



Glasgow Begging Strategy

Action Plan 2020-2025



Contents

Foreword	5
Understanding the Challenge	6
Begging in Glasgow	8
Current Support Provision	10
Enforcement issues	10
Policy Context	12
Scottish Legal and Strategic context	15
Partner Projects	16
Housing First	16
Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness	17
Positive Outcomes Project	17
Strategy Action Plan	18
Key Projects Summary	20
Action Plan Summary	21
Key project: Alternative Giving	22
Key project: Financial and Digital Inclusion Services	24
Key project: Environmental Strategy	25
Key project: Public Perceptions	27
Governance/Monitoring	28
Appendix A: Working Group Membership	29
Appendix B: Responses to Public Consultation	29
Appendix C: References	35

Begging on the streets is an unfortunate yet notable feature of many town and city centres in the UK today.

In this regard Glasgow is no exception. Often, however, little is understood about the personal circumstances of the people engaged in this activity, the challenging issues they face and, in many cases, their inherent vulnerability.

This strategy aims to respond directly to some of the associated issues by delivering an action plan focused on supporting people and underpinned by research and evidence. Glasgow City Council would like to thank all the organisations and individuals who were involved in the development of this document.



Foreword



*Councillor Allan Casey
Glasgow City Council
Ward: Dennistoun (22)
SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY*

I am pleased to introduce the **Begging Strategy** for Glasgow. Over recent years many cities in Scotland have experienced an increase in begging, and Glasgow has been no exception. This strategy represents the work undertaken by the **Working Group** and has been developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders including **3rd sector organisations, NHS Scotland, Police Scotland, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce** and many others.

This has been a great collaborative effort because we understand that no single agency or organisation has all the tools required to reduce begging in our city. Only by working together in partnership can we all collectively take the positive steps needed to assist the most vulnerable amongst us.

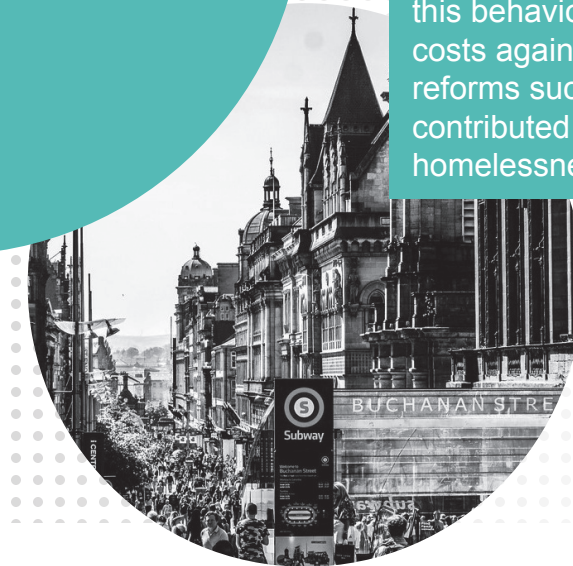
I am confident that the **Glasgow Begging Strategy** will encourage transformational change by improving service delivery to those who need it most, giving Glasgow's citizens the best chance to move onto positive destinations.

I would like to thank the **Working Group** and all the stakeholders for their hard work and dedication in developing this strategy and I look forward to continuing this work with them to ensure that we deliver on the priorities established.

1 Understanding the Challenge

The term “begging” refers to people who ask for money from members of the public in a unilateral exchange.

Research has demonstrated that people’s begging patterns are influenced by their reasons for begging. Engagement with those participating in street begging within Glasgow city centre has revealed that the act of begging is usually a symptom of a complex set of issues. Wider societal factors can play a part in facilitating this behaviour, for instance, rising living costs against a backdrop of welfare reforms such as Universal Credit, has contributed to an increase in levels of homelessness and use of food banks.



In 2017 Glasgow City Council (GCC), in partnership with third sector organisations and the local business community, formed a Working Group to develop a Begging Strategy. Its first task was to research the issues pertaining to street begging and the impact it has on individuals involved.

The root causes of begging and rough sleeping are complex and varied and can relate to both structural and individual factors. People who engage in begging often have multiple and complex needs and require a range of inter-linked support services from different agencies.

This can include support with a range of issues including mental, physical, and sexual health, drug and alcohol dependency, criminality, behavioural problems, daily living skills, employability, and the development of social networks.

People are drawn to begging for a variety of experiential, economic and emotional reasons, and often a combination of these factors such as:

- A response to general poverty or to afford specific items such as food
- More commonly, people started begging to fund an addiction
- Begging being rooted in adverse childhood experiences, or more recent negative events

For most people, the reasons that initially motivated them to beg are the same factors that maintain their begging behaviour. This can become a vicious cycle as they find themselves trapped by their circumstances.

Begging tends to take place in areas of high footfall. Sometimes, people begging can congregate in groups where drinking and drug activity takes place. This can create issues for local businesses, public services, and the general public. Detritus can result in significant environmental degradation in these areas, with associated cost implications.

Additionally, whilst the question of whether to give money to someone begging remains a personal choice, it is important to note that this money could be used to feed an addiction, thereby contributing to that individual remaining on the street.

2 Begging in Glasgow

Over the last few years many cities in Scotland have experienced an increase in begging with several councils exploring options to deter or prevent this activity, including the possibility of enforcement action against the act of street begging.



On an average day in Glasgow there are between 60 and 80 people begging on the streets. The Simon Community Scotland is a critical local support service for these individuals.

Their Street Team, as contracted by Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership, connects with people who are begging in Glasgow city centre on a daily basis, with about 15 to 25 individuals known to be rough sleeping (numbers frequently vary). However, it should be noted that the majority of those begging in the city do have accommodation. More generally, of the many people supported by Simon Community Scotland's services, very few ever resort to begging.

There are many third sector and voluntary organisations who provide support to people who are engaged in begging activity. As the largest service provider in Glasgow city centre, Simon Community Scotland conducts a begging census during the year to understand and gain insight into the scale of the issue.

The most recent census was conducted in July 2019 and found that 67 people were engaged in begging activity within Glasgow city centre. Analysis of the data shows that 34% were from the Roma community (around 4000 individuals currently live in private rented accommodation in Glasgow), and 66% were Scottish nationals (20% of which were female).

Without exception, all Scottish nationals were known to Simon Community Scotland and the other service providers¹.

Current Support Provision

There are a diverse range of service providers working across Glasgow who offer help and support to those in need. The Simon Community Scotland, Glasgow City Mission, Marie Trust, and Turning Point Scotland all have a significant role in tackling homelessness and begging in the city centre. Together, these organisations form the City Ambition Network², an initiative focused on helping the city's most vulnerable and excluded homeless people.

As part of the multi-agency response, the **Eat, Sleep, Clothes, Meet - A Guide to Where to Get Help in Glasgow City Centre** booklet was created in 2014 to improve access to free resources and practical help³.

Copies of the booklet are distributed by the various service providers, and also by the GCC City Centre Response Team, a specialist team of Community Enforcement Officers who primarily patrol the retail zone known as the Style Mile (Sauchiehall St, Buchanan St and Argyle St) and the surrounding streets and lanes.

Enforcement issues

Begging is not illegal in Scotland unless it is deemed to be aggressive. In such cases the Police can respond accordingly. However, research has identified a range of unintended negative consequences which can arise when enforcement is used as the primary intervention to reduce begging behaviour.

- Evidence suggests an inverse relationship between rates of begging and certain criminal activities e.g. enforcement against begging results in increased theft rates⁴
- People on the streets may find themselves coerced into even more harmful activities if not begging e.g. shoplifting, sex work etc.⁵
- Enforcement is only likely to displace begging rather than prevent it completely. This means that the activity continues to occur but in places which are less safe⁶. This builds upon and corroborates a 2016 report undertaken by Glasgow Homelessness Network (now Homeless Network Scotland) which investigated what people were likely to do if they were unable to get money from begging:
 - Crime was the most common response (e.g. shoplifting, theft, housebreaking, street robbery)
 - No alternative method was the second most common response
 - Others suggested that they would prioritise essentials in spending (e.g. drugs, food, alcohol)
 - Fewer suggested sorting out benefits, looking for work, borrowing money from family or friends
 - Sex work or suicide were also identified as alternatives



<https://www.glasgowcitycentrestrategy.com/eat-sleep-clothes-meet.htm>

Like many other metropolitan cities throughout the world, Glasgow and some of its most vulnerable citizens face challenging times. Throughout the city, a range of services is available for those most in need. Individuals can receive a variety of support including; chaplaincy, education advice, outreach support, Healthcare provision meals, clothes and washing facilities.

3 Policy Context



Despite being a separate issue, street begging is often inaccurately conflated with rough sleeping or homelessness. Although homelessness and begging are often inextricably linked, it is important to be aware that not all homeless people beg and not all people who beg are homeless. Studies suggest that more than 70% of beggars in Glasgow have access to accommodation⁹.

Following laws passed in the Scottish Parliament, the planning and delivery of health and social care services across Scotland now involves councils and health boards working together (Health and Social Care Integration⁷) to ensure that the provision of health and social care services are targeted and effective.

Under the terms of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2015, Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde formed two organisations:

- The Glasgow City Integration Joint Board (GCIJB) is the main decision-making body

and undertakes the planning and monitoring of community health and social care services

- The Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSP) is responsible for service delivery

A strategic plan was produced by GCIJB and this document, **Flourishing Communities, Healthier Lives - Glasgow City Integration Joint Board's Strategic Plan for Health and Social Care 2019 - 2022**, forms the existing strategic framework into which the Begging Strategy document will sit⁸.

The Scottish Government's *Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan*¹⁰ recognises the links between homelessness and begging.



Scottish Legal and Strategic context

The act of begging was decriminalised with the introduction of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

Scottish Legal Context

The act of begging was decriminalised with the introduction of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982. This legislative position has since been reaffirmed by the Scottish Government through a confirmatory statement made by the Justice Office in 2012.

Anyone begging in a manner that constitutes a breach of the peace or involves the use of threatening and abusive behaviour, can be prosecuted under existing criminal laws. This includes provisions contained within the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 and the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 which can be used by local authorities and the Police can use to deal with acts of aggressive street begging.

The Scottish Government encourages local authorities to continue to work pro-actively with bodies such as health boards, the Police, social services and third sector organisations to engage with street beggars to help them seek the support and advice they require to help them deal with their immediate needs.

Additionally, UK Visas and Immigration have authority to investigate any individuals engaged in street begging who are believed to be non-indigenous. Not only can they provide immigration and settlement guidance to the individual in question, they can also offer appropriate support. Further information about these services can be found online¹¹.

Scottish Strategic Context

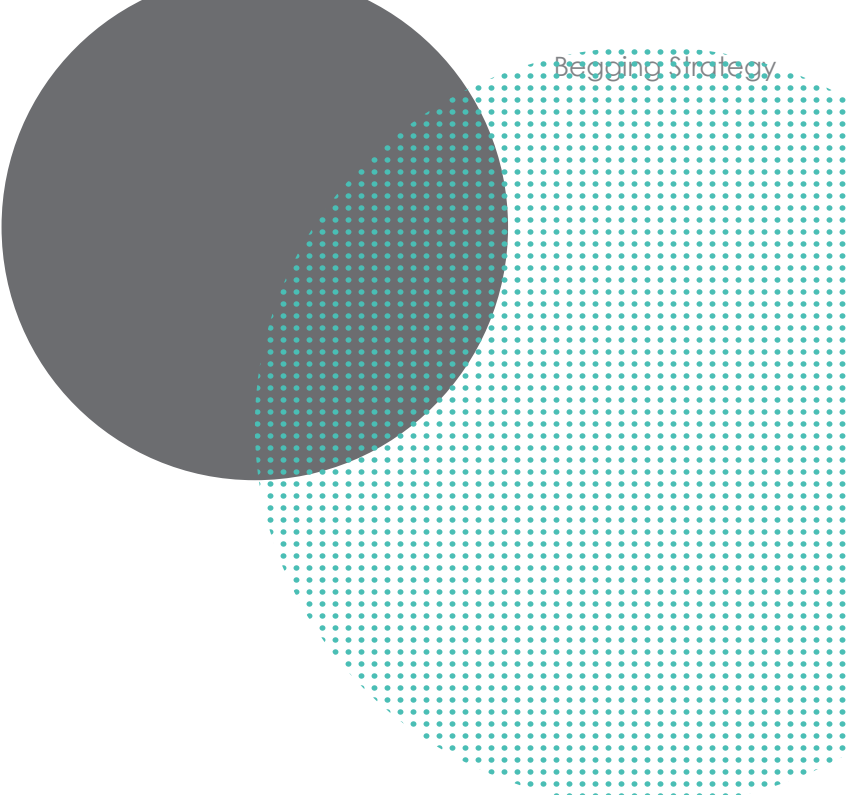
Recent studies by the Glasgow Homelessness Network, **Experiences of Begging in Glasgow**¹², and Shelter Scotland, **Street Begging in Edinburgh**¹³, have highlighted the complex nature of the issues involved.

The perceived negative impact of begging upon High Street businesses and the wider cost of health, social care and criminal justice activity related to those engaged in begging was highlighted in previous studies.

“Street begging has a negative impact on the city’s [Aberdeen] reputation. Failing to satisfactorily address the matter may create risk to the vibrancy of the centre”¹⁴.

The Scottish Government’s **Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan**¹⁵ recognises the links between homelessness and begging:

“We will explore ways of providing effective support to people engaged in street begging. Recognising that, while not necessarily rough sleeping or homeless, those involved in street begging or other street-based activity are also likely to need support with their housing and will be, almost without exception, extremely vulnerable, we will review support available, with a view to developing a national approach as part of the wider work to develop a national model of effective, empowered frontline outreach. We will work with partners in community justice to develop this work.”



Partner Projects

A variety of Partner Projects already exist which support the aims and objectives of the Begging Strategy.

Housing First

Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) developed the Multi-Agency Housing First Project (Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan) in July 2018 for homeless individuals with multiple and complex needs, who had experienced multiple episodes of homelessness and rough sleeping¹⁶.

Housing First is a well-evidenced approach to tackling homelessness and shifts services from the traditional step approach (multiple different types of accommodation usually temporary and emergency before permanent accommodation) to supporting people in their own home. Housing First minimises time spent in and the need for emergency / temporary accommodation and provides a secure tenancy as a first option with wrap around support which helps people sustain tenancies. It is about rapidly rehousing people in a community as the first, rather than the last step.

The GCHSCP service is working in partnership with the Housing First Consortium Glasgow (a joint partnership between Turning Point Scotland, Simon Community Scotland and Loretto Care and the Salvation Army) which aims to support individuals directly into

independent tenancies with bespoke 'home support' that helps people manage their new home and to settle into their community.

By sustaining a permanent tenancy, individuals are in a better position to access community support, health care and social benefits. The model focuses on a harm reduction approach incorporating the individual's recovery journey, provides a furniture package and the basic necessities to settle someone in a secure tenancy.

The service in Glasgow is one of the Housing First Pathfinders developing this approach across Scotland, with funding by Social Bite and the Scottish Government over the next two years.

Housing First delivers on the national strategy of 'Rapid Rehousing' to move people into settled accommodation as directly and quickly as possible.

Not everyone who is involved in begging or rough sleeping is homeless, but anyone who is homeless with a homeless application in place and who has established complex needs can be referred to Housing First.

Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness

On February 6th, 2020, a report was approved by the Council's Contracts & Property City Policy Committee. The document was the culmination of an initiative started in 2016 to modernise delivery of homelessness services in the city. Glasgow - Everyone's Home group was named as the preferred bidder to work with the City Council to transform the planning, design and delivery of homelessness services in the city. Seven organisations (Aspire, Crossreach, Loretto Care, Mungo Foundation, Sacro, Salvation Army and YPeople) make up the group and the contract value is worth more than £187million over a maximum of 10 years¹⁷.

The Council will retain sole responsibility for statutory homelessness services and be a member of the Alliance which will make financial and operational decisions on the provision of "purchased services" such as street and community outreach services, Housing First provision, emergency and supported accommodation, day services and specific outreach support for young people aged over 16 years.

A Director will be appointed to lead the Alliance which will have a budget of £23million in its first year. For the first two years, the Council, will also provide a further £100,000 annually in set-up costs.

Positive Outcomes Project

The **Positive Outcomes Project (POP)** is a joint initiative between **GCHSCP**, **Police Scotland** and the **Criminal Justice Charity, Aid and Abet**. The Project offers a unique service that works voluntarily with individuals who are over 16 years old, reside within the Glasgow City boundary and are persistently committing offences to support their drug and/or alcohol addictions. Many of the **POP** Service Users find themselves involved in begging across Glasgow to raise funds to sustain their dependency on alcohol and/or drugs.

POP supports its Service Users in accessing accommodation, welfare rights, education, community/residential rehabilitation services and medical services etc. The project also encourages its participants to engage with the criminal justice system, through attending court and dealing with any outstanding matters. The objective of this outreach work is to break the cycle of offending and antisocial behaviours as well as to reduce drugs deaths, the fear of crime and to promote community wellbeing, training and employment opportunities.

The **POP team** can be contacted via telephone on 0141 276 7456 or email on PositiveOutcomesProject@scotland.pnn.police.uk

4 Strategy Action Plan

A multi-partner Working Group was established by Glasgow City Council's City Centre Strategy Board to develop this strategy and action plan.



While there already existed a wide strategic and policy framework to support and assist vulnerable individuals in Glasgow, it did not directly address the issues of street begging. It was this disparity which became the catalyst for the development of this Begging Strategy and Action Plan, which will initially be delivered with a five-year plan that will be monitored annually and evaluated in 2025/26.

The Working Group membership was formed from a variety of organisations and agencies with a direct interest in supporting people on the streets. A full list of members can be found at **Appendix A**. As part of the development process, a significant consultation exercise was also undertaken with service users with lived experience of begging. This was extremely helpful in gathering evidence in the Glasgow context.

The process also highlighted that some actions should commence at the earliest opportunity and in advance of the Begging Strategy being formally approved in its entirety. Accordingly, recommendations to expedite delivery of the Digital Inclusion and Alternative Giving outputs have been progressed in advance of this document being formally approved.

Three strategic objectives have been identified for the Begging Strategy:

1. To support people on the street who are begging
2. To reduce the need for people to have to beg
3. To provide cash-alternatives for people who wish to support beggars

In order to deliver the strategic objectives, four **Key Projects** have been established:

1. Alternative Giving
2. Financial and Digital Inclusion Services
3. Environmental Strategy
4. Public Perceptions

Key Projects Summary



Alternative Giving

- To investigate and consider ways to:
- Provide the public with alternatives to on-street cash giving
 - Assist and direct more people to positive destinations
 - Change negative public perceptions about begging and provide positive narratives
 - Obtain buy-in and develop partnership working with businesses and city entrepreneurs
 - Raise additional funding for the vulnerable user support services currently operating within Glasgow



Financial and Digital Inclusion Services

- To ensure that vulnerable users have access to their maximum benefit entitlement whilst also investigating ways to increase their access to key services, including:
- Employment
 - Housing
 - Skills training and development
 - Other meaningful activity
 - Other tailored services appropriate to the individual



Environmental Strategy

- To explore options which:
- Encourage businesses to take a more proactive approach to securing vacant unit shopfronts
 - Ensure future street design incorporates measures to discourage negative use of space
 - De-clutter Street furniture



Public Perceptions

- To raise awareness and change behaviour so that members of the public:
- Can understand and access existing support services
 - Can access information about what they can do to help and how to do it
 - Remain informed of key issues
 - Are aware of alternative options for public donations

Action Plan Summary

The Action Plan comprises four Key Projects, all of which will contribute towards the overarching strategic objectives for this Begging Strategy. This section will provide further information about the specific actions within each project area.

Key Projects	Actions	Description	Timeline					
			2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Alternative Giving	Research / Case Studies	Investigate comparator projects and identify best practice						
	Business Participation	Identify and promote ways in which local businesses can become involved in project						
	Community Involvement	Identify and promote ways in which private individuals can become involved in project						
	Infrastructure	Source suitable infrastructure and funding mechanism to deploy and maintain it						
	Funding Stream	Allocate and monitor use/impact of AG income						
	Monitoring and Evaluation	Review impact and scope for project continuation post-pilot timescale 2021-2022						
Financial and Digital Inclusion Services	Additional Officer Resource	Create and fund new Social / Digital Inclusion Officer						
	Data Inclusion	Conduct street begging mapping exercises						
	Social Inclusion	Seek to maximise income of vulnerable users						
		Reduce impact of sanctions upon vulnerable users						
		Signpost support services and track progress of vulnerable users						
	Monitoring and Evaluation	Review impact and scope for project continuation post-pilot timescale 2021-2022						
Environmental Strategy	Environmental Impacts	Encourage businesses to take a more pro-active approach to securing vacant unit shopfronts						
	Safe and Secure by Design	Ensure future street design incorporates measures to discourage negative use of space and rationalise street furniture to limit negative use						
Public Perceptions	Internal	Establish clear information sharing protocol and data management agreement						
	External	Create branded public awareness campaign						
		Inform content from those with lived experience						
		Align branded message with other events/promotion						
		Employ on-street wayfinding signage to promote positive messaging and to direct vulnerable users to support services						

Key project: Alternative Giving

Enabling the public to make an informed choice when considering making donations

What is it?

Although giving money to people begging on the street can appear supportive, evidence suggests that it doesn't help vulnerable individuals get away from sleeping rough and participating in begging. Nor does it assist in addressing the complicated range of reasons which brought them to that point on the contrary, cash contributions can actually sustain the very problems that they seek to address.

Alternative Giving schemes aim to redirect money that may otherwise be given directly to people on the streets, to a central fund. The money raised is then spent on interventions to assist individuals who are begging and to help provide a positive route out of this activity. In general, multiple organisations can make referrals to Alternative Giving funds on behalf of the people whom they are supporting.

Additionally, Alternative Giving schemes tend to disincentivise the act of begging to those who are engaged in it through e.g. organised gang-related begging, or to those who could otherwise be engaged in more gainful employment. Overall, the benefits of Alternative Giving schemes are increasingly recognised by city centre policy managers and third sector organisations and many have now been established in UK cities and towns including Manchester, Cardiff and Cambridge.

Following research and comparative analysis into the ways in which other cities are responding to these matters, there is a consensus amongst the wide range of organisations actively involved in reducing begging that an Alternative Giving scheme would positively benefit Glasgow.

Who is involved?

The Street Change initiative was originally developed by Simon Community Scotland, utilising technology to allow people who are begging or rough sleeping to receive financial support from the wider community. Simon Community Scotland are proactively involved in supporting those who are rough sleeping in both Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The infrastructure required to facilitate the use of contactless payment technology was initially acquired by the Council through its IT partner, CGI. Additionally, the Council will also support the financial transaction systems needed to enable and collect the payments received as part of a 12 months trial to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that it demonstrates maximum effectiveness and suitability. During this period, the scope of the activity is likely to be geographically limited while its performance is monitored. This will inform decision making going forward.

Street Change Glasgow (SCG) provides an alternative that enables members of the public to make an informed choice when considering making donations, whilst also developing a long-term cultural change¹⁸.

All money donated to SCG will go directly to assist those participating in on-street begging against their own individual requirements with a view to enabling them to move on to a positive destination and will not be used for any staff or running costs associated with this scheme. These costs will be covered in the pilot year by GCC and the Simon Community Glasgow.

What are the expected outputs?

The vision is of a network of businesses and other local organisations supporting and championing SCG, each hosting contactless donation points in venues across the city centre. The funds generated will be quickly accessible to ensure that it benefits those in need effectively.

Consequently, by disincentivising and effectively removing the need for begging, it is hoped that SCG also will encourage vulnerable users to actively engage with the relevant support services. More than just money, SCG is intended to enable fundamental change. The key objectives of SCG therefore include the following:

- Provide local focus on issues affecting Glasgow and tap into Glaswegians' goodwill to help those most in need
- Offer a positive alternative to on-street donations without proscribing what people do with their money
- Develop a focus on assisting those participating in on-street begging to move on to positive destinations
- Quickly release funds which though small can make a big difference to the individual
- Have a clear, effective and transparent process which publicises where donations have been allocated and promotes successes
- Ensure people with lived experience are at the heart of the project and are included in the fund approval panel
- Assist with long term cultural change in public perceptions about street giving
- Provide a resource to engage with businesses and promote the SCG scheme

What else will the project seek to achieve?

Over the long term, further development and implementation of SCG, will include:

- Developing a publicity campaign in partnership with businesses, charities, Council services, student groups, major event locations and other local organisations and institutions
- Launching SCG with a public awareness campaign to project a clear, concise, unified message to promote the aims and objectives of the initiative to the wider public
- Installing contactless donation points at participating locations i.e. bar, nightclubs, restaurants, which also provide an opportunity to promote SCG through other existing initiatives, such as the Best Bar None accreditation scheme
- Developing an online donation facility and webpage
- Developing a SCG Ambassador programme to increase meaningful engagement with businesses / residents and achieve further stakeholder buy-in
- Including SCG within GCC tenders as a community benefit clause

Key project: Financial and Digital Inclusion Services

People can be supported to ensure they are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to

What is it?

As an action arising from the research and consultation process which informed the Begging Strategy, it was agreed that a Digital Inclusion Officer post should be created at an early stage for the city centre to undertake a case management approach to enabling routes out of begging.

Since the post was created in 2018, the new digital specialist has been working on the streets alongside the Simon Community's Street team and, equipped with a tablet computer, been helping people to navigate the benefits system. In this way, people have been supported to ensure they are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to.

Who is involved?

This full time post has been jointly funded by Glasgow City Council and Simon Community Scotland and was created ahead of the introduction of Universal Credit in Glasgow – a UK Government benefit which must be applied for online and paid into a bank or Post Office account.

What are the expected outputs?

This service will connect vulnerable users to all the benefits they are entitled, support them with critical tasks like establishing a bank account, and link them to wider support services such as employment, housing, skills training and development etc.

Funding for this role was originally established for a period two years until March 2020. However, an additional 12 months of funding has since been agreed.

What else will the project seek to achieve?

The Digital Inclusion Officer has also been involved with a range of other activities intended to help improve the intelligence available to supporting organisations, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the services they provide. This includes:

- Undertaking an initial and periodic mapping exercise of begging
- Implementing strategies to reduce social exclusion including:
 - Working with established GCC Financial Inclusion team
 - Maximising income as a priority
 - Reducing impact of sanctions
- Signposting individuals to support services and tracking their progress.



Key project: Environmental Strategy

Ensuring that public realm operates effectively and is positively used

What is it?

A city functions best when its public spaces operate effectively, supporting and facilitating local communities and businesses, and encouraging positive uses whilst restricting opportunities for negative activity. In this way, a strong and robust environmental strategy lies at the heart of many strategic initiatives undertaken by local authorities.

The Glasgow City Centre Strategy and Action Plan, for instance, has two principal strategic projects which encapsulate this ethos: the Avenues programme, and the District

Regeneration Frameworks. Both projects are focused on ensuring that Glasgow city centre becomes less traffic-dominated and more people-centred, making it cleaner, greener and easier to get around on foot, by bike and public transport.

Marketing, outdoor events, lighting and public safety will all be improved – and much more besides. Everything is geared towards delivering inclusive growth, sustainable infrastructure, and economic uplift over the next decade. These same principles will be applied to supporting the Begging Strategy throughout its lifetime.

Who is involved?

Glasgow City Council will remain the primary driver of the actions contained within the Environmental Strategy key project, working with principal stakeholders and local businesses where appropriate to realise emerging opportunities for effective regenerative intervention. The capital investment already being progressed through the Avenues programme and District Regeneration Frameworks will also be supported by smaller catalyst initiatives as well as the ongoing commitment of front-line operational Services.

What are the expected outputs?

Within the Environmental Strategy key project, an initial range of specific outputs have already been identified and these include street de-cluttering and securing vacant shopfronts. In addition, general themes for intervention will include:

- Improving cleanliness and safety
- Restricting antisocial behaviour
- Addressing local issues arising through targeted interventions
- Encouraging positive use of the public realm
- Supporting local communities and businesses
- Cooperative working with key stakeholders and support services

What else will the project seek to achieve?

The wide scope of this work anticipates a degree of flexibility to enable realisation of emerging opportunities and for possible interventions to be explored throughout the lifetime of the Begging Strategy. Not only will this maximise the range of outputs involved and their overall effectiveness in supporting the aims and objectives of the Begging Strategy, but it is also intended to encourage stakeholder engagement and participation going forward.

Key project: Public Perceptions

Keeping the public informed through continuing engagement

What is it?

People Make Glasgow is the city’s marketing brand, but it stands as more than just a simple tagline. Glaswegians pride themselves on being supportive and caring citizens. In this context, whilst the Begging Strategy is a response to the issues of on-street begging, it is also a reflection of the city’s will and determination to ensure that no one is left behind. It is a collective, sustainable effort that includes partners from all over Glasgow. In the same way, the Public Perception key project will be important to help raise public awareness and change behaviour, to ensure that members of the public understand the range of support services which exist across Glasgow and which can be accessed by vulnerable users. It will also enable the public to access information about what they can do to become involved to help and how to do it, as well as enabling them to remain better informed about the key issues which the Begging Strategy is looking to address.

Who is involved?

The principal lead for this key project will be Glasgow City Council, who will work in partnership with other key stakeholders, in particular those support services already part of the working group, to ensure that effective proactive messaging and communication is consistent, cohesive and appropriate.

What are the expected outputs?

The Public Perceptions key project will seek to integrate the various narratives arising

from the wider work of the Begging Strategy into a clear and channelled public awareness campaign. Not only will this be informed by and reflective of the different activities being undertaken by the Working Group members, but it will also include content from those with lived experience. This messaging will also be used to align other promotional activities taking place through linked/supporting events and, where appropriate, corporate sponsorship opportunities.

What else will the project seek to achieve?

The Begging Strategy was always intended to include local stakeholders in its continuing development to help inform its shape and scope, whilst also encouraging ongoing engagement and buy-in. In this context, the Working Group has actively sought active participation from local businesses including those within the licensed trade, as well as the wider local community to help support the aims and objectives of the Begging Strategy. The involvement of Best Bar None Glasgow already provides an example of how this inclusive approach works through, for instance, the training seminars offered for staff working with vulnerable users and other individuals who may be street begging.

Going forward, other opportunities to encourage business participation and community involvement through branded and promotional messaging will be explored.

Additionally, measures to deliver improved, effective communications as well as establishing clear information sharing protocols and data management agreements will also be investigated.



Governance/Monitoring

The Glasgow Begging Strategy will be overseen by Glasgow City Council through a Project Coordination Group (PCG) whose membership and Chair will be drawn from the existing multi-partner Working Group. A lead officer will be responsible for each Key Action. Progress of the Strategy will be reported annually to the Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community & Citizen Engagement City Policy Committee.

The PCG will also make any additional provisions deemed necessary as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, through ongoing monitoring and assessment of the developing situation and liaison with project partners and relevant stakeholders.

Appendix A: Working Group Membership

- Big Issue
- British Transport Police (BTP)
- City Centre Retail Association (CCRA)
- Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP)
- Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
- Glasgow City Council (Chair: Councillor Allan Casey)
- Glasgow City Mission
- Homeless Network Scotland (formerly Glasgow Homelessness Network)
- Marie Trust
- National Health Service Greater Glasgow & Clyde
- Police Scotland
- Simon Community Scotland
- Turning Point Scotland

Appendix B: Responses to Public Consultation

As part of the development of the Glasgow Begging Strategy, Glasgow City Council undertook a public consultation process.

The responses we received in many instances either raised particular points of view or sought further clarification. Due to the vast numbers of responses received, it's simply not possible to answer each of these items on an individual basis. However, the principal points raised through the consultation have been summarised and the following information is provided in the interests of clarity and transparency.

Given the scope and intent of the Glasgow Begging Strategy, will there be a co-ordinated information campaign to help the public understand what is being achieved?

Yes, we will seek to co-ordinate and publish information arising from the Glasgow Begging Strategy and its many partner organisations. The purpose is to help keep people informed

and inspire a sense of ongoing discussion and active engagement.

I have concerns regarding instances of criminal activity or anti-social behaviour linked to street begging. I'm also led to believe that some begging is being organised by gangs, perhaps from Eastern Europe. What is being done to address these concerns?

Begging is not, in of itself, a criminal activity. Where anti-social behaviour or other forms of criminal behaviour are concerned, they must be addressed as separate issues and reported to Police Scotland who remain the only organisation with the powers to remove or detain individuals alleged to have carried out criminal acts.

Additionally, where it is suspected that begging is linked to or organised by non-indigenous persons who may be in the country illegally, UK Visas and Immigration would be the agency tasked with making this determination and taking such action as is deemed appropriate. Mechanisms already exist for reporting and escalating these cases.

I think that enough is already being done to help those begging on the streets. Those involved in this activity have to take responsibility themselves and seek appropriate support services.

As we've tried to demonstrate in the Glasgow Begging Strategy, the root causes of begging and rough sleeping are complex. People who engage in begging often have multiple and complex needs and require a range of interlinked support services from different agencies.

This can include support with a range of issues including mental, physical, sexual health, drug and alcohol dependency, criminality, behavioural problems, daily living skills, employability, and social interactions.

So, while there's a vast array of agencies providing support services, getting individuals to access them is not always easy. The Glasgow Begging Strategy is intended to be a city-wide response to the issues raised by begging. No single organisation has the powers or resources required to adequately act and only a multi-agency approach will be successful. Together we hope to facilitate and maximise cooperative working to continue engaging with those who need help the most. We feel that this approach is in the city's best interests.

I have concerns as to how funds will be used to assist vulnerable users. How can you help allay these concerns?

Due to the current financial situation, no project partner is able to provide additional funding towards the Glasgow Begging Strategy. Consequently, it is vital that all available resources are deployed as effectively as possible and we believe that this strategy helps form the framework necessary to create meaningful change. All spending, whether through Glasgow City Council or other agencies and organisations, comes from existing budgetary allocations and will remain subject to the governance mechanisms already in place. To ensure oversight, the Project Management Group (which will co-ordinate the various outputs of the Key Projects) will report to

Council Committee.

Additionally, data about the funds generated through the Street Change Glasgow initiative (and how these funds are being spent) will be made available through Simon Community Scotland who remain responsible for its management.

We want to guarantee that all aspects of the Glasgow Begging Strategy remain as open and transparent as possible to encourage people to become involved in any way they can.

I felt that some of the information contained within the strategy document was too vague or otherwise unclear. What is being done to address these issues?

The content of the Glasgow Begging Strategy is consistent with other similar strategy documents. Its aim is to provide a project overview in a way that is concise and accurate.

Information about personnel and staffing is likely to change over the course of the project's lifetime and would become outdated. Additionally, information of this type is subject to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and, therefore, for internal consideration only.

Furthermore, we expect to gain greater levels of detail on each Key Project as they continue to develop. This is only the start of the journey and our intention is to make as much information available as possible and it is in this spirit that we have created this FAQ list.

I don't feel that the Glasgow Begging Strategy goes far enough to help people who have to beg. Can't more be done?

Unfortunately, whilst Glasgow already benefits from a huge network of support service providers, demand can tend to outstrip supply. With finite resources at our disposal this will always be a concern. However, even while facing these challenges, it remains our hope that the Glasgow Begging Strategy will enable project partners to share best practice, encouraging improved forms of co-ordinated service provision, and achieving the best results possible by working together.

As we progress this body of work, we'd also hope that other agencies and organisations might become encouraged to link up with the wider activity, bringing their experience and expertise and increasing the range and scope of resources which can be deployed.

While I may agree with the general outline of the Glasgow Begging Strategy, I think it's important that we don't seek a one-size-fits-all approach. How will you ensure that vulnerable users are treated as individuals and with the respect they deserve?

We'd wholeheartedly agree that there is no "silver bullet" to helping people who feel that they have no option but to beg. The development of the Glasgow Begging Strategy has been informed and shaped by the views and opinions of vulnerable users and this will continue to be the case in the future.

The agencies and organisations who actively engage with people on the street will also agree that everyone should be treated with respect and dignity and receive support in the way that best suits their own circumstances. This flexibility is an intrinsic part of the Glasgow Begging Strategy ethos.

It's all very well generating this document, but what's really needed is getting people into suitable housing. What is being done to achieve this?

A separate Homelessness Strategy already exists to deal with the specific challenges arising from this issue and further information about it can be found here: <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/chttpandler.ashx?id=34784&p=0>

However, while begging and homelessness are not the same thing, there is a significant overlap between these issues. Therefore, the Housing First initiative is referenced within the Glasgow Begging Strategy as a fundamental supporting activity. Further information about Housing First can be found here: <https://homelessnetwork.scot/housing-first/>

I think I agree with much of the Glasgow Begging Strategy, but I still have concerns that it won't be implemented properly. What sort of oversight measures will be put in place?

As we've previously noted, a Project Management Group will co-ordinate the various outputs of the Glasgow Begging Strategy, including those contained within the Action Plan and its Key Projects. Not only will this body be responsible for project oversight, but it will also generate annual reports to Council Committee and be subject to an overarching governance structure through which issues can be raised and escalated, as appropriate.

How much is all of this going to cost? I don't think the city can afford to provide the support services required to really make an impact.

There is currently no additional funds available for the Glasgow Begging Strategy and all activities arising from it must be contained within existing budgetary allocations and commitments.

However, this doesn't mean that the city shouldn't try to respond when faced with a challenge, even one as complex as begging. These limitations simply mean that we should be more considered in our approach, ensuring that we rely on evidence-based data to more effectively deploy available resources, sharing best practice, and ensuring that we support the service provision network as much as we can. We believe that collaborating through the Glasgow Begging Strategy is the best way to achieve meaningful change.

Why can't we just extend existing services and resource them more fully?

The Glasgow Begging Strategy represents a collaborative effort because we understand that no single agency or organisation has all the tools required to reduce begging in our city. Only by working together in partnership can we all collectively take the positive steps needed to assist the most vulnerable in our city.

The real problem is the current benefits system. What is being done to ensure that it works better for those who need to access it?

The benefits system currently in place across the UK is known as Universal Credit and was mandated and implemented by UK Parliament. As a result, the terms of this system remain out with the scope of the Glasgow Begging Strategy.

However, the Financial and Digital Inclusion Key Project has been specifically designed to ensure that everyone who should receive benefits can claim their full entitlement. To date, 100% of vulnerable users assisted through this activity have been enabled to claim their full benefits entitlement.

I don't think that you've identified what the outputs of the Glasgow Begging Strategy are supposed to be. Why can't you just make things clearer?

The Glasgow Begging Strategy is designed to provide an overview of the aims of the partnership working.

Principle outputs (i.e. identified activities) are included within the Action Plan section of the document. However, we understand that progress will be a fluid and dynamic process as actions are started, tested, revised, and completed. Lessons will be learned and applied to new actions through the Project Management Group.

We know that we don't have all the answers at this early stage, but this shouldn't prevent us from presenting our aims (based on the best current evidence) and improving effectiveness as we move forward.

Without access to real training and job opportunities, the most needy will never be able to break the cycle and will remain reliant on benefits. What is being done to address these issues?

This is a valid concern and something which we'd like to see addressed, but we must also remember the inherent limitations of the Glasgow Begging Strategy, both in terms of resources and in terms of scope. The creation of jobs and training opportunities lies out with the immediate gift of the current project partners.

However, we can try to create the conditions which will enable these sorts of opportunities to arise and this is specifically referenced within the Alternative Giving Key Project. It is hoped that, with the right support, local employers will be encouraged to consider extending opportunities to vulnerable users as part of the Street Change Glasgow initiative. Other additional mechanisms will continue to be explored as the Glasgow Begging Strategy develops.

I think the four Key Projects identified in the Glasgow Begging Strategy are a good start, but I also think that they don't go far enough. What will be done to increase their range and scope?

Like any new activity, we can't expect to develop an entirely comprehensive and perfectly suited range of actions right away - this is especially true when considering an issue as complex as

that of begging.

Some initial parameters of the Glasgow Begging Strategy have been intentionally refined to give the overall project the best chance of success, such as restricting the initial geographical remit to the city centre.

This has been a strategy which has worked well when applied to other activities and is consistent with basic project management principles. Over time, as we learn more and achieve our goals, it is anticipated that project scope will be widened accordingly.

At the end of the day, it's those begging on the streets who are best placed to tell you what they need? Why can't you just listen to them?

The Glasgow Begging Strategy has been informed and shaped by the views and opinions of vulnerable users and this engagement will be crucial to take the strategy forward.

Additionally, the testimonies of individuals assisted through the Glasgow Begging Strategy will be used to help promote this activity, inform public discussion, and better engage with other people who may find themselves in similar situations.

If you just focus on the issues in the city centre, then you'll only displace them somewhere else. Why can't you look at the whole city?

We've had to give some careful consideration to the range and scope of activities and how they are rolled out due to availability of resources. The city centre has been chosen as the initial primary focus because evidence clearly demonstrates that this is where the challenges are most pressing.

However, the intention is to expand the geographical scope of the Glasgow Begging Strategy to encompass the entirety of the city and ensure that all citizens are supported.

I think the Glasgow Begging Strategy will work better if you increase the scope of project partners. Why aren't more organisations being involved in this?

A wide range of partner organisations are already involved in the Glasgow Begging Strategy, most from its inception, and they have assisted in its development and will support delivery of the

Action Plan through the Key Projects. A list of these partners is available within the document. It remains our hope that new partners will be encouraged to join this work in the future. At its heart, the Glasgow Begging Strategy is a city-wide response to the complex challenges of begging, and it can only be successful through collaboration. As a result, we welcome active engagement and participation by any interested parties who share in our goals and aspirations.

I would have liked to have seen more consultation on this work. Will there be any further engagement to inform the Glasgow Begging Strategy before it goes live?

As is normal practice, the Glasgow Begging Strategy was published for public consultation for a period of six weeks and promoted through multiple media platforms to ensure as many people as possible could provide their views and opinions.

Once approved, the Glasgow Begging Strategy will become a live document which will continue to develop and be informed by ongoing discussion and review. In this way, outcomes will be refined in line with evidence and agreed best practice.

More should be done to make sure the city looks its best. We should be protecting city streets and buildings and ensuring that there are no obstructions or other detrimental impacts.

This is a wider concern which remains an integral part of the duties and responsibilities of Glasgow City Council and will be complemented by the Glasgow Begging Strategy.

It is for this reason that the Environmental Strategy Key Project was developed, and the actions contained within this thematic strand will continue to be progressed and refined.

There should be more police on the streets to help people feel safer and to prevent some of the bad things I've seen from happening in the first place.

Police Scotland are an important project partner to the Glasgow Begging Strategy and their active involvement in its development remains vital. Their participation in this work brings an opportunity to effectively respond to the wide range of challenges which the city faces, through the use of shared intelligence and targeted, evidence-led data.

I don't think that calling this document a "begging" strategy is helpful. Why couldn't you have chosen a more sensitive name?

This item was discussed internally for similar reasons. The final selection was informed by the views and opinions of vulnerable users

Unfortunately, it is true that the word "begging" has acquired some pejorative or negative connotations which are not helpful. One aspect of the public engagement will be to ensure that people are fully informed of the wider issues involved, including the complex challenges which vulnerable users invariably face.

We need to offer people begging early pathways to services and opportunities. The longer they stay on the streets the worse it becomes for them.

We would whole-heartedly agree with this sentiment. However, the nature of the complex challenges which vulnerable users experience means that they are sometimes unwilling or unable to readily accept assistance from front-line service providers. The reasons for this are numerous and vary from person to person.

A key goal of the Glasgow Begging Strategy will be to help bridge this gap, thereby encouraging individuals to interact with project partners and other agencies and organisations who can offer the appropriate levels of care and support.

I think we need to adopt best practice. If someone is already doing something elsewhere and it's working, why can't we just copy that?

There are already many instances where this has been the case, from the development of the Alternative Giving Key Project (which was based on similar initiatives taking place elsewhere) to supporting activities such as Housing First. If something has demonstrated its effectiveness, then it can be tested in Glasgow.

Appendix C: References

1 <http://www.simonscotland.org/news/begging-in-glasgow/>

2 <https://www.glasgowcitymission.com/about-us/what-we-do/city-ambition-network.ph>

3 <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=44298&p=0>

4 <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Responses%20to%20Begging%20Dec2016.pdf>

5 Fitzpatrick, Suzanne, and Sarah Johnsen. "The Use of Enforcement to Combat 'Street Culture' in England: An Ethical Approach?" *Ethics and Social Welfare* 3, no. 3 (2009): 284-302.

6 Berk, Richard, and John MacDonald. "Policing the homeless: An evaluation of efforts to reduce homeless-related crime." *Criminology & Public Policy* 9, no. 4 (2010): 813-840.

7 <https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/integration-scheme>

8 https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/GCHSCP_Strategic_Plan_2019_1.pdf

9 <http://www.simonscotland.org/news/begging-in-glasgow/>

10 <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2018/11/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/documents/00543359-pdf/00543359-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00543359.pdf>

11 <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

12 https://www.ghn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Report_-_Begging.pdf

13 https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1712291/Shelter_Scotland_Street_Begging_Final_Report_Jan_2019.pdf/_nocache


14 <https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s46511/Street%20Begging%20Update.pdf>

15 <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2018/11/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/documents/00543359-pdf/00543359-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00543359.pdf>

16 <https://glasgowcity.hscp.scot/sites/default/files/publications/Glasgow%20City%20HSCP%20Rapid%20Rehousing%20Transition%20Plan%202019-20%20-%202023-24.pdf>

17 <https://www.yoursupportglasgow.org/media/25087/prospectus-for-the-glasgow-alliance-to-end-homelessness-outline-specification.pdf>

18 <https://www.streetchangeglasgow.com/>



If you have any questions, comments,
or would like further information on
the Glasgow Begging Strategy, please
contact:

citycentrestrategy@glasgow.gov.uk



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