



**4<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL EVENT  
22 April 2010  
ST ANDREWS IN THE SQUARE  
GLASGOW**

**REPORT**

**This report is a summary of the presentations and discussions from the annual event and does not necessarily represent the views of the GoWell partners or sponsors.**

GoWell is a collaborative partnership between the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, the University of Glasgow and the Medical Research Council Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, sponsored by Glasgow Housing Association, the Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde.

## Introduction

The 4th GoWell Annual Event was held on Thursday 22 April 2010 at St Andrews in the Square, Glasgow and was attended by over 70 delegates from a range of organisations with an interest in regeneration and in improving health and wellbeing. Some participants were working in local communities, others at a city-wide level, and others nationally.

Delegates received a copy of three new reports, available to download below.

- [Progress for People and Places: Monitoring change in Glasgow's communities Report and Executive Summary](#)
- [Synthesis of Research Findings 2006-2009](#)
- [Progress Report 2009/10](#)

During the first half of the morning some of the findings from the second GoWell community health and wellbeing survey were presented (comparing 2008 results with the first survey undertaken in 2006) followed by a rapid response from four key stakeholders. The second half involved participants in working together to consider the implications, and the actions that should be taken in light of the findings. A copy of the event programme is available [here](#).

## Opening address: Prof Carol Tannahill

Prof Carol Tannahill, Director of the Glasgow Centre for Population Health and one of the GoWell Principal Investigators, opened the morning. Carol highlighted the challenge that often faces researchers in ensuring that their research is relevant, useful and influential. GoWell tries to rise to this challenge by sharing and discussing early findings with local communities and with those involved in policy, planning and implementation, in local and national arenas. This enables the research to be adapted and shaped to reflect emerging issues, and findings to be used to influence priorities and work on the ground. There are a number of positive examples already of findings having been used by communities, organisations and policy-makers to support the case for change, for example as supporting evidence in grant applications. This is exactly what research should be – a force for change.

Although focussed on 15 communities experiencing a range of different interventions in Glasgow, GoWell is a study of international significance and has already received interest from across the world including from Canada, Australia and Europe. It is a resource for all to undertake enquiry and to support policy-relevant learning and development locally, nationally and internationally.

Carol reminded delegates of GoWell's research objectives which are to:

- investigate how regeneration and housing investment affect individual and household health and wellbeing;
- assess the degree to which places are transformed by policy interventions;
- understand the processes that support cohesive, sustainable communities;
- monitor the effects of interventions on area-based inequalities within the city; and
- develop and test research methods.

A range of interventions are taking place across the 15 GoWell communities including housing improvement, dwelling change, tenure mix, neighbourhood improvement, social and economic change and development, and tenant and community empowerment. Some areas are receiving all of these interventions; others only some of them. GoWell is not a study into one type of intervention but a real-life research

programme looking at the effects of whatever mix is happening in the areas on the health and wellbeing of the residents there.

Carol highlighted two major challenges faced by the programme. The first involves ensuring ongoing support and participation by communities in the study. This is difficult not just because participation in research is falling generally across the UK, but also because many of the GoWell communities have particularly transient populations. She called on delegates to support activities that might enhance participation in the next wave of the survey. The second major challenge is that of moving from findings to recommendations for action. She hoped that through collectively reflecting upon and discussing the findings at this event, there might be a shared understanding of the implications of the findings and agreement as to actions that should flow in light of them.

A copy of the presentation is available [here](#).

### Progress for People and Places: Prof Ade Kearns

Prof Ade Kearns, Professor of Urban Studies at the University of Glasgow and GoWell Principal Investigator, presented a summary of the findings from the wave 1 and wave 2 GoWell surveys on a range of dimensions. These were presented in terms of:

- Residential outcomes: housing satisfaction; psychosocial benefits of home and neighbourhood; area reputation.
- Social and community outcomes: sense of community; cohesion; social support.
- Health and human capital outcomes: physical health and behaviours; mental wellbeing; training and skills; employment.

The comprehensive presentation slides are available [here](#), summarising the key findings in terms of each of these dimensions and drawing out some implications and key questions.

### Rapid responses:

Four individuals from key stakeholder agencies provided a rapid response to the findings.

### Duncan Booker, Glasgow City Council

Duncan responded under two guises – firstly, by reflecting on the findings presented by Ade, and secondly, by way of a policy response from Glasgow City Council. Duncan highlighted two main threads running through the findings – trust and confidence; and being active.

Trust encompasses the trust that people have in themselves and within their communities but also crucially the trust or lack thereof in the agencies that are there to serve them, and the confidence that they can make decisions within their communities and be supported to do so.

Being active refers not only to physical activity but also to being socially active (i.e. being an engaged member of the community) and economically active (i.e. employment, training and taking opportunities to get into the labour market). The continuing and crucial challenge of employability was highlighted. Although there

appears to be some good news in this regard from GoWell findings and also in data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, current economic circumstances cast a shadow over these. Even during Glasgow's most buoyant period of economic growth, the benefits were not shared equally with social housing tenants. And it is evident from previous recessions that the most vulnerable communities tend to suffer most in harder economic times. Duncan therefore emphasised the need to continue efforts to support people into employment, often with highly tailored and personalised services, as a route to protecting against the benefits of regeneration becoming lost.

Duncan reflected on some of the positive findings regarding empowerment and choice and highlighted the need to learn lessons from these and continue to strive to do better in the future. It is important to get simple issues right such as people's choice about the colour of their front door or having a say in where to go during decanting programmes. These are crucial issues in terms of building people's trust and confidence. By ensuring that people have a choice and a degree of control over some specific issues, there is more chance they will believe bigger statements and strategies regarding involvement and empowerment. Duncan highlighted the need for agencies to be prepared to transfer and relinquish power.

Referring to a recent article on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of John Wheatley, Duncan was very clear that at a time of restrictions on national government expenditure there are never the less still municipal powers and resources that can be brought to bear in support of communities. There is a need to continue to mobilise municipal will in order to be able to continue to support and protect communities in the hard times ahead. Duncan's final point related to trust and confidence and he highlighted the challenge not only of building trust and confidence within communities but also amongst ourselves as agencies in order that we can do better during the hard times to support our vulnerable communities.

### **David Fletcher, Glasgow Housing Association**

GHA's approach in responding to the GoWell findings has been to develop a wide-ranging action plan. This seeks to respond to the research in terms of where a future direction of travel is suggested, strengths to be built upon and weaknesses that are still a major challenge – not just for GHA but for the range of agencies working across the city. The action plan responds to the findings not just on housing management and investment but tries to ensure that as an organisation GHA is taking on a wider responsibility. David acknowledged that this is challenging.

David reflected that the findings regarding dwelling satisfaction are very positive but acknowledged that GHA is aware of having come from a relatively low base in terms of tenant satisfaction and is working to build a new approach to neighbourhood management services. GHA tenants and the wider communities are increasingly satisfied with the core housing investment work but they would like to see more joined up services in the wider environment. David suggested that social and community regeneration requires more advance planning to determine how best it can complement physical regeneration.

### **Craig McLaren, Scottish Centre for Regeneration**

Craig suggested that despite some of the rather depressing findings presented by Ade, it is important to recognise that progress has been made over the last few years. For example, some of the progress with regard to physical improvements should be celebrated. It is well acknowledged that social regeneration is the more

difficult part of the regeneration equation but some progress has been made on that as well – for example, there are a third fewer datazones in Glasgow in the most deprived 5% of areas in Scotland now compared to 2004.

Despite these signs of progress it is important to recognise the challenges ahead and the action required to respond to the issues. One of the ways the Scottish Government has responded is to allow local partners and communities to work more effectively hand in hand to take things forward – for example via the Fairer Scotland Fund. This totals £435 million over three years; £145.5 million of which is directed to Glasgow. This Fund is no longer ring-fenced, providing an opportunity for local partners, agencies and communities to work more closely together with the flexibility to take things forward in light of particular knowledge of how local communities and neighbourhoods work.

Craig recognised that it is easy to talk about holistic and joined up working but it is much harder to do in reality. Having been involved in regeneration for almost twenty years, Craig reflected that ‘partnership working’ has been a constant topic. Clearly there is still a way to go, but improvements have been made, and more joined up working and more interaction between different professions, disciplines, agencies, communities and geographies is now emerging. However, agencies and communities often need support to do this. At a national level, the Scottish Centre for Regeneration can help identify and share with others what does and doesn’t work, and importantly help people to apply it and think about how they can use it within their local circumstances.

The Scottish Government is investing in GoWell as it provides an evidence base and suggested future direction of travel. The key findings and messages from GoWell are being fed into different parts of the Scottish Government to ensure there is joined-up thinking at a national level.

### **Andy Milne, SURF**

Andy reflected on the SURF Annual Conference held in Dundee in 2008 at which members concluded that regeneration is ultimately about the wellbeing of individuals and communities. He suggested that this focus on wellbeing helps define the roles we have to play. Physical and economic regeneration activity is important but it is only really ‘regeneration’ if such activities ultimately contribute to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. He noted that while there has been a lot of activity over recent decades described as ‘regeneration’, and although it may have resulted in other outcomes for the players involved, it often did not ultimately contribute to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Andy suggested that this reflects the degree of investment in physical regeneration in recent decades and the contrasting under investment of time, effort and money on social regeneration.

This has to change – firstly, because this imbalance ultimately undermines the investment made in physical regeneration; and, secondly, because the current financial, political and ecological climate mitigates against continuing the previous property market based model.

The most recent SURF Annual Conference in March this year, looked not only at how we can sustain but how we can reinvent community regeneration in the current challenging context. Speaking at that conference, Prof Duncan Maclellan stated that although Scotland is very good at producing place-based regeneration policy, it has

not been so good at what he described as capturing the ‘unearned gains’ of planning development in regenerating areas for the people, businesses and organisations that live and work in those communities. Professor Maclennan suggested that this is something that Scotland needs to move towards to secure sustainable regeneration. He also cautioned that we operate in a wider political and economic context and within that there appears to be a drift away from place-based regeneration amongst the ‘policy elite’.

Andy thanked Ade and the GoWell team for the very useful work they are engaged in and the interesting research material being produced. He referred to Hilary Thomson’s earlier work, which highlighted a lack of evidence in making the linkages between regeneration efforts and health and wellbeing. GoWell is going a long way towards addressing that lack, and also importantly is engaging with practitioners, policy-makers and communities to ensure that the academic research and findings are translated into changes on the ground – not only to engage and improve communities but to empower communities to find their own way forward.

### **Discussion session:**

Delegates at each table collectively reflected on and discussed what they had heard during the first half of the morning. Reflections and discussion were focussed on two key issues:

#### ***General responses to the findings presented.***

#### ***In light of the findings, what needs to happen in the city to ensure that social regeneration keeps pace with physical regeneration given the current financial climate?***

The main discussion points fed-back following these table discussions are outlined below. Andy Milne facilitated the plenary feedback.

- There are a lot of positives in terms of physical regeneration but clearly social regeneration is well behind. Some of the outcomes with regard to physical regeneration and to multi-storey flats in regeneration areas lagging behind other areas are not that surprising and could have been predicted. However, some of the social outcomes such as neighbourhood problems and empowerment are surprising.
- There is a lot going on but there is a need for more joined up activity between services. This wouldn’t necessarily need a great deal more by way of resources but it would need a willingness to change. Partnership working needs to be better planned and targeted with clear aims, objectives and intended outcomes.
- There is a need to enhance the effectiveness of community planning by improving the way in which it accesses the knowledge, expertise and priorities of communities. It was suggested that power needs to be given over in a much more meaningful way to communities. Current structures are seen to be bureaucratic. An example given concerned the rules that exist regarding membership of Community Reference Groups (CRGs) – previously you could be a member if you were a resident whereas now you must be a member of a designated group; and it was felt that local people should be able to attend/join these CRGs more freely.

- This led on to a point regarding the thematic action plans for each area. It was suggested that these are driven largely by one key organisation from which partners' priorities are then set. A greater degree of alignment between the priorities of agencies and communities would be desirable. Genuine engagement is needed with what people are saying about their priorities; and a marrying up with resources. Some examples of good tools were highlighted, such as the national Standards for Community Engagement and VOICE.
- The model that existed in the past around generic community workers should be revitalised. These workers could act as catalysts and boundary workers within communities to help support people and rebuild some of the aspects of communities that are declining, such as volunteering. The funding implications of such a model were recognised. However, it was suggested that a cost-benefit analysis of the potential outcomes would likely show reasonable value for money in terms of the social capital that could be built up.
- There was concern regarding the low levels of physical activity found in the GoWell survey. Individually tailored approaches such as health workers or social workers visiting families to make them aware of the amenities and opportunities in their neighbourhoods for physical activity were suggested. It was also thought that promoting sporting-type activities to young people might have more appeal to them than just walking. A point was made that the reported low levels of physical activity may not be completely accurate if participants are in receipt of incapacity benefits.
- Mention was made of a neighbourhood survey that asked a set of questions about neighbourhood problems (similar to GoWell) but additionally asked participants if they would like to get involved in trying to tackle some of the problems. Those saying 'yes' were then used as a starting point to get people together to start addressing the issues with the support of agencies. This resulted in some of the problems being reduced or even resolved, alongside community involvement and an increase in residents' own skill base and confidence.
- The findings on lack of neighbourliness and community cohesion are concerning. Despite the current economic climate, there needs to be investment in community involvement, community development and that sort of activity. There is a danger that disinvestments could occur in the current climate.
- Some of the resources that exist within communities have not been properly identified or linked up. For example, there are a lot of completely community or voluntary activities going on in which people network together, build skills and experience, and make links. These could be built into a wider strategy of community support.
- Housing associations are well placed to support some of the social regeneration and community development issues discussed as part of their wider role – although issues about their capacity to take on additional responsibilities were acknowledged. Nevertheless, as key community organisations with assets, local accountability, management and administration systems, and a real knowledge and understanding of local issues, they have a crucial role to play in supporting wider regeneration.

- The key findings from GoWell need to be disseminated at a higher level and more forcefully (“to organisations that make big decisions and who have large budgets”) to highlight that wellbeing is linked to community activity and empowerment. Community engagement and empowerment are often seen as intangible and can be dismissed by decision makers. Gowell is demonstrating that they are tangible and do make a difference in terms of health and wellbeing.

### Sum-up:

Andy Milne concluded that the findings presented and the discussion that followed demonstrate the real value of research. Many people have recognised for a long time the important links between physical regeneration and social regeneration and wellbeing, and GoWell is putting that issue in an empirical context. Andy suggested that the expertise and ideas emerging from the discussion are helpful, not just at a policy and research level but at a practical level within communities for making some progress.

He reiterated the point made earlier in the day that unless the range of activities referred to as regeneration (such as housing improvements, training, employment etc) are ultimately about the improvement of the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, they are not actually regeneration.

Regarding the need for more meaningful community empowerment, it was highlighted that the flip side of this is professional and organisational disempowerment. Power is not transferred unless some of it goes from somewhere to somewhere else. Work needs to be done across the range of agencies, and also at the personal level of professionals and workers, to foster this giving of power alongside the more often recognised need to support communities in taking power.

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