

Learning from the Glasgow approach to homelessness

Vanguard City role

Glasgow, Scotland [joined the Institute of Global Homelessness](#) (IGH) 'A Place to Call Home' campaign in [October 2018](#), following [Adelaide's participation](#) commencing in November 2017. Led by the [Homeless Network Scotland](#) (formerly Glasgow Homelessness Network), Glasgow's target is to reduce rough sleeping by 75% in the city centre, and 50% across wider Glasgow, by the end of 2020.

Interestingly, where Adelaide's progress is tracked through the [Adelaide Zero Project \(AZP\) dashboard](#), Glasgow's current progress towards their homelessness target is more difficult to find. However, this may be due to the nearly 12-month head-start Adelaide has on Glasgow to establish data collection and publishing practices.

Central body for ending homelessness

Following consultations and a [feasibility study](#), the [Centre for Homelessness Impact](#) (CHI) [launched in 2018](#). Funded through philanthropy, the organisation supports [data and evidence-driven solutions to sustainably end homelessness](#).

CHI also hosts a platform named '[SHARE](#)' which tracks data such as dwelling availabilities throughout the UK.

Housing availability

As part of the Scottish Government's '[Housing Beyond 2021](#)' plan, the Government pledged to deliver at least 50,000 affordable homes, including 35,000 intended for social renting. It is stated in the housing plan that the cost of delivering the houses will be £4 billion and, 'even this level of investment would not be sufficient to meet Scotland's housing needs.'

In comparison, British charity [Crisis states the need for 105,000 new social homes](#) each year for the next 15 years to house people experiencing homelessness and people living on low incomes. It is important to note that this number is specific to Britain, not Scotland.

The importance of lived experience

The Scottish Government's publication [Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan](#) contains details of their views on lived experience. The 2018 report [Aye We Can](#) contains an example of wider consultation of people with lived experience who consistently emphasise need for secure and affordable housing.

Additionally [in December 2019](#), Homeless Network Scotland began a lived experience project called '[All in for Change](#)'. The project involves regular meetings bringing together frontline workers and people with personal homelessness experience to discuss relevant issues and influence policy at local and national levels. Attending this first meeting was The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning, Kevin Stewart MSP.

The Homeless Network Scotland [reflects on lived experience in a recent news post](#) factoring in the current COVID-19 situation.

What can South Australia learn from Glasgow?

From a South Australian perspective, Adelaide is already taking significant strides forward towards eradicating inner-city homelessness through the AZP and collaborating with IGH. In fact, the AZP saw [Adelaide become the first non-US city to have its homelessness data certified](#) by international social change organisation Community Solutions. This significant milestone means Adelaide has high quality data from which decision makers can take decisive action to end rough sleeping. Hopefully over time the project will expand to include suburban Adelaide and wider South Australia.

In examining Glasgow's approach to homelessness, South Australia can learn two major lessons. Firstly, availability of affordable housing is a must. To quote the *Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan*, 'the best way to end homelessness is to stop it happening in the first place.' Ultimately, creating more safe and affordable housing where people can receive support if they need it, should be the top priority. For South Australia to address homelessness properly it is critical for governments to invest in social housing that is affordable for people living on low incomes.

Secondly, reforming the homelessness sector takes time. Crisis and Homeless Network Scotland commenced researching a potential central body for the sector in April 2016, commencing a two-year process in establishing the Centre for Homelessness Impact. In comparison, the South Australian State Government is currently engaging in a brief sector reform process spanning approximately six months up to September 2020, with the aim of completing the reform by mid-2021, taking just over a year. All while taking place during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic where all organisations are facing widespread disruption to normal working practices.

More time should be granted for the consultation process in addition to supporting all organisations within the homelessness sector in their current respective forms until the end of the pandemic and beyond. This will ensure all organisations – large and small - have an equal and fair opportunity to participate in deciding the future of the sector.