



Glasgow Homelessness Network

Housing Options Made Easy!

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Presentation to:

NIHE Seminar: the housing options approach

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A bit about us:

- Est 1980 as a conduit between local government and non-governmental organisations tackling homelessness. An umbrella, membership and non-profit organisation for Glasgow, with national and European profiles
- We apply a *housing + opportunity + wellbeing* model of homelessness prevention and housing need where people take the lead
- We promote *participative and evidence-informed* housing policy and practice, collaborating with:
 - people in housing need
 - communities
 - academics and students
 - frontline practitioners, service and housing providers
 - policy/decision makers and politicians

... and our interpretation of:

- **Scotland's** approach to Homelessness
 - Preventing or tackling it with a progressive threefold package of:
 - Housing Rights
 - Housing Options
 - Housing Support
- **Glasgow's Model** of Housing Options
 - Clearly positioned people's rights and incorporated advocacy to protect those rights
 - Embedded the voluntary sector, at planning and delivery level
 - Recognised that local people have a unique insight into local housing issues and so invited local people to *participate* in the housing options approach

this session will outline:

The advocacy strand of Glasgow's Housing Options:

- HOME (Housing Options Made Easy) Peer Advocacy
- Why **housing options** advocacy?
- Why **independent** advocacy?
- Why **peer** advocacy?
- Key positions/principles
- Key opportunities

project description:



- Peer (citizen) based housing advocacy
- Shared life or local experiences
- Launched a small pilot in April this year
- 8 peer advocates (volunteers)
- 15 customers
- Self-referrals and referrals from housing providers and city council homeless casework teams

who is it for?

HOME welcomes self referrals and referrals from housing options staff where:

- ☑ You have an unsatisfied customer
- ☑ The conversation is not flowing or concluding
- ☑ Your customer seems unsure of what they want
- ☑ Your customer is not expressing opinions or aspirations
- ☑ Your customer is agreeing with all of your opinions
- ☑ Your customer uses health, social care or welfare services OR you are making a referral to a service

why housing advocacy?

- Supporting Staff:
 - a place to go for help and support
 - more relevant and sustainable use of housing resources
 - creating time and space
- Taking Time Out:
 - providing tools to make an informed choice
 - understanding feelings and expectations
 - customers tend to be frustrated, angry, confused, anxious
 - not usually direct reflection of staff, but is about having someone on your side at all times

why housing advocacy?

- Supporting People:
 - Make a decision
 - Communicate a decision
 - Represent rights

From assessment to options appraisal:

- Turning options into one 'best' housing choice
- Considering the factors that influence that choice

assessment 'v' appraisal:

Assessment:

- Process driven (often by legislation and policy)
- Sequential
- Linear
- Rationing
- $A+B=C$

Appraisal:

- Identifying needs and aspirations
- Weighing up options for best fit
- Customer led & Person centred
- Solutions focused
- Flexible

factors influencing housing choice

- **Location** *Near family/ friends? Hobbies? Childcare? Schools? Work? Services? Transport links?*
- **Size/type** *How many bedrooms needed? Is this likely to change? Garden, balcony, veranda?*
- **Accessibility** *Wheelchair access? Other medical factors?*
- **Cost** *Housing Benefit and impact of Welfare Reform? Current employment /aspirations?*
- **Security of tenure** *If renting an option is household looking for long term tenancy?*
- **Safety/Security** *Territorial issues? Fleeing domestic or other forms of abuse or harassment?*
- **Time** *How immediate is housing need? Will household wait for first preference?*

why independent advocacy?

- **Safeguarding** people who are vulnerable, discriminated against or whom services find difficult to serve;
- **Empowering** people to express their own needs and make their own decisions;
- **Enabling** people to get information, explore and understand their options, and make their views and wishes known;
- **Speaking** on behalf of people who are unable to do so for themselves

(Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance; 2013; www.siaa.org.uk)

why independent advocacy?

- Aspiration 'v' Reality:
 - Housing needs and pressures are different in every area - as are range of options available
 - Your home is the base from which you build and live your life - aspiring to what is best for your family is not unreasonable
 - It is not the job of advocacy to 'reality-check' aspirations against housing resources, however independent advocacy will:
 - Explore pros and cons of different housing options
 - Provide information to help people make an informed choice (in relation to the factors that influence housing choice)
 - Work with households to identify interim housing options

why peer advocacy?

- Word of mouth momentum
 - Advocates represent a replenishing group of local people who are champions and experts of the housing options approach
 - Creates better knowledge transfer
 - Increases ownership: less critical and more solutions focused
- People-centred policy and practice
- Relatable experiences
- Sharing power and *coproduction*

coproduction in housing options

- **Coproduction** for communities


*“Co-production is a **new vision for public services** which offers a better way to respond to the challenges we face - based on recognising the resources that citizens already have, and delivering services **with rather than for** service users, their families and their neighbours.*

*Early evidence suggests that this is an effective way to deliver better outcomes, often for **less money**”.*

(National Endowment for Science, Technology and Arts (NESTA) and New Economics Foundation (NEF); 2013; www.nesta.org.uk)

coproduction framework (1/6)

- **Recognising people as assets**



transforming the perception of people from passive recipients of services and burdens on the system into one where they are equal partners in designing and delivering services

coproduction framework (2/6)


- Building on people's existing capabilities



From a deficit approach to one that provides opportunities to recognise and grow people's capabilities and actively support them to put these to use with individuals and communities

coproduction framework (3/6)

- Mutuality and Reciprocity



Offering people a range of incentives to engage, which enable us to work in reciprocal relationships with each other, where there are mutual responsibilities and expectations

coproduction framework (4/6)


- Peer Support Networks



Engaging peer and personal networks as the best way of transferring knowledge and supporting change

coproduction framework (5/6)


- **Blurring distinctions**



Blurring the distinction between professionals and recipients, and between producers and consumers of services, by reconfiguring the way services are developed and delivered

coproduction framework (6/6)

- Facilitating rather than delivering



Professionals become facilitators rather than 'fixers'. This makes people agents in the design and delivery of public services – which generates better outcomes and lower costs

key positions/principles (1)

- Independent advocacy is a positive, solutions-focused process that always works in the interest of the household
- Independent advocacy is not a complaints process, nor has it the *purpose* of finding system flaws or failures
- Independent advocacy works most effectively when the relationship between commissioner and provider is carefully developed, reciprocal and trusted

key positions/principles (2)

- The need for advocacy will exist within perfect systems, because some people will always need:
 - Extra time and assistance
 - More information
 - Their rights or wishes represented
 - Their options explained and implications considered

“Peace of mind knowing that you are not alone in dealing with prospect of homelessness” (HOME client)

key positions/principles (3)

Specifically, independent advocacy services:

- are set up so they and their advocates are as free as possible from interests which conflict with those of the people they support;
- do not have further unnecessary restrictions on their action;
- have strong community roots; *and*
- try to include people with direct experience of using services in every area of the service;

key opportunities

... that are presented when considering an independent peer advocacy strand of housing options:

- Creates a structure and a safety net
- Demonstrates accountability and openness to challenge
- Provides evidence for regulation and inspection
- Local people participating and transferring knowledge from professionals to communities
- Narrows the distance of exclusion
- Empowered people make better choices which creates a better use of local housing resources
- Everything is moving toward personalisation and choice...

Contact us

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The logo for GHN is a large, teal-colored speech bubble shape. Inside the bubble, the lowercase letters "ghn" are written in a white, sans-serif font. The bubble has a tail pointing towards the bottom left.

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