

Modular homes for people experiencing homelessness in Cambridge

Presenters:

Dr Richmond Ehwi

Dr Kwadwo Oti-Sarpong

2-Feb-22



Outline of presentation

- Snapshots of homelessness
 - in the UK
 - in Cambridge
- Residents' lived experiences in the Jimmy's modular homes
- Lessons learned
- Q &A



A snapshot of Homelessness in the UK

- Statistics show **homelessness** continues to be a problem in the UK:
 - rough sleeping rose from **2,181** to **4,751** between 2011 & 2017, before declining to **4,266** in 2019 (ONS 2021)
 - core homeless in Great Britain increased from **121,000** in 2011 to **158,400** in 2016 (Downie et al. 2018)
- The UK Government has implemented several **interventions** to help tackle the problem:
 - **Legislation** (Homelessness Reduction Act 2017; Coronavirus Act 2020)
 - **Welfare reforms** (Universal Credit)
 - **Funding** (e.g., £10m Cold Weather Payment; £266m Next Steps Accommodation)
 - **Technology** (StreetLink)

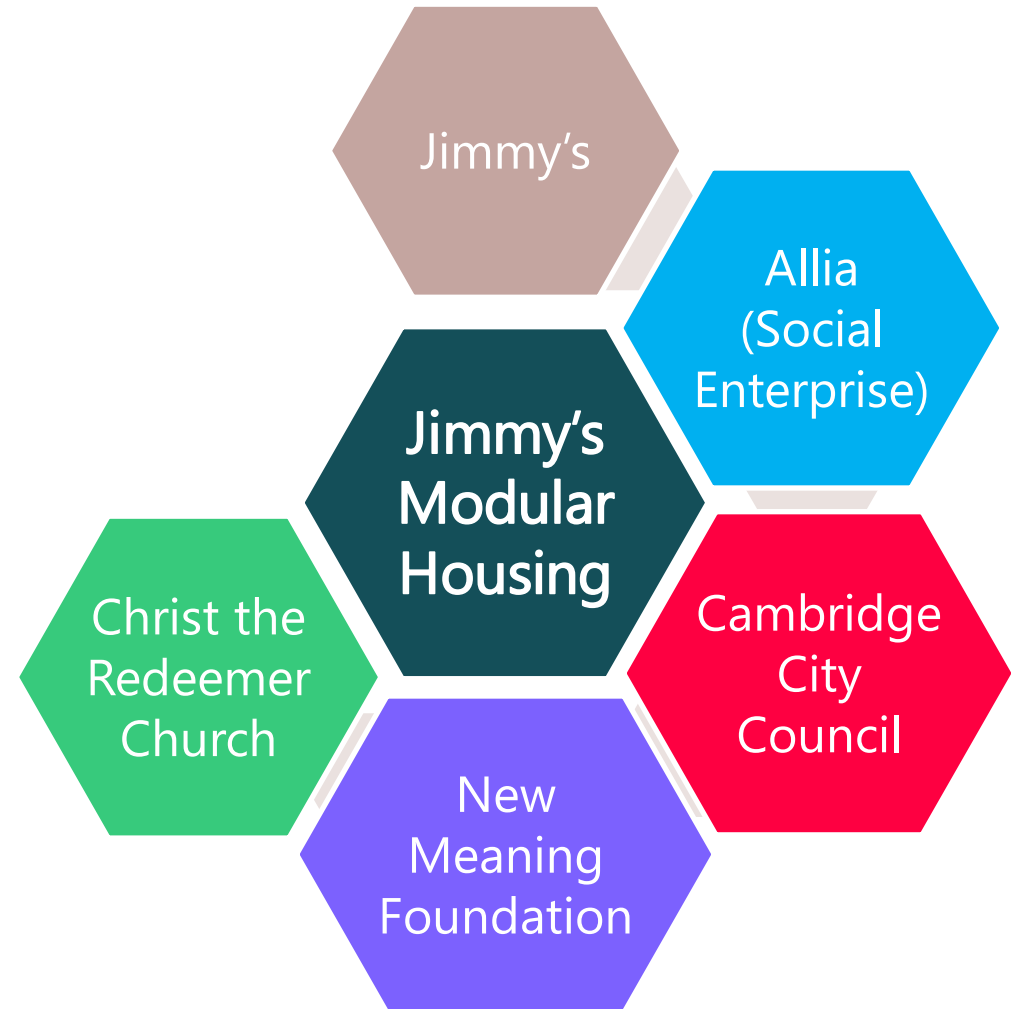
Homelessness in Cambridge – Relevant statistics

- 6 in every 1000 households are experiencing homelessness
- 4 in every 1000 households are threatened with homelessness
- 24 of every 1 million people experiencing homelessness died between 2013 – 2019
- **Loss of a privately rented home** and the **unwillingness of friends and family members to provide accommodation** account for about 50% of applications to the Homelessness Link (Cambridge City Council 2019)



Source: Cambridge Homeless Outreach Programme

The Jimmy's Modular Housing Project – Key stakeholders



Post-occupancy evaluation at 12 months

We found improvements in the following aspects of residents' lives:

- Drug and alcohol dependency
- Money management skills
- Employment, skills and readiness for work
- Managing relationships
- Sense of community
- Safety and security
- Sense of control



Examples of positive impacts of living in the modular homes (1 of 4)



"Living here, oh everything is good! I can't say anything bad. It's got me off me drugs, got a roof over my head, it's got me back to work...can't say anything bad really. I've stopped using drugs altogether. There's nothing bad about the place. Everything's positive." – Resident



"Since the last time we spoke, I have received some back pay which is quite a decent amount. I have given part of it to my daughter. I am not going to spend it all... I will save some and use part for myself." – Resident

Examples of positive impacts (2 of 4)



"Before moving here, I barely spoke to my daughter. Now I talk to my daughter every week, twice a week. Living here has allowed me to make some improvements. I've been clean for 14 months. She's coming to see me here for my birthday in July." – Resident



"We attended the Church's Christmas celebrations. It was a good feeling. Really nice people." – Resident

"I get along well with everybody." – Resident

Examples of positive impacts (3 of 4)



"The job I am familiar with is how to make cabinets and furniture and decorate houses. I want to work till retirement. I'm returning to my passion. I've got a goal; I've got a plan. I can't believe I'm saying that, but yeah...it's amazing really." – Resident



"Well, living here is safe for me and I like it. I've got my own place, I can stay locked in to prevent any trouble from others, but the guys are generally nice so there's no trouble at all. We've got cameras around here and they help to keep us safe." – Resident

Examples of positive impacts (4 of 4)



“Yeah, yeah, I can cook but not the level of a chef or anything. It is brilliant that I have my own cooker and fridge, so I can sometimes cook my meals.” – Resident



“I am not looking forward to being told where I am going to be put next after here. I hope the three-year limit will extend to five years. It will be difficult for me to move out, but if the next location is not outside Cambridge, then that will be fine.” – Resident

Lessons from the project

- There is a clear **need for innovative forms of temporary accommodation** that provide people experiencing homelessness with their “own front doors”.
- Providing **bespoke support services** and **decent housing** afford **multiple benefits** to people experiencing homelessness.
- The **complexity of homelessness** and the mutually reinforcing nature of the outcomes that follow require solutions that go beyond housing to include **targeted support services**.
- The **outcomes identified** are as **described by the cohort of residents studied**. Future research in different contexts, involving different kinds of residents, is needed for more evidence of impact.



Lessons from the project

- **Modular homes** can be **integrated into neighbourhoods** without necessarily stoking sentiments of NIMBYism among local residents.
- A **collaborative and innovative approach** to tackling homelessness may result in significant public-sector cost-savings. More research is needed in this regard.
- **Off-site manufacturing** offers avenues for local authorities to **increase the supply of social housing** for people experiencing homelessness at a lower cost, for the longer term.



Thank you for listening

Q & A

TEAM

Leads:

Dr Gemma Burgess; Dr Johannes Lenhard

Researchers:

Dr Richmond Ehwi, Dr Kwadwo Oti-Sarpong, Eana Meng