Rebuilding Lives: supporting formerly homeless people to achieve independent living

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Presentation

- Design of the Rebuilding Lives study
- Difficulties associated with independent living for formerly homeless people
- Provision of housing-related support
- Implications of findings for practice
Rebuilding Lives study

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Details of presentation from Summary of Findings and Implications for Practice: Pre-Review Version
Study’s aims

➢ To examine the longer-term outcomes for formerly homeless people who were resettled

➢ To identify the characteristics of those who receive or need longer-term support

➢ To explore the roles of different practitioners in providing this support
Study design

- Longitudinal study built on FOR-HOME study
- RL sample: 297 participants who were housed at 18 months
- Interviews with potential participants FIVE YEARS post-resettlement
- Interviews with workers providing housing-related support to participants
Collaborating homelessness sector organisations

- Centrepoint
- Framework
- St. Anne’s Community Services
- St Mungo’s Broadway
- Thames Reach
## Rebuilding Lives sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact at 60 months</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewed (13 were homeless)</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>79.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted / not interviewed</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died or in prison</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost contact</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total sample</strong></td>
<td><strong>297</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Circumstances of the 224 housed and interviewed
Profiles of housed participants

- 159 men / 65 women. 22% aged 20-29; 51% aged 30-49; 26% aged 50+
- Problems: 63% physical health; 60% mental health; 32% alcohol; 47% drugs; 18% literacy difficulties
- 34% homeless more than 5 years
- 45% local authority; 42% housing association; 12% private-rented
Achievements

- Three-quarters created a ‘home’ and looking after accommodation.
- Many had renewed / strengthened relations with family members. 27 people had started their own family.
- 27% in employment; another 16% involved in education, training, voluntary work.
Difficulties associated with independent living
The accommodation

- 35% in housing in serious disrepair
- Difficulties with landlord (repairs)
- Conflicts with neighbours (36% in last 12 months)
- Conflicts with other tenants (shared housing in PRS)
- Ending of fixed-term tenancy agreements (PRS)
Settling / coping with a tenancy

- 19% unsettled – 4+ tenancies / 1+ episodes of homelessness (mainly in PRS)
- One-quarter struggling to cope – dirty living conditions or hoarding
- 40% difficulties with household tasks
- Characteristics of those less able to cope: men aged 40+; mental health / substance misuse problems; homeless >10 years
Finances / bills

- Low incomes – budgeting difficulties
- Social security benefit changes / sanctions
- 39% rent arrears in last 12 months / 22% eviction threats
- 75% had debts when interviewed; 31% had debts of £1,000+
- Young people most likely to be struggling financially
Debts of £1,000+ (not student loans)

% of participants

- 20-24: 5% when resettled, 55% 60 months
- 25-29: 21% when resettled, 37% 60 months
- 30-39: 23% when resettled, 39% 60 months
- 40-49: 18% when resettled, 23% 60 months
- 50-59: 10% when resettled, 26% 60 months
- 60+: 7% when resettled, 7% 60 months

Legend: 
- Blue: 60 months
- Light blue: When resettled
Poor motivation and behaviour

- 19% poor motivation; 17% pessimistic about the future.
- 34% still using illegal drugs; 15% drinking heavily.
- Antisocial behaviour of participant / their visitors → problems with neighbours for 9% of participants.
- Many in their 40s and 50s not engaged in ETE.
Housing-related support from services
Housing-related support

Support provided to meet a person’s housing, welfare and social care needs in order for them to sustain a tenancy.
People receiving support

- 40% in last 12 months; 32% at 60 months
- People receiving support more likely to have health / substance misuse problems and long histories of homelessness
- Less likely to have support: young people, those in PRS, and those outside London
Housing-related support at 60 months by age

Percentage of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>69</td>
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Workers providing the support

- Tenancy support / housing support workers
- Homelessness sector staff
- Housing wardens / housing officers
- Substance misuse workers (mainly drugs workers)
- Advice / advocacy workers
- Mental health workers
- Social worker / home care workers
- Other workers, e.g. probation workers
Types of help

- Social Security benefit claims
- Managing money / budgeting / debts
- Bills / paperwork / rent problems
- Housing problems e.g. repairs, neighbours
- Household tasks
- Emotional / personal / family problems
- Linking into health / substance misuse care
- Linking to education, training, employment
- Changing accommodation
Types of help by types of worker

- Tenancy support workers – support across spectrum of problems
- Drugs workers – various types of support apart from housing problems
- Advice workers – help with social security benefit claims, bills, paperwork
- Wardens / housing officers – help with rent or housing problems
- Homeless sector staff – budgeting, emotional problems, linking to ETE
Frequency of support

- Continuous (4%) – at least once a day. Mainly home-care workers

- Regular (21%) – at least monthly. Mainly tenancy support / housing support workers or drugs workers.

- Intermittent or short-term (13%). Mainly advice workers / homeless sector staff.
Frequency of support in last 12 months by age

Percentage of participants

- 20-29: 10 (Continuous), 12 (Regular), 12 (Short-term)
- 30-39: 29 (Continuous), 15 (Regular), 11 (Short-term)
- 40-49: 3 (Continuous), 26 (Regular), 11 (Short-term)
- 50-59: 21 (Continuous), 21 (Regular), 16 (Short-term)
- 60+: 42 (Continuous), 8 (Regular), 17 (Short-term)
Unmet needs

- 38% identified unmet support needs
- Most common types of help needed:
  - finding employment or training
  - budgeting / managing debts
  - social security benefit claims
  - changing accommodation
- Those aged 20-24 or in their 30s or 50s more likely to report unmet needs
Implications for practice
The need for support

- Planned resettlement for homeless people works, but many are vulnerable when rehoused and require long-term support either regularly or at times of difficulties.

- Current tenancy support services are effectively targeting many with complex needs.

- Support services should also be offered to young people and others who have little experience of independent living.
Addressing housing problems

- Workers should link with local housing advice services that can advocate on behalf of tenants living in homes in disrepair.
- Public health practitioners should help tackle poor housing.
- Personalised support plans for people self-neglecting, in squalor or who are hoarders.
Addressing financial problems

- More advice and coaching on managing finances and avoiding debts should be available to homeless people both before and after they are resettled.
- Those with large debts should be assisted to access specialist debt advice services.
- Assistance should be given by DWP advisers / other workers to vulnerable people when SS benefits change or stop.
Addressing poor motivation / behaviour

- Support workers should encourage and assist people with alcohol / drug problems to access specialist substance misuse services

- Ways need to be developed to encourage formerly homeless people to participate in ETE

- Role of volunteering / specialist job-skills training for people not ready to enter mainstream employment
Conclusion

Resettlement for homeless people works. However, many who are resettled face various problems in the first few years that could affect its success.

In such instances, the keys to its success are the availability of workers who can:

- identify people who are having difficulties but may not seek help
- respond to unmet needs in order to enable tenancy sustainment and prevent further homelessness
Our warm thanks to …

The study participants who have been involved throughout the five years, and have willingly invited us into their homes and shared their experiences.

The tenancy support workers and other staff who participated in Rebuilding Lives. Also members of the Advisory Group and Experts by Experience.

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FOR-HOME final report available at:
www.kcl.ac.uk/scwru/res/hrp/past/for-home.aspx