Formerly homeless people’s experiences of independent living and their longer-term outcomes

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Presentation

- Design of Rebuilding Lives study
- Profiles of participants and housing outcomes
- Experiences of participants and challenges faced
- Housing related support from services
- What is needed
Two studies

FOR-HOME Study

- Funded by Economic and Social Research Council
- Outcomes over 18 months for 400 homeless people resettled into independent housing in London, Nottingham, Leeds, Sheffield
- Interviewed at time of resettlement, and after 6 and 18 months

Rebuilding Lives study

- Funded by NIHR School for Social Care Research
- Outcomes after five years for 297 FOR-HOME participants. Also interviewed 46 support workers.
Disclaimer

The views expressed in this presentation are those of the presenters and not necessarily those of the NIHR School for Social Care Research, Department of Health, NIHR, NHS or ESRC.
Collaborating homelessness sector organisations
Profiles of Rebuilding Lives participants and their housing outcomes over five years
Profiles of participants

- 215 men and 82 women, aged 17+ when resettled
- 58% White British; 42% other ethnic groups
- 24% homeless < 12 months; 25% homeless > 5 years
- Problems: 63% mental health; 37% alcohol; 57% drugs
- 50% had never previously held a tenancy
- Housing tenure when resettled: 46% local authority; 44% housing association; 10% private-rented sector
Housing situation at 60 months

Details for 265 participants:

- 55% still in original accommodation
- 34% housed in another tenancy
- 6% were homeless
- 4% had died
- 1% in prison
Housing outcomes over the five years

- 16% homeless at some time during the five years.
- Young people and those with long histories of homelessness (> 10 years) more likely to have become homeless again.
- People rehoused in the private-rented sector had poorer housing outcomes – 36% homeless again.
- Reasons for tenancies ending: financial problems / rent arrears; difficulty coping; problems with neighbours / local people; participant’s anti-social behaviour; ending of fixed-term tenancy agreements.
Episode of homelessness since resettlement

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<th>Age at 60 months</th>
<th>Percentage of participants</th>
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<td>20-24</td>
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Experiences of participants who were housed and interviewed at five years (N = 224)
Adjusting to being resettled

- Most were glad to have been resettled and believed that they had benefited. Many young people said that they had matured and become more responsible.
- Three-quarters had created a ‘home’ and were looking after their accommodation.
- 16% reduction in alcohol or drug usage.
- At 60 months, 83% felt ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ settled.
Education, training, employment (ETE)

- 43% involved in ETE at 60 months:
  a. education / vocational courses
  b. volunteering programmes
  c. welfare-to-work programmes
  d. employment

- 27% employed at 60 months – 14% full-time; 5% part-time; 8% casually or on ‘zero-hours’ contracts

- Increase over time in % of young people in work. Few people aged 40-59 years in employment.
Family and social relationships

- Several people had renewed / strengthened relations with family members – 43% of young people had better relations with their mother.
- Participants received help from *and* gave help to relatives and friends.
- Some had started a family since being resettled.
- Some had ended negative / abusive relationships with partners / friends.
Challenges facing participants after five years
Housing conditions

- One-quarter were struggling to cope at home – in dirty living conditions or hoarding.
- People with mental health or alcohol problems or long histories of homelessness more likely to be struggling to cope.
- 35% in housing in serious disrepair – all housing tenures affected. More likely than general population to be in ‘damp’ conditions.
Income and finances

- Most on low incomes and struggling financially. 65% had income below UK poverty threshold.
- 39% had rent arrears in last 12 months – 18% threatened with eviction. 26% still had rent arrears at five years.
- Financial problems exacerbated by:
  a. Social security benefits suspended / stopped
  b. Casual or ‘zero-hours’ contract employment
- Increase over time in debts, esp. among young people.
Debts of £1,000+ (not student loans)

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<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>When resettled</th>
<th>60 months</th>
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<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
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<td>50-59</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>60+</td>
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Housing related support from services
Participants receiving support

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

Percentage of participants

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Workers providing support

- Tenancy support / housing support workers
- Homelessness sector staff
- Housing wardens / housing officers
- Drugs workers
- Advice / advocacy workers
- Mental health workers
- Social workers / home care workers
- Others, e.g. probation officers
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 services
- Linking to education, training, employment
- Changing accommodation
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
What is needed
Overview

- For many participants, resettlement led to positive, longer-term outcomes. They settled in their accommodation, created a ‘home’, and made considerable progress in rebuilding their lives.

- Some were able to cope after being resettled with little or no help from services, but many remained vulnerable and required intermittent or regular long-term support.
Housing and support needs

✓ Planned resettlement for homeless people works and should be encouraged.

✓ Regular, long-term tenancy support for those with enduring problems and needs; flexible and easily-accessible support for others at times of difficulties.

✓ More attention to support needs of young people, and those resettled in private-rented sector.

✓ More help for tenants living in homes in disrepair. Help from public health workers to tackle poor housing, and from local authority safeguarding teams to support people living in squalid conditions or hoarding.
Addressing financial difficulties

- More advice / training on managing finances, paying bills and avoiding debts before and after resettlement.

- Encouragement and assistance for those with large debts to access specialist debt advice services.

- Tenancy support workers and housing staff should collaboratively work with formerly homeless people who have rent arrears.

- Assistance by DWP advisers/ other workers for vulnerable people when social security benefits change or stop.
Participation in education, training, employment

- Ways need to be developed to encourage formerly homeless people to participate in ETE
- Assistance by Jobcentre staff / other workers to help formerly homeless people access regular jobs, rather than relying on casual work
- More specialist job-skills training and job placement services with support to prepare vulnerable people for entry into mainstream employment
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.

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FOR-HOME final report and policy / practice briefings available at:
http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/scwru/res/hrp/hrp-studies/rebuilding.aspx