GLASGOW WINTER NIGHT SHELTER
2018-19
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Glasgow Winter Night Shelter opened for a ninth year on 1 December 2018 running for 121 nights until 31 March 2019. The night shelter is delivered by Glasgow City Mission and supported by significant partnerships – including the embedding of Health and Social Care Partnership Social Care staff five nights a week. This made an enormous difference to the service offered. New partners - Healing for the Heart - were able to supply counsellors this year to offer active listening to troubled guests.

Staffing was enhanced this year with the introduction of workers who had ‘lived experience’ of homelessness. This had a positive impact on the safety and effectiveness of the project. There was also a team of volunteers who gave generously of their time to support the work.

Despite this winter being much milder, the night shelter hosted 691 individual guests, a 16% increase on the previous year and the highest number to date. However, close partnership working meant that guests were being moved on to appropriate accommodation much sooner. This was shown by 70% of guests only staying three nights or fewer and overall bed-nights being 36% lower.

Staff, partners and guests felt that the night shelter was a safer space this year, with a noticeable reduction in violence and aggression. However, there was an increase in overall drug use coupled with a number of serious health issues, compared to previous years. Around 17 individuals receiving life-saving interventions.

Key Statistics
- 691 unique guests (up 16% from previous year) staying for 2,452 bed-nights (down 36%)
- Average occupancy was 20 (down from 32 in 2017/18) with the busiest night being 36.
- 83% male, 16.5% female and 0.5% other; with an average age of 41.
- 71% identified as Scottish with a further 10% as other British. 10% were EU Nationals.
- 74% of guests were recorded as moving onto a positive outcome.
INTRODUCTION

The Glasgow Winter Night Shelter was set up in 2010 by Glasgow City Mission in response to a very severe winter, and has been running annually ever since. This season the night shelter ran from 1 December 2018 until 31 March 2019, with a 40-bed capacity. The primary aim is to provide crisis accommodation for men and women who have nowhere else to sleep. The more substantial underlying goal is to help each person connect with partner services and support them into suitable and stable accommodation. The staff and volunteers at the night shelter offer compassion, care and support as they strive to bring hope into the lives of every guest.

PARTNERSHIP

The night shelter works because of partnerships between Glasgow City Mission and the other homelessness agencies throughout the city. Partners bring the expertise necessary to help guests, they include:

- Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)
- Simon Community Scotland
- Lodging House Mission
- Govan Law Centre
- Shelter Scotland
- Police Scotland
- City Ambition Network
- Healing for the Heart
- Marie Trust

It is this broad partnership that enables the project to achieve results for guests at the night shelter. This mirrors emerging evidence across the homelessness sector that closer joined-up working increases the likelihood of people engaging with services and thus moving onto stable accommodation.

The project has evolved over the nine years since its launch and has moved from the Shieling Building to Renfield St. Stephen’s Church to the Lodging House mission. This is the fourth consecutive year where the night shelter has been hosted at 35 East Campbell Street.
**STAFF**

The staff team consisted of a Manager, two Team Leads, eight Staff Members and four Bank Staff. A deliberate development in staff recruitment this year was to ensure that each shift included a worker with previous ‘lived experience’ of homelessness. This proved hugely beneficial to the night shelter, augmenting the knowledge and experience of the team. They were able to bring a unique understanding and empathy to their interactions with guests. It is strongly recommended that this becomes standard practice in future years.

**VOLUNTEERS**

It is important to note that although we do have paid staff in the night shelter we rely on volunteers to support the staff in carrying out the required duties. Regular volunteers take on one shift per week, either a twilight shift (9pm – midnight), a full night shift (9pm - 8am), or a sunrise shift (6.45am - 8am). There was a team of around 40 regular volunteers this season. There are also churches in Glasgow who provide volunteers to staff the kitchen on each of the 121 nights. The volunteers often have time to listen and chat to the guests while providing tea, coffee and toast. We are grateful for this vital support.

**DATABASE**

A further valuable development this year was a new database. This provided a secure system to store information on guests with a simple user interface. Data entry was quick and straightforward with the system able to pick up on duplicate entries. Partners were also offered a login facility by which they could access data and record outcomes. Measuring statistical information and tracking progress for guests became immensely easier.

**KEY PROVIDERS**

We are grateful for help and assistance from many organisations and individuals who gave their time, skills and money. We would like to especially thank:

- Alan Gilmour and ITRS Scotland – who developed and built the database.
• PLS Laundry – who provided linen and laundry services.
• Scotia Radios – providing team radios.
• Craig Borthwick with Venture Medical – providing First Aid Training.
• Mike Grenville with Salvas – providing assault & avoidance training.
• The NHS – providing naloxone training.

We are also grateful to the hundreds of trusts, foundations, Housing Associations and individuals who helped fund Glasgow Winter Night Shelter including: Rangers Charity Foundation; HOPE Foundation - Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow; Urban Potential; The Rayne Foundation and The Baird Trust.
STATISTICS

OCCUPANCY
The graph opposite displays the number of unique guests who have stayed in the night shelter in each of the last four years. This season, 691 individual guests used the night shelter. This is a 16% increase on the year prior.

The reasons for this increase are not immediately obvious. Part of it may be due to increased awareness of the night shelter across the rough-sleeping community. Another factor is likely to be the number of guests coming from other local authorities, which seemed to be a bit higher this year.

The average number of guests staying each night was only 20, compared to 32 the previous year. Furthermore, we were very pleased that there were zero nights when the night shelter reached capacity, and only nine nights where we had more than 30 guests sleeping in the night shelter. The maximum number of guests we had on any one night was 36. Last year the service was busier with 71 nights hosting more than 30 guests and eight nights where the capacity of 40 guests was reached or exceeded.

Perhaps a more remarkable change from the previous year can be seen in the second graph which displays bed-nights¹ over the past four years. This year there were 2,452 bed-nights; a 36% drop from the previous year.

¹ The total number of nights stayed by all of the guests.
This can be explained by a decision this year to be more proactive in two key areas:

i. If the person presenting has alternative accommodation they must use that and not take up a bed in the night shelter.

ii. Anyone using the night shelter is strongly encouraged to engage with services on offer. They are supported to accept alternative accommodation rather than regarding the night shelter as a long-term solution.

Although this may seem a rather firm approach, we felt it important to ensure there were always beds available for those with a genuine need. The implementation of this was only possible through the excellent partnership with the HSCP. Almost every guest coming into the night shelter was linked to Social Care staff with whom they could either make a homeless presentation or get an update on their case. Sometimes individuals were sent back to their tenancy with a bus token or taxi after sorting out spare keys or sourcing help to resolve tenancy issues. HSCP staff strived to make arrangements quickly and efficiently for individuals to enter other homeless accommodation, and on a few occasions into long-term housing. There were even a few instances where an outcome was achieved so swiftly that an individual found themselves in a taxi en-route to new accommodation within the hour.

It is acknowledged that some people who sleep rough do so because of previous challenges with statutory services and we were sensitive to that. For example, one rough-sleeping gentleman quickly asserted that he would not talk to housing or present for accommodation. However, after a few nights of good care, good sleep, fresh clothes and seeing others excited about being sent to accommodation, he decided to engage and the next night he was sent to a bed in a nearby hostel. He was delighted and it was a huge turnaround for him.

We felt it was important that the night shelter did not become a ‘community’ but remained only an emergency stop over. The longer a guest stayed, the harder it could be for them to start engaging with other services on offer. Guests were then liable to become reliant on night shelter staff to care and provide for them rather than being encouraged to take up independent accommodation.
The high proportion of guests staying only one to three nights illustrates the success of proactively helping guests to move on. The graph opposite clearly shows a significant increase this year, with 70.2% of guests staying for three or fewer nights.

It was a joy to have a guest return to visit the night shelter during the final week of the season to tell us about his new flat. He was delighted at the way he had been supported and looked after whilst in our care. He also reported that with the additional support he had been offered he had been “clean for a month.”

GUESTS

The majority of our guests, as per previous years, were male - 83%, with 16.5% female (See pie-chart opposite). One evening we had a record of nine females in the night shelter and had to enlarge the cordoned-off space designated for women.

The average age of guests was 41. Although this is only a marginal increase on the previous year, it does appear part of a longer term trend (see graph opposite). As might be expected, although there are still guests in the younger age brackets, there is a significant proportion who are part of an aging cohort.
Some 71% of guests identified as Scottish with a further 10% as ‘other British’. Like last year, there were a number of EU National guests staying at the night shelter. Of the 691 guests, 71 (10.3%) were from EU countries and they accounted for 22% of total bed-nights. Last year the comparable figures were 41 EU guests (6.9%) accounting for 23% of bed-nights. The complexity surrounding the status of some EU guests often made providing support more problematic. On a few occasions we were able to support them as they linked with services to access private rented accommodation. However, there were some who had no recourse to public funds and no employment opportunities and therefore no options with regards social housing. It was very difficult to establish what the best course of action was for these guests.

OUTCOMES
One of the most beneficial additions the new database afforded was the ability to record an outcome for any guest, and for this to be created or amended by any partner. Of the 691 guests recorded, only 54 were without a recorded outcome. There were some guests who ended up with multiple outcomes noted in their engagement history. For example, being provided with accommodation, losing it, and subsequently provided with a different option. The results below only include the final outcome which was recorded for each guest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Guests</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation provided</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went to stay with friends or family</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned home</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took up a private let</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned to another local authority (i.e. no local connection)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No outcome recorded</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>691</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is very encouraging that more than 47% of guests moved into accommodation, and a further one in four guests returned home or chose to go and stay with friends or family. The latter is particularly encouraging as it often signified that a broken relationship had been reconciled or a negative home situation had been resolved. Add to this the small number of private lets and it is fair to conclude that 74% of guests ended up with a positive outcome. The infographic on the following page displays all 691 guests – with the warm colours representing positive outcomes from these four categories.
It is significant to note that 70 individuals had come from another authority area and were encouraged to return there in order to present as homeless. Some of these guests had been actively assisted by local council workers to be transported to the night shelter, whilst others came from further afield, including England, and received assistance to return.

**HEALTH**

Throughout the four months of operation there were many guests who were assisted with simple first aid, dressing wounds or plasters or dressings for abscess. Staff were trained to administer naloxone\(^2\) and this season had to do so on a significant number of occasions. There were 17 instances where guests were identified as being in a potentially life-threatening situation and staff intervened by dialling 999 for an ambulance and administering naloxone. It is concerning to contemplate that these guests may well have died if they had been sleeping rough on the streets. Overall this season, we have witnessed a significant increase in excessive and/or poly-drug use of night shelter guests. This is corroborated by a substantial increase in drug-related deaths reported across the city this winter, of which there were three who had previously slept in the night shelter.

On two occasions this winter staff had to physically step in to prevent guests who were trying to take their own life. Emergency services were very quick to respond when called for and worked well with our team and supported the guests appropriately.

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\(^2\) An opiate blocker used in overdose situations.
This was a very distressing part of the work. Staff appreciated being able to hand over guests to the professional nursing team from Hunter Street in the morning, and also to be able to seek personal support from the Pastoral Coordinator of Glasgow City Mission.

A new partner this year was Healing for the Heart. They provided professional counsellors for a few evenings each week, to offer a listening ear for many guests who were struggling with suicidal thoughts, paranoia or depression. Being able to signpost a guest with mental health issues to a dedicated trained person proved exceedingly helpful. It allowed staff to continue running the night shelter whilst knowing that a guest they were anxious about was being given the care and attention they needed.

**INCIDENTS**

Staff, volunteers and partners all reported that the night shelter felt much safer than last year. Statistics provided by Police Scotland confirmed this with a 53% reduction in reported crime. Common assault was down by 88%, and there was a 73% reduction in breach of the peace incidents. This is testimony to the good working partnership with the Homeless Liaison Unit of the Police who provided ongoing support to the manager and staff teams.

**ENVIRONMENT**

We felt the responsibility to consider the sustainability of the night shelter and the impact of our actions on the environment. To reduce waste, Ikea storage bags were bought to replace single use plastic-bags to store guests’ luggage, and tea and coffee was served in ceramic mugs rather than polystyrene cups.

We also improved the hygiene of the night shelter by replacing the sleeping bags with duvets which were donated by Sanctuary Halls of Residence. They were subsequently passed onto the Dogs Trust after the night shelter closed. This meant a clean, fresh bed each night. Guests regularly made mention of the clean bedding and were very appreciative of this improvement.
FEEDBACK FROM STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

It is important to continue to share the stories of the guests we serve. An anonymous feedback form was completed by staff and volunteers allowing them to talk about their experiences. Some responses are recorded below:

What were some of the positives about your experience at the night shelter?
Some guests who thanked me for doing what we do; and others I have met on the street who have said hello and thanked me since the night shelter closed.

When one guest, who had previously stayed with us, returned and I didn’t recognise him because he looked so good and clean. He was still in his accommodation and was so thankful for the support he received – an amazing transformation.

It was a challenge but a privilege to be able to serve one lady in her desperate need. She arrived soiled and wasted - unable to clean herself. It was wonderful to see her subsequently getting a place to live. I pray for her daily.

I was on duty one night when a troubled lady came in. It felt really hard in the moment, and I was desperately trying to piece together what she was saying to me whilst trying to physically help her, not really knowing if what I was doing or saying was helping her. But knowing that the night shelter had been a positive experience for her, and that she now has accommodation was such an encouragement.
Sitting through the night with a suicidal young man who reached out regularly to hold my hand like a little boy. In the morning, he thanked me and told me he was going to keep living!

One guest came in after being on a 3-week bender - great to hear that we helped him get into rehab.

**What were some of the challenges you experienced?**

Hearing some of the sad circumstances that the night shelter guests had experienced that day. Some were very heartbreaking.

Trying to decide what was the best way to love someone as Jesus would when talking to people who are in situations I just don’t understand.

Some of the roles were unfamiliar to me and therefore took me out of my comfort zone; equally I wanted that challenge so worked with Team Leads to ‘get over myself’ and do the jobs that might stretch me.
TARGETS AND ASPIRATIONS

At the close of last year’s report, we set some targets for 2018/19:

1. To reduce number of unique guests by 10% to 540  
   \[\text{Actual} = 691\]
2. To have zero nights where capacity of 40 beds is reached  
   \[\text{Actual} = \text{zero}\]
3. To reduce total number of bed-nights by 20% to 3,100  
   \[\text{Actual} = 2,452\]
4. To have no guests staying longer than 60 nights  
   \[\text{Actual} = 1 \text{ guest}\]
5. Create a new secure database accessible for partners  
   \[\text{Achieved}\]

The second, third and fifth targets were successfully reached – the night shelter never reached capacity; the bed-nights fell by 36% rather than merely a 20% reduction; and the new database was a great boon to operations.

As for Target 1 – we unfortunately did see a rise in the number of unique guests, with possible reasons for this discussed earlier. This is an area which will need more work.

The fourth target was almost reached with only one guest staying more than 60 nights. His status was complicated and he did make small steps towards engaging with help offered. All other guests stayed less than 30 nights; moreover 97% stayed for 14 or fewer nights.

TARGETS FOR 2019/20

1. **Number of unique guests**
   Although we experienced a 16% increase this season, our hope would be to see this number reduced. This will require substantial partnership effort – especially around Housing First and the Rapid Rehousing plan. We would aim to see this decrease below the figure for 2017/18.
   \[\text{Target} = 575 \text{ unique guests}.\]

2. **Length of stay**
   There was a huge reduction in bed-nights this year. Our aim would be to reduce that still further. However, the key outcome we are seeking is to see people move on from the night shelter quickly. Therefore, we will look for an increase in the proportion staying only one to three nights at the night shelter, and no guest staying longer than 30 nights.
   \[\text{Target} = 75\% \text{ of guests staying 1-3 nights.}\]
   \[\text{Target} = \text{no guest staying >30 nights}.\]
3. **Night shelter occupancy**
   To have no night exceed an occupancy of 35 guests.
   **Target = nightly occupancy ≤ 35**

4. **Enhance partnership working**
   Establish a key contact person in each partnership organisation so that guests can be linked into services swiftly and any operational challenges can be dealt with before they escalate.
   **Target = key person with each partner attend weekly operation meetings.**

5. **Add to existing training programme by covering:**
   - Managing mental health issues.
   - Providing basic first aid for wounds.
   - Active listening skills.