The role of modular homes in addressing homelessness: Cambridge’s modular homes

Dr Katy Karampour
Dr Gemma Burgess
Dr Johannes Lenhard
Jimmy’s Cambridge

16th March 2023
Introduction

• Modular homes as a type of temporary accommodation (TA)
• Increasingly used but limited evidence about their effectiveness and the experiences of the users → evidence is needed for a wider national roll-out
• Funded by Capabilities in Academic Policy Engagement (CAPE)

• Aim:
  • To investigate whether modular homes are the right type of accommodation to support people experiencing rough sleeping to end homelessness.

• Objectives:
  • Understanding the outcomes of Cambridge's modular homes in addressing rough sleeping and what we learn from Cambridge modular homes;
  • Generating broader evaluation metrics to allow for wider comparison with other modular homes in future.

• Research methods --> Co-produced with Jimmy’s
  • Analysis of quantitative data
  • Interviewing residents, Jimmy's staff, Cambridge City Council, Hill, former modular home residents
Jimmy’s modular homes

- 22 modular homes
- All self-contained each with a fitted kitchen, living space, bathroom and separate bedroom.
- Housing people experiencing rough sleeping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>No of units</th>
<th>Launch date</th>
<th>Construction team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Allia &amp; New Meaning Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dec 2020</td>
<td>The Hill Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jan 2021</td>
<td>The Hill Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>July 2021</td>
<td>The Hill Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jimmy’s resident experiences

- Life experiences before moving to a modular home
- Experience of living in a modular home

- Having an address
- The size of the space
- Available amenities inside
- Neighbourly relations
- The support provided by Jimmy’s

- Future plans
  - Managing alcohol and drug consumption
  - Finding employment
  - Securing permanent accommodation
### Key aspects of the modular homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setup</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Admission setup** | - Referral criteria and selection process  
                      - Challenges with the referral system                                  |
| **Tenancy setup**  | - Tenancy agreement  
                      - Pre-tenancy work                                                        |
| **Support setup**  | - Supporting the residents  
                      - Level of support need                                                   |
| **Physical setup** | - The design of the sites  
                      - Number of units per site  
                      - CCTV and maintenance                                                    |
Outcomes

• Challenging to ascertain what is a good outcome → vary from one person to another depending on their life experiences and their goals:
  • For some reducing alcohol consumption might be an important outcome, for others, it might be moving into settled long-term accommodation.
Outcomes

- Housing outcomes
  - Diversity of desired housing outcomes for residents
  - Moving on into a secured social tenancy is the most desired outcome, but a few expressed that for them being able to stay in their modular home permanently is what they perceive as the best outcome.

- I don't want a council flat; I have been there and done that, it wasn't good for me [...]. The flat was really bad, I was left there without any help [...]. It is the first time in 20 years that I've actually felt settled [...] If someone come and say, look, you've got move out, we'll give you a place. I'll just walk away and just will be on the streets.

- I hope to get my own flat that I could stay in.
Outcomes

• Housing outcomes

• Physical and mental health outcomes
  • Dental problems, chronic diseases, accidents which severely affected their health, and physical issues related to alcohol and drug misuse
  • Anxiety and depression

• Drug and alcohol use management

I've got my mental state back since I've been here. I'm helping myself more. Little by little, even though it's taken a bit of time, but I had a rough time out on the streets. It is just nice to have somewhere to go where I can be on my own.

I'd love to be totally clean. Which I'm nearly there […]. I've got to fully get off these four things: drink, crack, heroin and methadone. I'm on my way […] I've been on these things since I was 15 years of age. I'm 48 now, […] the most important thing for me to do is to get clean … I'm doing really good.
Outcomes

• Housing outcomes
• Physical and mental health outcomes
• Drug and alcohol use management
• Social integration and relationship with family

I've really fitted into the community well. I take people's dogs for a walk [...] or do a bit of gardening, usually for older people who can't manage.
Outcomes

- Housing outcomes
- Physical and mental health outcomes
- Drug and alcohol use management
- Social integration and relationship with family
- Skills and Employment

I'm hoping to get a driving job, I've been looking on the internet, on Indeed and Total Job to work as a driver, it's been quite difficult to find anything.
Recommendations

• Allocation process and pre-tenancy work
  • Detailed information about an applicant’s background should be provided to help the support provider put in place an appropriate level of support for that resident.
  • Pre-tenancy work to facilitate the transition to living in relative independence in the modular homes.

• Tenancy agreement
  • Offering licences instead of assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs)
  • Being flexible with the length of tenure

• Supporting the residents
  • Providing a person-centred support plan
  • Provision of specialised support, including mental health support services and drug and alcohol support services
  • Improving support for people experiencing homelessness to find and maintain employment

• Site design
  • Providing good quality green space to improve the residents’ quality of life
  • Number of units on a site
Conclusion

• The modular homes are a type of accommodation in-between traditional types of temporary accommodation and fully independent living accommodation, which can be understood as a quasi-independent housing type.

• Using modular solutions as temporary accommodation to prepare people to live independently works best where the housing offer is combined with support.

• A useful next step: to evaluate the different types of modular housing schemes housing a variety of residents across the country to provide evidence of their outcomes, and to compare with other types of temporary housing provision.

• The evaluation metrics that were developed can serve as a starting point to facilitate wider comparison of modular home schemes.
Thank you!

Katy Karampour: Katy.Karampour@uwe.ac.uk
Gemma Burgess: glb36@cam.ac.uk