Resettlement outcomes for single homeless people: the influence of housing and neighbourhood characteristics

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Presentation

Findings from the FOR-HOME study:

- Resettlement outcomes – housing satisfaction, settledness and tenancy sustainment
- Associations between outcomes and accommodation and neighbourhood characteristics
- Conclusions and needed policy measures and practice adjustments
FOR-HOME study: aims and methods

To collect longitudinal information about:
(a) the experiences of homeless people who are resettled
(b) the factors that influence the outcomes

- Sample of 400 single homeless people in two clusters (London and Nottinghamshire / Yorkshire) resettled into independent accommodation

- Interviewed immediately before being resettled, and after 6 and 18 months. Interviews from mid-2007 to early 2010. Keyworker completed questionnaire at baseline.

Funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council
Collaborating organisations
Study participants

- 296 men and 104 women
- 24% aged 17-24 years; 62% aged 25-49; 14% aged 50+ years
- 56% White British, 44% other ethnicity
- Personal problems: 63% mental health, 33% alcohol, 57% drugs, 19% literacy difficulties
- 18% homeless less than 12 months, 14% more than 10 years
- 48% moved to local authority (public) housing, 38% to housing association tenancies, and 14% to private-rented.
Housing satisfaction and settledness at 6 months

- 86% satisfied with housing. 76% felt settled.
- No significant differences between men and women, or by four age groups
- London participants more likely than those in Notts/Yorks to report housing satisfaction and settledness
- Housing satisfaction and settledness reduced slightly over time
Housing outcomes at 15/18 months

- 79% still in original (resettlement) accommodation
- 7% had moved on to a new address
- 14% without a tenancy – on streets, in hostels, staying temporarily with relatives / friends, prison, rehab
- London participants more likely to have remained in original accommodation, and Notts/Yorks people more likely to have moved to another tenancy
- No significant differences between men and women, or by four age groups
Housing and neighbourhood attributes
Accommodation attributes that influenced housing satisfaction and settledness

Housing satisfaction and settledness *more* likely if:

- Satisfied with landlord (is helpful, has regular contact)
- Has open-ended tenancy (not fixed-term or ‘introductory’)

Housing satisfaction and settledness *less* likely if:

- In private-rented accommodation
- In bedsit accommodation
- Serious problems with condition of accommodation (heating / boiler defects, dampness, mould or infestations, flood damage)
- Problems with rent / utility payments
Settledness at 6 months by housing tenure (%)

- Local authority: 76% settled, 24% unsettled
- Housing association: 82% settled, 18% unsettled
- Private rented: 57% settled, 43% unsettled
Neighbourhood attributes that influenced housing satisfaction and settledness

Housing satisfaction and settledness more likely if:

- Likes neighbourhood
- Good transport links
- Near shops and amenities
- No concerns about crime or anti-social behaviour in the area
Accommodation and neighbourhood attributes that influenced tenancy sustainment

More likely to have remained in original accommodation if:
- Likes neighbourhood
- Satisfied with landlord
- Near shops and amenities
- Good transport links

Less likely to have remained in original accommodation if:
- In private-rented sector
- In bedsit accommodation
- Victim of crime / harassment in local area
Associations between tenure and housing type and tenancy sustainment
Tenancy sustainment at 15/18 months by original tenure (%)

- **Local authority**: 81% (Original housing), 14% (New tenancy), 5% (No tenancy)
- **Housing association**: 87% (Original housing), 5% (New tenancy), 8% (No tenancy)
- **Private rented**: 47% (Original housing), 22% (New tenancy), 31% (No tenancy)

Tenure of original housing

European Research Conference
Access to Housing for Homeless People in Europe
York, 21st September 2012
Tenancy sustainment at 15/18 months by original accommodation type

Type of resettlement accommodation

Original housing
New tenancy
No tenancy

Self-contained flat
- Original housing: 86%
- New tenancy: 5%
- No tenancy: 9%

Studio flat
- Original housing: 84%
- New tenancy: 9%
- No tenancy: 7%

Bedsit
- Original housing: 41%
- New tenancy: 23%
- No tenancy: 36%
Why did private-rented tenancies have poorer outcomes?

- More likely to be bedsit accommodation
- More likely to be short-term tenancy agreements (renewable only if both landlord and tenant agree)
- Poor condition – fear of pressing landlord to do repairs in case asked to leave
- Higher rents than in social housing – particularly a problem when a person moved in/out of employment. Private-renters more likely to accrue debts.
- Private renters less likely to have ‘tenancy support’ once resettled
- A closely-managed private-rented scheme with co-operation between landlords and homelessness service-providers had better outcomes
Tenancy sustainment at 15/18 months by type of private-rented scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>Original housing</th>
<th>New tenancy</th>
<th>No tenancy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>33</td>
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Conclusions and needed policy measures and practice adjustments
The FOR-HOME study: headline findings

- The resettlement of single homeless people by six leading non-profit organisations in England during 2007-09 had a good rate of success, as indicated by tenancy sustainment, housing satisfaction and settledness.

- Good outcomes were least common among those resettled into private-rented tenancies and into bedsits, the most cramped accommodation.

- Policy changes, particularly substantial reductions in rent subsidies (Housing Benefit) and more restricted access to social housing, as well as the growing shortage of low-cost rental housing, threaten the improved rate of success of resettlement from the 1990s to 2009.
Ways in which the difficulties are increasing

- The UK government is resolved to restrict access to social housing even more – no longer ‘a home for life’ – and investment in new social housing is currently miniscule.

- It is also determined to reduce welfare benefits expenditure further, with housing subsidies (Housing Benefit) an explicit target, particularly for people aged less than 26 years.

- Housing unaffordability affects an increasing share of UK households, including people in work on low wages, such as service workers in London. Political support for prioritising the housing needs of formerly homeless people is reducing.

- Pressure on homelessness organisations to resettle clients has led to increasing use of housing vacancies in less popular areas, with little consideration of unfavourable neighbourhood characteristics.
The needed policy measures and practice adjustments

- Incentives to set up managed private-rented resettlement schemes that provide a service beyond initial tenancy ‘start-up’, i.e. that monitor tenants’ progress, provide or arrange advice or support if needed (e.g. with finances), and provide advice or help if tenancy in dispute or disrepair.

- Encouragement and support of ‘socially responsible’ private landlords.

- Homelessness organisations have to educate their clients towards lower resettlement housing expectations, particularly as to ‘security of tenure’ and space/amenity standards.

- Increased investment in housing construction, including affordable housing, should be a high priority in a strategy for economic growth.
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