

Gorgie: A Community Needs Analysis

Katriona Gillespie and Inga Berndt

Gorgie Collective | June 17



Background

This Community Needs Analysis was commissioned by Gorgie Collective’s Management Committee and conducted by Collective members. The purpose of the analysis is to identify the profile and needs of adult residents in Gorgie, including attendees at the organisation’s pilot workshop series, to inform Gorgie Collective’s public workshop programme. Many of the findings will also be of interest to other local community groups.

Methodology

The analysis is based on a literature review of publicly available resources relevant to the Gorgie community. Gorgie is a highly-populated urban area lying to the west of Edinburgh city centre. Data on Gorgie is generally available at two overlapping levels: at community council level as a constituent part of Gorgie-Dalry and at ward level as a constituent part of the Gorgie-Sighthill ward. Both data sets are explored in this paper.

The paper also draws on qualitative data sources including: informal interviews with Gorgie residents conducted in February 2017; inputs from Gorgie Collective members and primary data gathered through Gorgie Collective’s pilot creative workshop series, March – June 2017.

A bibliography is provided at the end of this paper.

Demographic Profile

Demographic information relating to Gorgie is available in 2 different data groups, the community of Gorgie-Dalry and the ward of Gorgie-Sighthill. Both are discussed here and it is recognised that many of the issues and needs identified are common across Gorgie, Sighthill and Dalry.

Household profiles

Census data shows that Gorgie is a highly-populated urban area. Gorgie is well-known within Edinburgh as a destination for first-time homebuyers and young professionals. The distribution of the housing stock means Gorgie is well positioned to serve these groups, with over a fifth (23% in Gorgie/Dalry) of properties comprising 2 room (1 bedroom) accommodation, compared to an Edinburgh average of just 6%. There are issues with overcrowding – 7 of the 10 most housing deprived neighbourhoods in Edinburgh are located in Dalry, Gorgie and Sighthill. Almost all dwellings (96%) in Gorgie/Dalry and 83% of dwellings in Sighthill/Gorgie are tenements or flats.

A very high proportion of people – 55% in Gorgie/Dalry, 45% in Sighthill/Gorgie - live in single person households. This is significantly higher than the Edinburgh and Scottish averages at 39% and 35% respectively. Only 7% of households in Gorgie/Dalry comprise children under 16.

Gorgie residents are unlikely to own a car: 62% of households in Gorgie/Dalry and 55% in Sighthill/Gorgie do not own a vehicle. Most residents use public transport to travel to work. Only 23% of people in Gorgie/Dalry travel to work by car (against an Edinburgh average of 41%); just under half take the bus or train and almost a third (30%) walk or cycle.

Ethnicity

Gorgie-Dalry is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in Scotland and the second most ethnically diverse neighbourhood in Edinburgh after Southside in the city centre. It is home to a large Asian community, comprising 13% or 1 in 8 local residents. The proportion of Europeans in the area, including a large Polish community, is at 14%, double that of the city as a whole (7.5%). Only around half of the local population (55%) was born in Scotland.

Gorgie-Dalry town centre, one of Edinburgh's 8 town centres, is located on Gorgie Road and Dalry Road. The town centre is typified by small businesses, many of which cater to the area's migrant residents, with businesses owned and managed by migrant workers from Poland, India, China, Turkey, Italy, Pakistan and Nigeria amongst others.

There is a very close correlation between the number of respondents declaring a country of birth outwith Scotland and the number of respondents identifying as being of non-white Scottish ethnicity. This indicates that the majority of non-white Scottish residents in the area are migrant workers.

Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Mass Deprivation identifies several neighbourhoods in Sighthill/Gorgie as being amongst the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in Scotland. There are also a few which are amongst the most deprived 5%. Multiple social, economic, educational and health issues are associated with areas of high deprivation.

Broadly speaking, the incidence of deprived neighbourhoods increases as you move west through the ward, from central to more peripheral areas. There is a significant distribution of social and council housing stock in Sighthill corresponding with sites of deprivation.

The key demographic trends in Gorgie are summarised in the box below.



GORGIE PROFILE

- Gorgie is a **highly-populated urban area**
- The majority of Gorgie residents live in **single person households**
- The vast majority of households comprise **adults**
- The majority of residents **do not have a car**
- Gorgie-Sighthill includes some of the **most deprived neighbourhoods in Scotland**
- Gorgie-Dalry is one of the most **ethnically diverse** neighbourhoods in Scotland, the second most ethnically diverse neighbourhood in the City of Edinburgh
- Most non-white Scottish residents are **migrant workers**

Gorgie Collective: Qualitative Data

Gorgie Collective conducted 3 free craft workshops in the period March to June 2017, reaching 71 adults. The workshops were open to the public and advertised locally and on social media. The workshops successfully engaged adults of all age groups, both long-term residents and those new to the area.

Informal discussions between Collective volunteers and workshop participants indicate that issues for participants include social isolation and limited access to social and creative activities. Barriers to participation include linguistic barriers (for non-native speakers), accessibility issues and cost.

Migrant workers are over-represented in our sample, in an area with an already very high distribution of migrant workers. This indicates that migrant workers in the area are very interested in participating in free social and creative activities. Selected comments from workshop participants are provided below.

*This is the first time I have had the chance to do something creative since school.
Fantastic initiative!*

Just wonderful, can't wait for the next event.

Thank you for this opportunity, the workshop was so relaxing and calm.

It is good to feel young again!

All (100%) of those surveyed stated that would like to attend a future workshop or event. Asked to describe their experience using 3 words of their choice, participants provided a very positive description of their experience. The most popular responses by number were: *amazing, fun, enjoyable, wonderful and inspiring.*

Participants also described the workshops as *relaxing, happy, calming, fulfilling and joyful*, validating the existing evidence base showing that participation in creative activities lowers stress and promotes wellbeing.

Stakeholders

Key stakeholders in the community include local residents, voluntary organisations, charities, churches and community centres, local businesses and local and national elected representatives.



Challenges

Social Isolation

The demographic data presented above points to several key challenges in the local community. The very high number of single person households, including pensioner households, together with the high proportion of migrant workers and new residents in the area indicate that social isolation is a common challenge. Interventions that build social capital by developing social networks, teaching new skills and creating community connections are likely to be of value.

Deprivation

Sighthill/Gorgie contains some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Scotland with concomitant challenges for community engagement. Health in general and mental health is particular is at lower than average levels and there are hotspots of housing, economic and educational deprivation across the ward.

Quality of Life

Data captured in the Edinburgh People Survey, an annual survey conducted by Edinburgh Council, shows that residents in Gorgie-Sighthill are the least satisfied community in Edinburgh with their neighbourhood as a place to live. The ward also records the second lowest score against the statement “people from different backgrounds get on well together in this neighbourhood”, meaning there is scope for improved cultural integration.

Residents in the ward are unlikely to have participated in festivals or other cultural events. The Gorgie-Sighthill ward recorded the lowest level of participation in the city’s festival offerings and was one of only 2 wards where less than half (45%) of adults had attended a festival in the last 2 years, 17 percentage points below the Edinburgh average. Similarly, only around half (54%) of residents have attended any cultural event in the past year, compared to a city-wide average of 71%.

Barriers to participation in community activities in Gorgie include cost, language and accessibility. Consideration should be given to removing these barriers to maximise the range of stakeholders who can participate in planned interventions, for instance by delivering free, centrally located interventions that feature practical activities or cultural events.

GORGIE: LOCAL ISSUES

- **Social isolation** likely to affect a significant proportion of Gorgie residents
- Gorgie-Sighthill contains **hotspots of housing, economic and educational deprivation**
- There is a high incidence of **non-native speakers of English**
- Residents **unlikely to have attended a cultural event** or festival in the last year.
- Gorgie-Sighthill residents **most dissatisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live**

Opportunities

Diversity

The ethnic diversity of the local area and number of small businesses owned by migrant workers mean there is a rich cultural tapestry of backgrounds and traditions. This diversity is often in evidence at community events held locally such as gala days, garden parties and other public events. There is an opportunity to nurture and promote cultural diversity and engage participants from all backgrounds and traditions in inclusive community projects.



Green and Community Spaces

There are a number of free green and community spaces in the local area. Several voluntary and community host organisations offer space free or at nominal cost for local events. There are public parks in most neighbourhoods as well as resources such as the Wheatfield Community Garden and Gorgie City Farm.

Saughton Park is one of Edinburgh's 8 premier parks and is the area's largest outdoor resource featuring sports pitches, a playpark, skatepark and walled garden. It is currently undergoing a major redevelopment programme. The Park will reopen in 2018 with an improved offer including dedicated community spaces. Gorgie Collective will contribute to the arts component of the Park's activity plan.

Increased Community Engagement

In line with the findings of the Edinburgh People Survey, Gorgie residents are less likely than their neighbours to be content with their neighbourhood as a place to live. There is a very limited cultural offer in the area and no arts organisations other than Gorgie Collective. This is reflected in the low engagement rates of residents in festivals and cultural events, the lowest in the city.

This low baseline offers an opportunity for improvement; it also means that projects delivering e.g. a cultural experience and which support community integration are much more likely proportionately to have a significant impact on individuals.

Partnership Working

There are a number of locally-based voluntary groups, charities and service providers in Gorgie working to deliver services and interventions in the community. Many of the groups are represented on the Gorgie-Dalry Community Forum including Big Hearts, based at Tynecastle, Health All Round and The Welcoming, both based in Westfield and local churches and community centres based in Gorgie-Dalry town centre.

There is an opportunity and indeed strong appetite for partnership working between groups where the groups share common goals and target groups. Gorgie Collective is currently exploring the joint delivery of community projects and programmes with Saughton Park, Big Hearts, the City of Edinburgh Council and Dunedin Canmore.

Conclusion

The analysis detailed above suggests that there is an opportunity for community-based interventions aimed at adult residents in Gorgie. Interventions that are free, accessible to non-native speakers and delivered locally (within walking distance of the main population centres) are likely to be accessible to the majority of the community.

Partnership working is likely to increase volunteer participation, align resources and reach a wide range of potential participants. Interventions that address social isolation and overcome cost and accessibility barriers are likely to have the greatest impact.



Bibliography

City of Edinburgh Council, *Edinburgh People Survey 2016* (2016)

City of Edinburgh Council, *Local Development Plan: Gorgie-Dalry Town Centre Supplementary Guidance* (February 2014)

City of Edinburgh Council, Saughton Park Redevelopment Team *Heritage Lottery Fund Bid* (2013)

City of Edinburgh Council, Services for Communities *Census 2011: Area Profiles for Edinburgh Community Councils* (January 2014)

City of Edinburgh Council, Services for Communities *Census 2011: Area Profiles for Edinburgh Wards* (January 2014)

Gorgie Collective, Interviews with Gorgie residents (February 2017)

Gorgie Collective, Monitoring and Evaluation forms (March – June 2017)

Gorgie Collective, Verbal and Written feedback from Creative Workshops (March – June 2017)

National Records of Scotland, *Scotland's Census 2011* (2014)

Scottish Government, *Scottish Index of Mass Deprivation* (August 2016)

Scottish Government, *Scottish Index of Mass Deprivation (SIMD) Analysis: City of Edinburgh* (August 2016)

