

Who is being nominated?

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Organisation

Shelter Scotland

Award Details

Category

Category 5: A Different Approach 2019

Q1: Overview

Time For Change emerged from Shelter Scotland's Glasgow Participation Project – which used the untapped, expert lived experience of former homeless people to consult on and find a solution to what they thought was the biggest issue facing homeless people in the city. They considered 'what does better look like?' and the issue of 'gatekeeping' emerged - where people were being denied their legal right to a home when making homelessness applications.

People who engaged in the consultation were then invited to co-produce a response to this issue. The response was to train/equip them with the skills to advocate for people making homelessness applications – ensuring rights were upheld whilst engaging with individuals on a peer-to-peer basis. An 100% success rate meant that around 80 people weren't turned away and made to sleep rough, sofa surf with friends or return to dangerous home situations.

TFC is now embedded as our approach to involvement across Shelter Scotland. The model being rolled out in Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen, identifies issues facing homeless people in their locale and, through involvement and wider consultation, creates opportunities for individuals to become involved in co-producing the design and delivery of a local response to tackle them.

Q2: What did you do?

TFC is Shelter Scotland's best practice approach to involvement, participation, co-production, engagement and activism. There are six main stages: Identification and engagement; Consultation; Involvement; Co-design; Delivery; Governance.

We identified potential participants/trainees from service users - many who have multiple and complex needs - through a programme of active and assertive outreach, which helped us reach people in the community through the services they used. The TFC approach recognises that the people we want to engage with may face more barriers to accessing our core services than others, so we go to them. By going to them we can learn from their experiences and involve them in our work and provide them with access to our services there and then. This approach aims to improve individual outcomes whilst learning about the wider societal and systemic changes that are required.

Once identified, we then moved on to meaningful and robust consultation with them -- about 'what better would look like' in the services they access, the support they receive and the experience they have of the housing and homelessness sector.

People who participated in these consultations were invited to form a 'core group' and become involved in the design, delivery and governance of TFC in their area. This group and its governance structure lead to the development of a local delivery plan to effect change on the issues they have identified. Individuals involved in the TFC delivery became the agents for change; volunteering, campaigning, advocating and working alongside others in the community who were facing the same issues.

In Glasgow, traineeships were offered to participants to become involved with Shelter Scotland, to complete the Level 1 Housing Law and Advice training and then work towards an accredited qualification. This was as a direct response to the main issue of gatekeeping which came out of the consultation in Glasgow.

The training was to enable individuals to deliver assisted presentations - where trainees provided peer support and advocacy to people affected by gatekeeping when presenting as homeless. Trainees and TFC Glasgow staff attended outreach sites throughout the city. They established trusting relationships at these sites and took our housing knowledge and expertise to the client group. Housing advice was provided at the point of contact and 'assisted presentations' were offered where relevant. These assisted presentations have had an incredible success rate – because they knew the law and the rights people have under Scotland's progressive 2012 homelessness legislation and trainees were able to advocate whilst using their lived experience to 'walk the walk' with individuals facing similar issues.

The trainees have been supported with personal development plans to receive work experience and qualifications. Two of the TFC trainees are now actively seeking paid work and have qualifications to support this.

Q3: What did you achieve?

Participants have:

- improved the homelessness/housing experience for themselves/their local peers through involvement, volunteering, campaigning, advocacy and provision of peer support
- increased skills, confidence and knowledge to effect change
- moved from service user to delivery agent
- increased skills and employability

Beneficiaries have:

- increased access to housing advice
- increased access to peer support
- improved choice and control
- increased skills and resilience

Shelter Scotland has:

- Better informed services
- Increased user voice in service delivery and campaigns and influencing work
- Increased local profile
- Increased and improved local partnerships

Sector outcomes:

- Increased access to Shelter Scotland's core offer for service users
- Enhanced offer for service users through partnership working and on-the-spot advice
- Increased and improved local relationships
- Increased insight into user experience and perspective on local/national housing and homelessness issues

Apart from the dozens of people who were granted temporary accommodation instead of being forced to sleep on the streets, sofa surf with friends or family or return to dangerous home situations, our TFC teams have benefited from confidence boosting involvement and life-changing training and qualifications.

Core group members have also:

- Given evidence to a Scottish Parliamentary Committee on housing and homelessness
- Conducted media interviews on BBC/STV news channels
- Been the subject of double-page feature spreads in the Daily Record
- Attended a play based on Cathy Come Home by Cardboard Citizens and met and discussed issues with the cast and director.
- Gained qualifications in Housing Advice and Law
- 4 members of the original TFC group in Glasgow have found employment in their chosen sector

Case study (Glasgow)

XXXX became involved with TFC shortly after leaving rehab for drug misuse. She was still living in homeless accommodation at the time. She had left school without qualifications and had no professional experience. XXXX was put in touch with TFC and she was looking for change - a new focus. She volunteered many hours and proved an excellent support to clients at assisted presentations; building relationships, providing peer support and going the extra mile. Client feedback was incredibly positive. She opted to undertake the accredited housing law course as her goal was to apply for a trainee addiction worker programme. She has now been appointed to the trainee addiction worker programme with Scottish Drugs Forum. As someone with no formal qualifications or experience in the sector, she is leaving the TFC programme with accredited qualifications, experience and a paid job.

In Dundee, there are currently nine individuals going through peer mentor training and volunteer induction. Outreach continues at identified drop-in sites throughout the city where individuals using those services can chat to peer mentors (those who have completed their training and have PVG in place) and can also speak with a paid member of Shelter Scotland staff to benefit from our core offer without having to come to the Hub. Overall, there have been 88 TFC Dundee cases opened.

Q4: Why should you receive an award?

Time for Change should win as it is a user-led, co-produced response to issues experienced by people facing homelessness in Glasgow every day. By harnessing the lived experience of individuals and creating opportunities for involvement, delivery and professional development, TFC in Glasgow has succeeded in delivering incredible outcomes for individuals, for trainees and across the sector.

The response to the issue of 'gatekeeping' co-produced by this core group of individuals was innovative and impactful. People told us it was Time for Change and through their creativity, tenacity and commitment to supporting others facing the same issues, change has been delivered!