

THE JECH GALLERY.....

Room for one homeless person

The inverse care law¹ is only a special medical case of the general law that those most in need are least likely to receive it. Homeless people have often been regarded as being a special group of "undeserving poor" for whom only the most basic services have been provided. Accommodation comprising bunk beds was still in use into the early 1980s in Glasgow, UK (fig 1, left panel²). One resident would take the top bunk (shown) and the other would enter the bottom bunk from the adjacent door to the left. Rows of such beds filled bare floored halls of common lodging houses.

A new assessment service and temporary homeless hostel in Glasgow

provides spacious, modern accommodation (fig 1, right panel). Each room has a television, en suite kitchen, and bathroom. Accommodation for wheelchair users and for couples is also provided. There is no communal area because these tend to be a focus for intimidation and drug dealing. The hostel has a full time staff of healthcare professionals, housing officers, and social workers. It is anticipated that by demonstrating that homeless people deserve more care we can offer them a better future.



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REFERENCES

- 1 Hart JT. The inverse care law. *Lancet* 1971;ii:405-12.
- 2 Laidlaw S. *Glasgow common lodging-houses and the people living in them*. Glasgow: Health and Welfare Committee of the Corporation of Glasgow, 1957.

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Data supplements

Limited space in printed journals means that interesting data and other material are often edited out of articles; however, limitless cyberspace means that we can include this information online.

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