- Use flexible, creative approaches and the time to get to know the person - personalising services to meet the service user's needs

3. Collaboration & Connections

As, touched upon homelessness can only be ended by multi agency **collaborative approach**, providing an individualised approach. **Information sharing** was a key theme for frontline workers. For example, individuals having to repeat their stories and past experiences to different workers relived previous traumas. There also needs to be **less competition** amongst services and more emphasis on valuing what they can deliver to support an individual. Involving those with **lived experience** in the delivery of services was another key theme for frontline staff – frontline staffs feel this approach increases trust and meaning for service providers.

Frontline Suggestion

- Helping to build positive/ trusting working relationships
- Create a system where all services can access a client's current and past history
- More focus on rehabilitating individuals back into the community. Helping them reach their desired goals and aspirations

4. No Wrong Door: Housing First

Having a safe, affordable housing option in a locality of choice is a key priority, responses to homelessness must be housing led with access to flexible collaborative support. Frontline workers echoed the Aye We Can lived experience report; reducing temporary and hostel type accommodation along with the rules attached to living in these accommodations inhibits a person's move on to mainstream housing. For example, it was highlighted that individuals cannot seek out employability options because of the fear of not meeting high rent costs that supported accommodation brings. The current approach is keeping people dependent on the welfare system for the fear of being roofless.

Frontline Suggestion

- We need rapid rehousing for those leaving institutions or periods of rough sleeping
- Collaborative person centred approaches could be put in place to take away the fear of homelessness
- Bed and breakfast accommodation wastes money that could be better used elsewhere, it also holds people back from moving on

5. Being Heard: Frontline Leaders

The frontline would like to be **consulted more** on policy, strategic, service and project developments. For example when developing services it would be beneficial to involve beneficiaries and frontline staff within this process to ensure the service meets the needs of clients. Ensuring services are realistic in terms of delivery mechanisms, timescales and outcomes. Frontline often feel caseloads are not manageable due to limited access to resources and this can negatively affect outcomes, or at times, obtain any outcomes.

Frontline Suggestion

- Regular frontline network events to share knowledge and more funding to achieve good outcomes for service users
- A cross sector network for frontline staff to access training; policy updates, consultation platforms, share knowledge, receive peer support and reflective practice
- Decision makers to take into account the need for flexibility, e.g creative ways of working, give room for setbacks and increase trust to support clients

6. Support for the Frontline

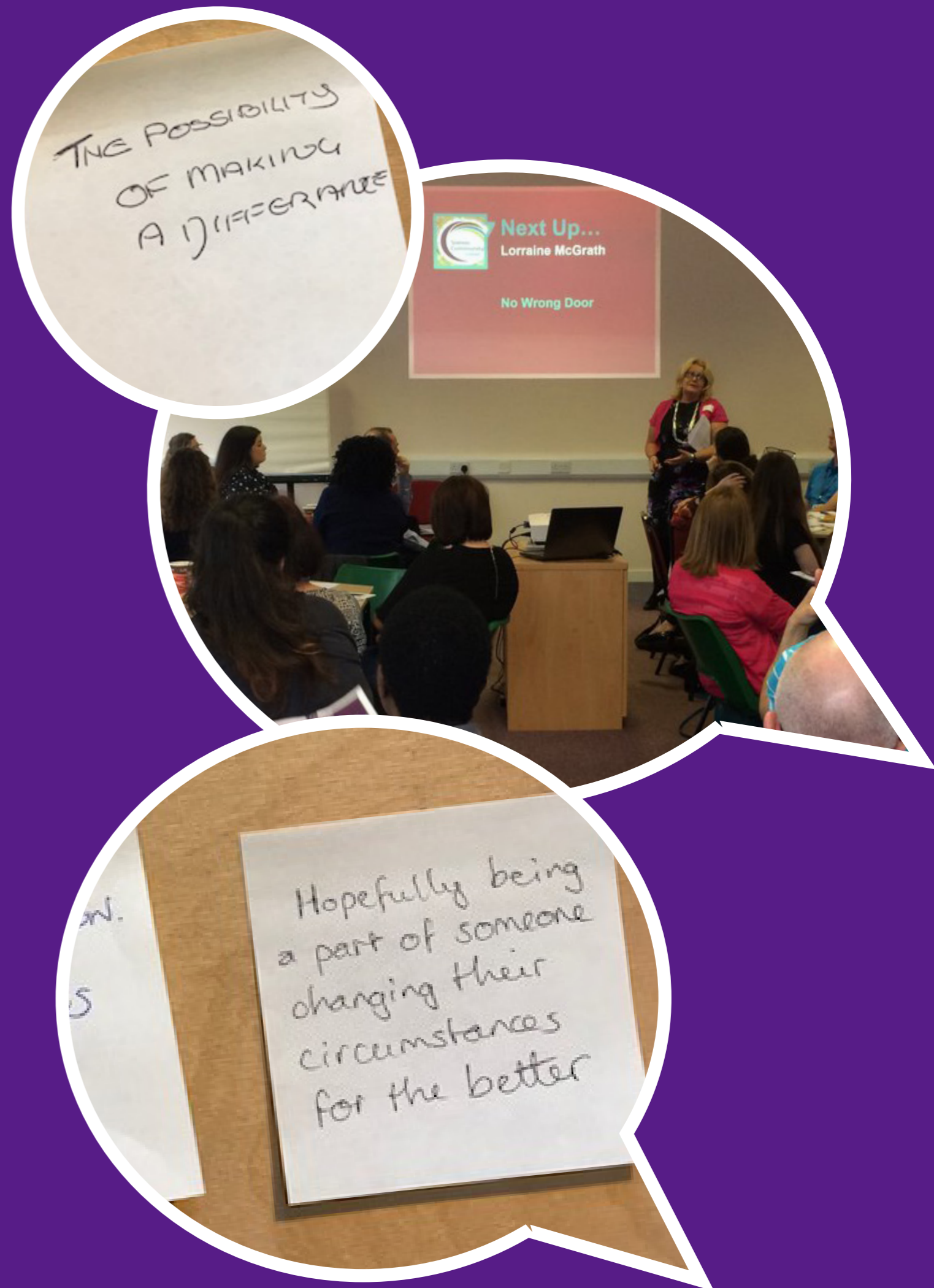
Increased **support for the frontline** has been identified as a key priority, with a particular focus on the health and wellbeing of frontline staff. Frontline workers asked for packages, such as, adequate training and support, better pay, reflective practice groups while working in a psychologically informed environments and clinical supervision – all beneficial mechanisms of support providers.

Frontline Suggestion

- Learn about developments in the sector. For example, providing training based on the model of tackling homelessness in Finland, if this is what the Scottish Model is being based on, bringing frontline workers together from the two countries to share information and practice
- Knowledge is power; therefore, to end homelessness and rough sleeping in Scotland lets invest in the frontline to create an informed, resilient and empowered workforce

Key recommendations from the Frontline... (so far!)

- Individuals require homes with longer or permanent support to sustain their tenancies, especially for those with a long history of trauma experiences
- Improve current processes for individuals who are at high risk of homelessness when leaving prison and hospital, including, preventative work for children and young people
- Long-term homeless people need more opportunities to be taught life skills and have suitable employability/education options, to help them move on to positive healthier lives
- Staff also need to feel valued and appreciated – this can be done through recognition, clinical supervisions, adequate training, better wages and tools
- More funding, resources and better partnership working through sharing resources, knowledge and collaborative associations
- Staff need to be involved during the process of change – their voice and exceptional insight can guide decision makers, HRSAG and the Scottish Government into the right direction, to end homelessness in Scotland, for good.





**Frontline
Network**

cyrenians



Glasgow
Homelessness
Network

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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