

Insights into the use of modular housing in addressing homelessness

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INTRODUCTION

- Investigates self-contained modular units & converted shipping containers providing temporary accommodation (TA)
- Funded by the Centre for Homelessness Impact
- Aim of the research:
 - Provide an overview of current modular & container housing provision in the UK
 - Provide a basis for future evaluation of the different schemes and for research on their impacts

RESEARCH METHODS

- Desk-based internet search for existing evidence and publications about the use of modular & container housing
- 19 local authorities across the country who are involved in modular & container schemes contacted to fill in the gaps
- Some of the housebuilders, manufacturers, consultants and social enterprises involved in the projects, and DLUHC were contacted for further information and informal conversations.

FINDINGS 1/2

- 33 schemes in 22 LAs using modular/container housing (in total 808 units): 6 schemes (18%) → converted shipping containers + 27 schemes (82%) → modular units
- 12 schemes (36%) for families and 21 schemes (64%) for single households
- But, out of a total of 808 units: 427 units (53%) for families & 381 units (47%) for single tenants.
- Shipping container schemes: an average of 40 units on a site, modular schemes: an average of 20 units on a site.

FINDINGS 2/2

- Key characteristics → typologies
 - The construction method used (modular/container)
 - The number of units on an individual site (under 20 units/20 units and over)
 - The cohort housed by the scheme (families/singles)
- Other characteristics
 - Size of units
 - Land ownership of the site
 - Onsite facilities and support
 - Conditions of entry

TYPES

Type	Construction method	Size of scheme	Cohort housed	Number of projects identified	% Of projects identified
A	Shipping container	Under 20 units on site	Families	0	0%
B	Shipping container	20 units and over on site	Families	4	12%
C	Shipping container	Under 20 units on site	Singles	0	0%
D	Shipping container	20 units and over on site	Singles	2	6%
E	Modular	Under 20 units on site	Families	3	9%
F	Modular	20 units and over on site	Families	5	15%
G	Modular	Under 20 units on site	Singles	14	43%
H	Modular	20 units and over on site	Singles	5	15%

POTENTIAL BENEFITS 1/2

Speed of construction

- Meath Court in 24 weeks
- Hill's SoloHaus in seven days

Relative low costs

- Little robust cost data available
- Unit costs £35,000 to £75,000

Quality of life

- Varies, shaped by individual, scheme and support related factors

POTENTIAL BENEFITS 2/2

Move on support

Good use of under-utilised land

Portability of the units

Collaboration

- Onsite or floating support
- Efficient use of brownfield & disused sites
- Temporary use of sites waiting for development
- Can be transported to site as completed units and moved to new sites
- Collaborations between several actors which allows for the local community to come together to take action

POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS 1/2

- 1** Space standards and quality of design
 - Concerns about shipping container schemes to house families with children
- 2** Length of tenancy
 - Intended to be for no longer than 2 years, but there are examples where tenancies were extended beyond the intended maximum length
- 3** Access to appropriate land
 - With utilities and services. Absence of internet connection
- 4** Location of the site
 - Distance from local amenities and services

POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS 2/2

5 Access to finance

- Reliance on in-kind support and donation; limiting conditions of some funding schemes

6 Stigma and local opposition

- Concerns about a change in the character of the area

7 Complexity of provision

- Multiple actors are involved, uncertainty about the future of the schemes with a temporary planning permission

8 Lack of robust evidence

- Lack of evidence about costs, resident experiences, and the outcomes and impacts of the schemes

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