The impact of cash payments on people with No Recourse to Public Funds in Scotland

Findings from an independent evaluation of Fair Way Scotland

Prof. Beth Watts-Cobbe





Context

- UK Government ‘hostile environment’ policies **drive destitution and homelessness by design**
- Clear Scottish Government position that **no one** should face destitution or homelessness
- Scotland’s **‘cash first’ approach** prioritizes cash over in-kind support to restore dignity, autonomy and choice in responses to food insecurity, destitution and material hardship
- The **Fair Way Scotland** partnership aims to prevent homelessness and destitution for for people with NRPF/RE

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Fair Way Scotland: an action-learning partnership

Four organisations provide support, advice and accommodation

Refugee Sanctuary Scotland

scottish refugee council

Simon Community Scotland

TURNING POINT SCOTLAND

Three organisations help connect, learn and influence

Homeless Network Scotland we are all in

I·SPHERE

JRF JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION

Working in close strategic partnership with

MIGRATION SCOTLAND

Scottish Government Riaghaltas na h-Alba gov.scot

And funded by

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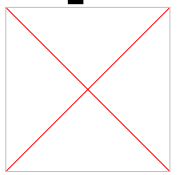
Scottish Government Riaghaltas na h-Alba gov.scot



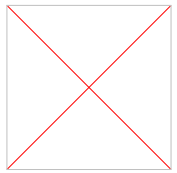
Direct delivery in **Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen(shire)** of integrated support model

- **Casework**: c.1,100 people supported in 2025/26
- **Legal expertise:** second tier legal advice, training and supervision from consortium of providers
- **Community-based accommodation: 64** people accommodated in shared Housing Association properties in 2025/26
- **Cash support:** £60/week payments to 266 people in 2024/25

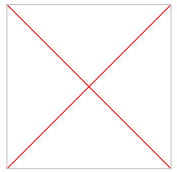
Experiences of extreme disadvantage prevalent



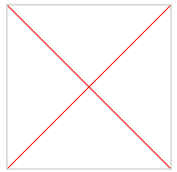
19% sleeping rough and 61% had slept rough in the last year



93% were experiencing destitution; almost 80% reported going without food in the last month



Low mental wellbeing is 2-3 times more prevalent than in general population (40% vs. 17%); very low mental wellbeing 4 times (12% vs 3%)



14% had used an ambulance in the last 6 months, 3.7 times the general population average

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Cash payments are used to buy basic essentials

to have something… to fill my belly… for me, [has made] a huge difference… Thank God, [I'm] blessed…I have to top up £20 every month, because that's very important… to be connected with the people… find things." (Jamal,35-44, Asylum)

Now you have your own cooker. You have your own fridge… You're more free. (Mahdi, 35-44, Other)

Tomasz (45-64) who was sleeping, used his first payment to buy a phone which he used to pass the time researching topics of interest. He also uses the money to find appropriately sized and good quality winter clothes from charity shops.

And in ways that enable choice and dignity

If I get [cash support] I'm happy… the Home Office, they gave us a voucher, not the cash… [but with] cash… we can go anywhere, and we do everything… the voucher is difficult for life. (Bekela, 35-44, Asylum)

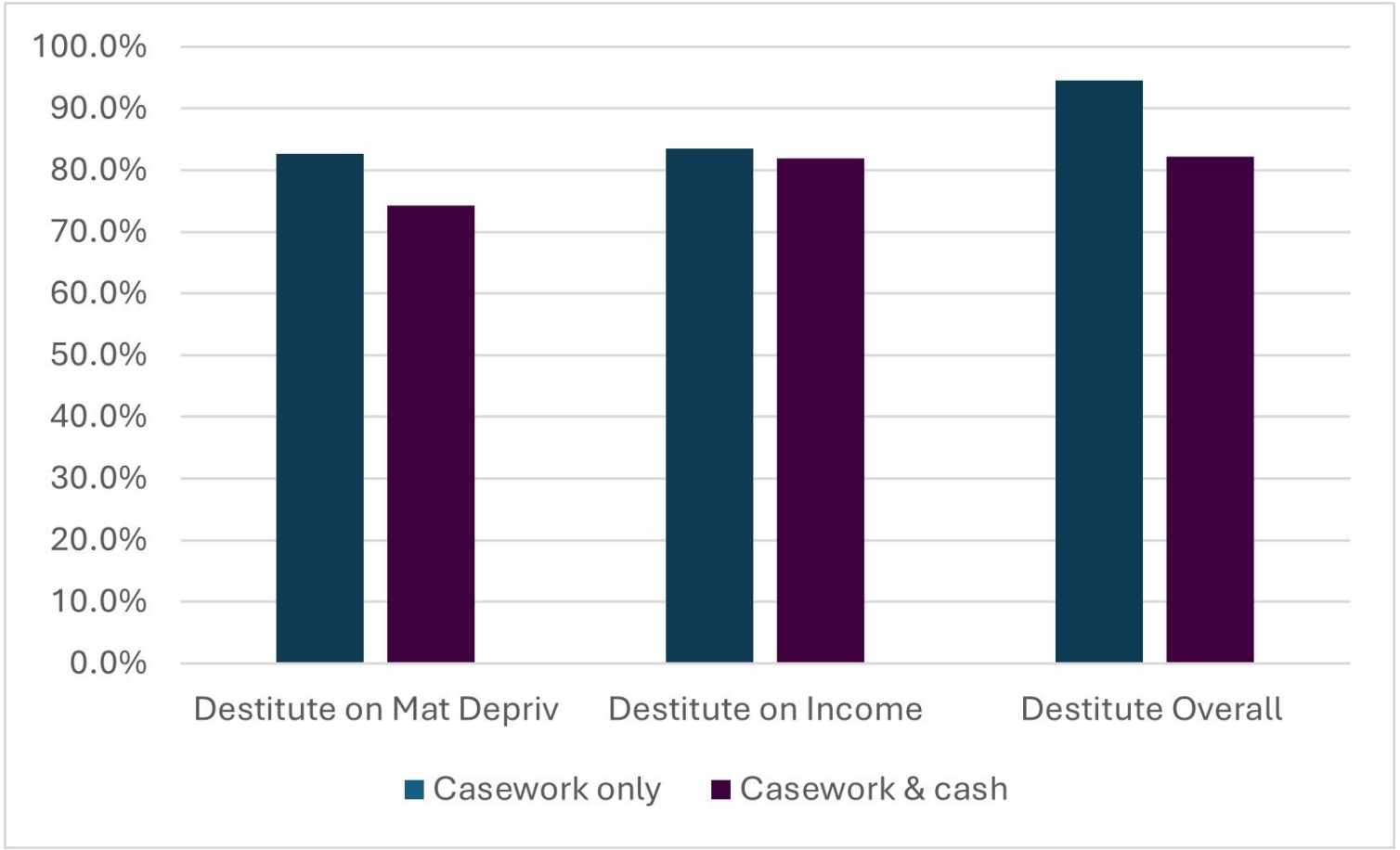
Even if it's not enough, it's better. (Chipo, 65 plus, Asylum)

Hana (45-64) had struggled to access food banks recently. Cash support meant she could buy her own food. She also prioritised cleaning products – keeping her flat clean made her "feel better".

Impact of cash payments on destitution and material deprivation

- People receiving cash & casework less likely to be destitute (82%) than those receiving casework alone (95%)

- People receiving cash less likely to report going without food than those not (80% v. 63%)



Wider impacts of cash payments

until you get these living essentials provided for, it's difficult to provide casework support that goes beyond that because people are, obviously, mostly worried about if they're going to be able to eat tomorrow… it's a crucial part of the model as a whole. (Key stakeholder, Fair Way partner)

You could disengage and just take the cash… [but] it seems to have actually increased engagement... created some bond… in the dynamic of the relationship between casework and the individual being supported… There's some alchemy in it that wasn't there before. (Key stakeholder, Fair Way partner)

whenever we meet anybody new, that's one of the first things we're doing—can we get this person on cash perks? (Frontline worker, focus group, EEA specialists)