



University of  
**Salford**  
MANCHESTER



**SHUSU**  
SUSTAINABLE HOUSING  
& URBAN STUDIES UNIT

## **Community Development and Collaboration; Can They Help Us Understand and Tackle Homelessness in Greater Manchester?**

**Best Practice Across Theory, Practice and Policy**

Beth Knowles, Professor Phillip Brown and Dr Andrea  
Gibbons

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### **About the authors**

The Sustainable Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) is a dedicated multi-disciplinary research and consultancy unit providing a range of services relating to housing and urban management to public and private sector clients. The Unit brings together researchers drawn from a range of disciplines including: social policy, housing management, urban geography, environmental management, psychology, social care and social work.

# Next Steps: Informing the GM Context



The role of the accountability board/strategy and support team is crucial as the 'core' elements of the network in guiding the Homelessness Action Network, should the HAN remain a large group of individual members with no official staff or independent management. These groups' responsibilities stretch to ensuring an embedded community development approach (with the support and guidance of the Knowledge Transfer Fellow and University of Salford) and thus, the establishment of the HAN as a community where collaborative design, challenge, best practice sharing and the building of solidarity take place. The Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy is the opportune moment for this

methodology for social movement building to be tested and incorporated. The next steps below highlight how this can be achieved utilising the information combined in this report. It must be noted that decision making and payment for labour, will be key to these actions being taken in a collaborative context and are questions for the HAN and associated groups to address going forward.

## 4.1 Membership based system

The encouragement to sign up to a set of values and a mission statement would be positive for the Greater Manchester Homelessness Action Network (GMHAN) if it wishes to remain a looser network, giving some common understanding of purpose or identity to what is often referred to as a 'nebulous'

network.

Beyond this, a recognised membership would allow election of a board to take place legitimately, in depth information on the model used in Chicago for their Continuum of Care's membership can be found on their website<sup>21</sup>. If the Accountability Board and wider Network decide not to adopt this, there must be recognition that decision making power is held by a core of active participants or 'coalition of the willing'. This includes the Strategy and Support Team and Accountability Board at time of writing, whereby invitation to join meetings is open, actions shared and legitimacy to make decisions is both through their positions within their sector, their ability to act as advocates for their sector and willingness to act collectively. As a step further and in line with the Glasgow Homelessness Network model, the notion of a nominal membership fee would enable events to be facilitated and communications for the network to be run by an external organisation if the GMCA should be unable to continue long-term funding, but this should not be seen as essential to becoming membership-based.

#### 4.2 Training

Providing training to the sector is written in to the GMHAN objectives in the Rough Sleeping Action Plan and thus needs to be taken forward urgently, this is a key gap in provision to the network and thus, people understanding what they can gain from being part of the collective. There is progress on commissioning this package by the GMCA, however the Accountability Board and Strategy and Support group need to ensure any commissioned organisation co-designs the necessary package with the wider network.

A vital part of this training is the space for critical pedagogy as outlined in Friereian community development. A 'Homelessness 101' course would give the opportunity for critical reflection on the reality of the homelessness situation and its multitude of root causes, as per the critical realist perspective outlined in Fitzpatrick (2005), this could lead to a causality chain to be developed collectively at the conclusion of the training.

Alongside this, training gives opportunity for people from different sectors or 'worlds' to meet and understand one another's perspective. Thus, this is a vital stage in developing individuals' factual knowledge from elected members to officers, people who have been homeless to health staff and their ability to inform their empathetic understanding, key to any movement forming.

Support has also been offered to create resources for schools in GM from the Museum of Homelessness, this resource would have the ability to act both as a political education opportunity and a prevention tool. Housing Providers could be approached to invest in and support the running of these packages, alternatively, they could also be considered in the commissioning of any training package designed with the GM Homelessness Action Network.

#### 4.3 Lived Experience Commission

There is no such formalised group as of yet across GM, informal or similar groups exist in the form of: Manchester Homeless Partnership Vox Pop group and Inspiring Change Manchester groups, it could be examined whether this type of 'Commission' or collective for the voices of people who have been or are homeless would be effective across Greater Manchester. At present, there are a small number of people being called upon for their insight and undue (and often unpaid) burden being placed on them as a result. This initiative could be discussed with people across Greater Manchester by co-production/community development workers across the city region. The prevention strategy listening sessions also provide an opportunity to encourage more people to get involved in the Network and widen the breadth of people participating.

#### 4.4 Client Action Committee

Greater Manchester have the opportunity to do something beyond the Client Action Committee mentioned in the best practice section on

21 [www.allchicago.org/continuum-care/membership](http://www.allchicago.org/continuum-care/membership)

Calgary Homeless Foundation, by recruiting people who have been or are homeless as community development workers, researchers, co-production facilitators and agents of systems change, creating stable employment opportunities and providing a path other than frontline support work. This is a key next step for investigation for any of the groups involved in the Homelessness Action Network if they want to catalyse meaningful systems change. A Community of Practice or Action Learning Set has been set up as part of the Jam and Justice 'Co-produce GM' initiative to look at key issues within systems change work and this hopes to look at this problem and develop calls to action around it.

#### 4.5 Evidence-led Practice

The Centre for Homelessness Impact looks as if it could be creating a national coalition/movement towards encouraging evidence-led practice to tackle homelessness. Should the network take an evidence-led approach through the Prevention Strategy, it should be considered how to partner with the Centre, whether officially through the strategy creation or by the joint hosting of events and seminars to share practice with members.

It is recommended that an accessible GM Homelessness Monitor be incorporated in to the work of the GMHAN and Programme Board to allow similar evidence-based understanding to take place locally.

#### 4.6 Models of Practice

The Calgary Homeless Foundation Logic Model Flowchart has been part of the inspiration behind the draft model 'GM Accountability Board Routes to Accountability and Action'. The Board and Strategy and Support team as the 'coalition of the willing' for the Action Network should take responsibility for testing this process and developing a similar shareable version of the 'logic flow chart', sharing the

process will open up any inner workings of the network to more people, hopefully encouraging greater involvement and participation in critical pedagogy/training and listening sessions.

#### 4.7 Partnerships

This is an area for individual members of the Accountability Board and Strategy and Support team to explore, in order to bring the HAN closer to existing wider anti-poverty practice regionally and nationally.

Within Greater Manchester, stronger bonds are on the way to being forged with the Greater Manchester Poverty Alliance (GMPA), in terms of co-branding events and communications in the short term, establishing the parameters for their involvement in Communities of Learning, running joint training and perhaps the GMHAN becoming a principal partner of the GMPA in the longer term. It should be considered which other organisations could have a similar relationship with the HAN, such as trades unions, poverty truth commissions and community anti-poverty alliance groups.

#### 4.8 System-wide Collaboration

Commonality between the Finnish and Scottish approaches are the fact their reports by 'action' or 'working' groups of sector experts, have been followed precisely by the governments which commissioned them and regular research has been conducted to test their 'real world' effectiveness. This should be considered in terms of the legitimacy of the cross-sector Accountability Board leading the Prevention Strategy co-production. An independent group of experts working with their combined sectors to develop a common approach, embedded through political will and evaluated consistently, is recommended as the approach to be adopted in relation to the Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy.

## 4.9 Working with Private Enterprise

This is mentioned as a separate point to that of partnerships, as this collaboration requires a step beyond sitting around the table together or signing up to common campaigns. Much like political will, just because one individual is sat around the table and shows and executes willing to see change, does not mean an entire organisation or sector will shift.

Separate action is required within the property development sector for the majority of root causes of homelessness to be muted. The role of the GM Homelessness Action Network and related partnerships is not simply to bring property developers in to their partnerships, but to bring property developers and housing strategy together with the primary aim of tackling directly related causes of homelessness, such as access to affordable and social housing. This has begun within the Manchester Homelessness Partnership and should be explored within the GMHAN, both to form commitments for the prevention strategy and wider local housing policy with developers and local authorities and also to encourage the formation of property developers as collective agents of change themselves.

As mentioned earlier in the report, the private sector should be seen as part of the cross-sector funding required, business has been brought in with relative success so far in GM through The Mayor of Greater Manchester's Charity and work of the Homelessness Business Network Chair, but more needs to be done to make this income stream more sustainable through initiatives such as a Hotel Levy and property developers action around genuinely affordable housing. A strong GM Homelessness Business Network with a coordinator/chair in each borough would add capacity to this area.

## 4.10 Long Term Funding

Should the GMHAN need to expand its capacity to achieve next steps, long term funding will be required, it should be assessed

whether this should be applied for by the GMHAN, creating a separate entity (as with the Glasgow Homelessness Network) or within existing sector support organisations (as with the support roles for the Manchester Homelessness Partnership). This funding would need to come from organisations or funding streams strictly supporting systems change (such as the Oak Foundation) and not redirect funds from any frontline or homelessness advocacy or support services.

For Homelessness Programmes  
The Programme Board will be taking responsibility for encouraging and building cross-sector funding for GM-wide programmes at the same time as developing and monitoring long-term funding requirements and recommendations in line with the prevention strategy.

## 4.11 The System Planner

This encompasses much of what local government currently undertakes in the UK or outsources to housing providers and voluntary sector partners, as well as some functions which the Programme Board will likely undertake at a Greater Manchester coordination level, including programme monitoring and crossover, goals measurement and a structure for service providers to work more collaboratively (both through supporting local partnerships and at a city-region level). A locally relevant version of this system planner could be used as a guide for the framework of the prevention strategy, giving clear roles and responsibilities to the various governance bodies within Greater Manchester working to implement and monitor this process.

## 4.12 Awards and Scholarships Programme

This idea adopted in Calgary, could be easily adopted by the GMHAN whom could look to respond to this alongside the University of Salford and GM Universities Homelessness Working Group, offering scholarships to members of the network who have been

homeless or frontline staff to expand their professional learning, as well as running annual awards to encourage and support best practice, nominated by other members of the Network.

#### 4.13 Website and Clear Communication

The Calgary Homeless Foundation and Glasgow Homelessness Network websites are models for the GMHAN to communicate its vision, mission, values, membership and information about homelessness. An initial small scale site should be set up to inform the wider network and public about the network and its aims and communicate the model around the prevention strategy. This could also include actions and updates from the Accountability Board meetings etc.

#### 4.14 Rolling Chair Position - Board

The Chicago Continuum of Care's show of mutual respect and authority through an annually rotating chair position, could be easily implemented for the GMHAN Accountability Board. It should be considered if this could alter the relationship with the GMCA by having the Portfolio holder for Housing and Homelessness as Chair, with a clear and direct line of responsibility for Housing and Homelessness issues within local and regional government.

#### 4.15 Plan for Rapid Rehousing

It should be assessed whether the GM Programme Board or GM Accountability Board should encourage the undertaking of such an exercise across Greater Manchester, beyond those authorities already selected for government funding. Whilst the housing stock is in a very different situation in Greater Manchester to Scotland, the mapping alone would give the city region a valuable picture to highlight detailed housing needs to national government and advocate for and provide solutions to shift away from temporary

accommodation.

#### 4.16 Utilising the Arts

The GMHAN has committed to embedding the Jigsaw of Homeless Support<sup>22</sup> in to its work, including the Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy. As detailed in the first stage of the 'Routes to Action' model above, this gives opportunity for the arts to help create a different space for dialogue and debate, involving diverse audiences and voices in the writing of the prevention strategy and associated policies. It should be considered how this approach could be adopted, particularly the involvement of Cardboard Citizens 'Cardboard Camps'<sup>23</sup> beginning in Sept 2019, and the use of Legislative or Forum Theatre<sup>24</sup> with trained practitioners, to help write the strategy. If adopted, this approach can be incorporated in to further research to share best practice and supports elements of the initial critical pedagogy and movement building required within community development.

#### 4.17 Devolved Statutory Responsibility

The National Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD), the US equivalent of the UK Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), devolves funding and responsibility to local areas for homelessness. A similar model of routing responsibility for funds devolved from government to the GM Homelessness Programme Board, could be an opportunity for GM to road test devolved accountability, but must have built in challenge from sectors outside of local government to maintain balance (this is achieved in the US by the Continuums of Care). Greater devolution should be approached with caution in increasing localism and local responsibility away from central government and is criticised in the United

22 <http://with-one-voice.com/jigsaw-homeless-support>

23 <https://www.cardboardcitizens.org.uk/announcing-cardboard-camps>

24 <https://www.tonyc.nyc/legislativetheatre>

States as national government as 'passing the buck' to local government.

#### **4.18 Alliance to End Homelessness**

It is recommended the GM Accountability Board monitor Glasgow's alliance commissioning programme by continuing their relationship with the Glasgow Homelessness Network. This could determine whether the financial means to tackle homelessness should be decided at a more localised GM level or whether sticking with roles centred around co-ordination, lobbying and monitoring is more appropriate. The GHN have offered to share their learning with GMHAN to allow this to take place on the back of their work.