Cambridge Centre for Housing & Planning Research

Jimmy's CAMBRIDGE

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

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1. Executive summary

Modular homes have recently become a type of temporary accommodation provided for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping in the UK, but there is limited evidence about the effectiveness of these models, the barriers and facilitators to set them up and operate them, and the experiences of people housed in them. The aim of this research is to provide local and national policy makers and modular home service providers with an evidence base about the impact and outcomes of using modular homes to temporarily house people experiencing rough sleeping by studying the four frontrunner schemes in Cambridge managed by Jimmy's Cambridge.

Jimmy's Cambridge provides 22 self-contained modular homes with wraparound support across four different sites for people experiencing rough sleeping. In 2020, Jimmy's launched its first modular homes scheme which was designed and built by a team including Allia and New Meaning Foundation. In 2020 and 2021, 16 more modular homes designed and provided by housebuilder, The Hill Group, were installed on three sites owned by Cambridge City Council. These are amongst the first modular home schemes in the country to house rough sleepers with multiple support needs who the council does not have a duty to house.

For this research we conducted interviews with multiple stakeholders, including the modular home residents, to understand their views on the modular homes and to what extent living in a modular home has affected their lives. The residents shared with us the different and complex reasons that led them to lose their home and where they were living before moving to their modular homes. Most of the residents expressed their appreciation of having the opportunity to have their own home and shared with us a range of desired outcomes that they would like to achieve while living in a modular home, including managing their alcohol and drug consumption, being able to find employment, and being able to secure permanent accommodation where they can settle down long-term. The modular homes were valued by residents for providing them with 'their own front door', a sense of ownership, privacy and an address, which is often necessary for applications and registrations (e.g., for claiming benefits).

In this report we reflected on some of the key aspects of the modular homes as a type of temporary accommodation including the allocation process, pre-tenancy work, tenancy agreements, support provision and the physical aspects of the modular home schemes. We also reviewed some of the outcomes of Cambridge modular homes. Despite the general view that the best outcome for people living in temporary accommodation is to move on to a permanent tenancy, the research showed that what is considered a good outcome varies

from one person to another depending on their life experiences and goals. We observed the following outcomes:

- Whilst for most of the residents, eventually moving on to a secure long-term tenancy is a desired outcome, some felt they needed more time before feeling confident to move on. A few residents expressed that being able to stay in their modular home permanently is what they perceive as the best outcome. The transition from living in supported accommodation and receiving extensive support to living fully independently can be challenging for some. So far one resident has moved on into long-term accommodation.

- Physical and mental health improvements, as well as managing drug and alcohol use, were reported as important desired outcomes while living in the modular homes for the residents. Having their own home, receiving support from the Jimmy's team, and having access to the health care system enabled residents to take care of themselves and improve their health, and to be able to manage their substance use to some extent. However, long waiting times to receive mental health support and drug and alcohol support were reported as a barrier by some of the residents to being able to improve their health.

- Most of the interviewed residents reported that after living in the modular homes they managed to improve their relationships with family and friends, although this can take a long time and is not easy.

- Although most of the residents would like to find employment, they all reported that they found it very difficult to secure a job. Some of the residents said that they had done some voluntary work and they were willing to do more. The main barrier to employment, according to support workers, relates to drug and alcohol use as well as physical and mental health issues. In terms of training and skills development, at the time of writing this report, none of the residents were attending a training course but a few expressed their willingness to sign up for a course in the future.

Reflecting on the outcomes of the Jimmy's modular homes, to maximise the outcomes of living in temporary modular housing for people experiencing rough sleeping we suggest the following general recommendations:

- Allocation process and pre-tenancy work: To be able to put in place an appropriate level of support for residents, referral applications made by other agencies should include detailed information about an applicant's background and needs. A period of

pre-tenancy work to set out expectations and build a relationship between the support worker and the prospective resident before moving to a modular home can help to facilitate the transition to living in relative independence and can make it more likely that the residents will engage with the support offered when they move in.

- Tenancy agreements: While offering assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) to residents can work well in most cases, in the case of an unavoidable eviction (for example, because of threatening behaviour of a resident), the processing times for evictions can be long which may lead to safety issues for other residents. The proposed repeal of 'no fault' Section 21 evictions will make an unavoidable eviction even more difficult. Jimmy's would prefer to be able to offer all residents of modular homes a licence, which means they can process an unavoidable eviction faster, ensuring the safety of the rest of the residents. Although there are proposed changes to the legislation, it is not yet certain how this may or may not benefit organisations providing supported accommodation. In terms of the length of tenure, whilst the official length of tenancy offered to the residents of the modular homes is currently two years, the research showed that being flexible with the length of tenancy and extending it beyond the initial two-year period can help residents, especially those with higher needs, to have more time to improve their circumstances before moving on.

- Supporting the residents: A person-centred support plan which is prepared by the residents and their support workers is a good starting point to agree on goals and desired outcomes. A key issue that needs addressing to improve outcomes for residents is the lack of provision of specialised support, including mental health support services and drug and alcohol support services. A lack of national funding for these services restricts local provision. In addition, for the residents to be able to find employment requires a lot of support. Jimmy's Cambridge, in collaboration with other agencies, provides opportunities for residents to undertake voluntary work. However, there is an overall national need to improve support for people experiencing homelessness to find and maintain employment by providing them with relevant skills and training support as well as helping them with the practical aspects of finding a job.

- Site design: Although finding appropriate land (in terms of size and layout) might be challenging, the research showed that providing good quality green space can improve the residents' quality of life. Having generously sized outdoor space can give

the option to expand onsite facilities, such as enabling provision of gardening space, as well as facilitating social interaction between the residents.

- Number of units on a site: The optimal number of units on a site is not a fixed measure and should be decided according to various factors including the level of need of the residents and the intensity of the support provided by the service provider. In the Cambridge case, the support workers and residents felt that a maximum of six units was appropriate, in order to provide the necessary level of support and manage relationships between residents.

The research suggests that these modular homes are a type of accommodation in-between traditional types of temporary accommodation and fully independent living accommodation (such as living in the social or private rented sector), which can be understood as a quasi-independent housing type. This research suggests that using modular solutions as temporary accommodation to prepare people to live independently works best where the housing offer is combined with support. Modular homes are an innovative solution to address homelessness and have brought about positive outcomes for residents which can be improved further by addressing the issues discussed in this report.

2. Introduction

2.1. Background

Modular homes have recently become a type of temporary accommodation provided for people experiencing homelessness in the UK. In Cambridge, the first set of modular units were installed in 2020. Our previous research on the resident experience of that first set of Cambridge's modular homes (Burgess et al., 2021) showed they have generated positive results both for the people experiencing homelessness living in the modular homes and a range of stakeholders. Our other work (Karampour and Burgess, 2022) mapped modular home schemes across the UK and reflected on their typologies and provided a discussion of their potential benefits and limitations.

Homelessness and the demand for temporary accommodation continues to rise (Fitzpatrick et al., 2021). Modular housing is one of the innovations increasingly used in the homelessness sector to provide temporary accommodation, but there is very limited evidence about the effectiveness of these models, the barriers and facilitators to set them up and operate them, and the experiences of people housed in them. In order to enable a wider national roll-out, policy makers and service providers will need to see more varied and long-term evidence of the efficacy of the intervention.

The use of modular homes is part of the government's plan to end rough sleeping. However, we are at the beginning of understanding the opportunities and limitations of modular homes as part of the policy response to tackle homelessness. Building on the research presented in this report, an extended and comparative study of different kinds of modular homes housing a variety of residents is needed in future to provide evidence for a greater national rollout.

2.2. Aims and objectives

The aim of this research is to provide local and national policy makers with an evidence base about the use of modular homes to house people experiencing rough sleeping in order to inform decision making about increasing the use of this new type of temporary accommodation. This research provides evidence, from the four frontrunner schemes in Cambridge manged by Jimmy's Cambridge, about the impact and outcomes of using modular homes to provide temporary accommodation for different types of people experiencing rough sleeping.

This research attempts to investigate whether modular homes are the right type of accommodation to support people experiencing rough sleeping to end homelessness. To address this question the following objectives are considered:

- 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.

2.3. Research methods and data collection

This research is co-produced with Jimmy's Cambridge (hereafter: Jimmy's), our research partner. We organised co-production activities at the beginning of the project to define the research questions and focus points as well as discussing how to approach data collection. We continued the co-production process through regular check-ins with Jimmy's throughout the research, discussing progress with them at various points, including a discussion of our research findings with Jimmy's staff after the data collection phase. All the data collection activities were carried out by consulting Jimmy's on the methods and approach between February and September 2022.

A mixed-methods approach was used for data collection, including analysis of quantitative data generated from Charitylog (which is an information and reporting system where Jimmy's store data about their residents), qualitative interviews with the key stakeholders, and group discussions. The data from Charitylog was collected by Jimmy's about their modular home residents and the services they receive. To avoid confidentiality issues, the quantitative data was analysed by Jimmy's team and shared with us anonymously. The analysis of Charitylog helps us to understand the profile of Jimmy's residents, including their age, ethnicity background, gender, and their level of need as well as understanding some of the outcomes including the rate of evictions and moving on.

Before starting the interviews with stakeholders, we organised two inception group discussions with Jimmy's staff to discuss research orientation and methods. Interviews were conducted with different groups of stakeholders and residents across four modular home sites in Cambridge to generate primary qualitative data. The aim of these interviews was to enable us to provide a comprehensive view of the modular homes from a variety of perspectives. The following stakeholder groups were interviewed as part of this research:

- Modular home residents

- Jimmy's staff whose work is related to modular homes
- Cambridge City Council
- The Hill Group, housebuilder
- Former modular home residents

To interview the modular home residents, we prepared an information sheet and a consent form in consultation with Jimmy's. We asked the residents' support workers to check with the residents whether they were happy to participate in the research before organising the interviews. Due to the nature of this type of accommodation, interviewing the residents proved to be challenging and we had to be flexible and accommodate unexpected circumstances. In total, we interviewed 14 out of 22 residents. Table 1 below summarises the number of participants on each modular home site.

Site name	Number of residents	Interviewed residents
Site 1	6	6
Site 2	6	4
Site 3	4	2
Site 4	6	2

Table 1- The number of modular home residents participating in the research

We interviewed 13 staff members of Jimmy's who work with modular home residents, including the management team, housing support workers, maintenance team, finance team and the data monitoring and research team. We interviewed some members of staff more than once and held conversations frequently to address research gaps.

We conducted two interviews with Cambridge City Council, one with the Housing Services Manager and the other with the Housing Advice Partnership Manager, to better understand the Council's priorities and views on different aspects of the modular homes. In addition, we talked to Hill's Solohaus Project Manager to understand the planning and development process of constructing the modular homes. The Hill Group donated 16 units to Jimmy's and the other six units were constructed by New Meaning Foundation. For this research we did not interview the New Meaning Foundation team as we interviewed them for our previous research on resident experiences of the New Meaning Foundation units on Site 1 (Burgess et al., 2021).

To capture the views of former modular home residents for whom living in a modular home was not successful, we contacted a small number of individuals and successfully interviewed one person.

The report is co-produced with the residents and Jimmy's staff and their voices will be heard throughout the report.

3. Modular homes as a type of temporary accommodation

3.1. Definitions of temporary accommodation and modular homes

3.1.1. Temporary accommodation

Councils in the UK have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households who meet specific criteria (Shelter, 2022). Households might be placed in temporary accommodation pending the completion of inquiries into an application, or they might spend time waiting in temporary accommodation after an application is accepted and until suitable secure accommodation becomes available (Shelter, 2022). Temporary accommodation could be a room in a shared house, hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation, or a self-contained (private, council or housing association) accommodation (Shelter, 2022).

Councils usually look at whether that person or household has a local connection to the area before housing them in temporary accommodation (Shelter, 2022). According to Shelter (2022), the following situations count as a local connection:

- Living in a council area for at least 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years;
- Working in a council area;
- Having close family members who have lived in a council area for at least 5 years;
- Being a care leaver who is under 21 and were previously in care in the area for at least 2 years or is under 25 and gets support from the council's social services;
- Having refugee status or humanitarian protection and being housed in a local area;
- Other special reasons such as a need to live in the area to receive specialist health care or having very important social connections with the area.

In addition to councils, there are several charities, like Jimmy's, who provide temporary housing for people experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping who do not fall under the councils statutory housing duty[1].

[1] For more information about councils main housing duty see: https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/legal/homelessness_applications/local_authority_homelessness_duties/local_authority_main_housing_duty

3.1.2. Modular housing

The term modular housing may refer to any kind of off-site construction, including pre-manufacture, prefabricated, or volumetric methods. A House of Commons report (2019, p.14) refers to all of these under the banner of modern methods of construction (MMC) which includes forms of offsite manufacture for construction, including modular and panellised systems, and timber or steel framed homes. The MMC definition framework identifies seven categories of MMC (MHCLG, 2019), the modular units studied in this research are developed entirely offsite and fall in category 1 which is a systematised approach based on volumetric construction involving the production of three-dimensional units in controlled factory conditions prior to final installation.

3.2. Modular housing as a type of temporary accommodation

To provide an alternative form of temporary accommodation, a number of local authorities, social enterprises and charities have introduced modular housing units for people experiencing homelessness. The number of schemes for people experiencing homelessness using modular units has increased considerably in the last few years. Our report 'Insights into the use of modular housing in addressing homelessness' maps some of the existing projects and categorises them into different types (Karampour and Burgess, 2022). In that research, we identified 27 schemes with a total of 568 units made of modular build. That report shows a diverse range of provision across the country, with variations in the unit construction type and size, the number of units on a site and the type of households housed (ibid).

London Borough of Ealing was the first council in the UK using modular homes as temporary accommodation to house people experiencing homelessness. Westfields Lodge built in 2016, and Lambourn Close, built in 2018, were the first modular schemes used as temporary accommodation to house families that the council has a duty to house. The Social Bite Village in Edinburgh, built in 2018, is another example of using modular homes to house people experiencing homelessness where two people share one modular home. However, Jimmy's modular homes in Cambridge are one of the first in the country where each resident has their own modular home, and the admission criteria is set up to support rough sleepers with multiple support needs who the council does not have a duty to house.

The government, through the 2021-2024 Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP), funds provision of temporary accommodation. In England, if a temporary accommodation scheme built using modern methods of construction aims to receive government grant funding through the RSAP, it needs to have a minimum life expectancy of 60 years and should comply with minimum space standards (MHCLG, 2021, p.8). At the time of our previous research, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

(DLUHC) confirmed that under the 2020-21 round of RSAP, the government has funded modular schemes in Reading, Haringey and Cowlins Mill at Carn Brea, Cornwall. There were also additional schemes under review for funding (Karampour and Burgess, 2022).

4. Jimmy's modular homes

4.1. Jimmy's areas of support and the modular homes

Jimmy's opened in 1995 as Cambridge's first all-year-round night shelter and now offers a much wider range of support including self-contained modular homes for people who would otherwise be sleeping rough. In addition to the modular homes, which will be discussed below, Jimmy's offers other housing options to people experiencing homelessness including:

- Jimmy's East Road providing 20 single person en-suite bedrooms for people who would otherwise be sleeping rough. This is the first place people come into before the Jimmy's team will begin understanding their needs to enable support in the next steps.
- Supported shared houses, which are an option for people after they leave East Road. These shared houses give people the opportunity of living more independently, backed up with the full support provided by a dedicated support worker.
- Jimmy's 451 is a hostel service providing accommodation and intensive support for people who would otherwise be sleeping rough and who have not been able to maintain accommodation anywhere else.

In 2020, Jimmy's launched its first modular homes scheme for people who have been rough sleeping and who would benefit from their own self-contained accommodation, backed up with wraparound support. The homes were designed and built by a team including Allia, New Meaning Foundation and Jimmy's Cambridge. In December 2020, four more modular homes designed and provided by housebuilder The Hill Group were installed on land owned by Cambridge City Council. Six more were launched in January 2021 with a final six being launched in July 2021. In total Jimmy's have 22 modular homes across four different sites in Cambridge. All are self-contained each with a fitted kitchen, living space, bathroom, washing machine and separate bedroom.

4.2. Construction features of Jimmy's modular homes

New Meaning Foundation designed and built the first set of Jimmy's modular homes, while the modular homes on the three other sites were designed, built and donated by housebuilder The Hill Group. The following two sections summarise the key features of the modular homes built by the two construction companies.

4.2.1. The New Meaning Foundation units

New Meaning Foundation is an ethical construction social enterprise in Cambridge focused on building affordable, modern and sustainable modular homes for people who have experienced homelessness. The New Meaning Foundation's modular homes are called SPACE Micro-homes and they are built by the people trained by the Foundation. The Foundation offers training and employment for those living in poverty or disadvantage. This includes young people who have been excluded from school or have been experiencing homelessness (New Meaning Foundation, n.d.).

The six New Meaning Foundation units at Site 1 use volumetric offsite construction, are steel-frames with structural insulated panels and are expected to last 60 years. The units, each measuring 25 square metres, have a front porch and a small garden. The units are designed to be relocatable, with opportunities for the occupants to continue their residency to other sites in the city when the present site is redeveloped (Burgess et al., 2021).

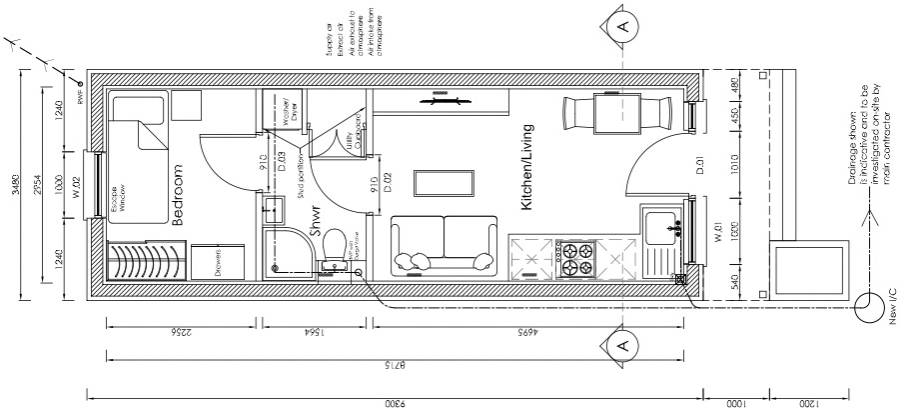

Figure 1-Floor plan of a New Meaning Foundation unit. Source: New Meaning Foundation

Figure 2- New Meaning Foundation units in Cambridge. Photo by: Katy Karampour, 2022

4.2.2. The Hill Group units

In 2019, to mark their 20th year of business, The Hill Group, a housebuilder based in London and the South East, established Foundation 200 to build 200 modular units over five years to be donated and used as temporary accommodation. The modular homes (SoloHaus prototype) have been designed with the help of leading homelessness charities and stakeholder groups, with a minimum 60 year life expectancy. They have been produced using offsite manufacturing methods, and will be sited on small plots of land, such as former garage sites, across Hill's area of operation (Karampour and Burgess, 2022).

Foundation 200 works with local authorities and housing associations to source land and secure planning for each of the small sites. Each site will also have a local homeless charity partner, which will be gifted the completed homes and will manage the re-homing process. The homes will be handed over to the partner charity fully furnished. Since the launch of the Foundation 200 SoloHaus prototype in April 2020, Hill has seen significant demand from local authorities, charities, housing associations, suppliers and consultants for purchasing SoloHaus homes, as well as considerable interest in Hill's pledge to deliver 200 homes (Karampour and Burgess, 2022).

The individual SoloHaus homes are stackable and moveable. The units are manufactured in 20 days; each home weighs approximately 9.5t and is delivered on a flat bed lorry and lifted into location. Hill's units provide 24 square metres of living space and heated with an air source heat pump (SoloHaus, n.d.).

Figure 3- Floor plan of a SoloHaus unit. Source: https://solohaus.co.uk/the-solution/

Figure 4- SoloHaus units in Cambridge. Photo by: Katy Karampour 2022

4.3. Land ownership and planning arrangements

The Site 1 units are installed on a leased piece of land owned by a church. The land is rented from the church by a charity company called Allia, and Jimmy's rents the modular homes from Allia. The site is identified for redevelopment in a few years and the modular homes on that site can be moved elsewhere.

The other three sites are built on council owned land that the council identified either on the edge of housing estates or on underused garage sites. These are sites that could not be used for permanent housing development but could get planning permission for interim housing schemes. The three sites have permissions which will be reviewed every 10 years. Jimmy's has leased the land from the council but owns the modular homes which were donated by Hill.

4.4. Financial arrangements

Residents pay rent to Jimmy's at the maximum local housing allowance rate for a one-bedroom home in Cambridge which is £178.36 per week (Cambridge City Council, n.d.). The majority of Jimmy's residents are entitled to Housing Benefit and Jimmy's provides support for residents to apply for Housing Benefit. To make it easier for all concerned parties, especially Jimmy's, the entitled Housing Benefit is paid to Jimmy's directly instead of being paid to the residents, as Jimmy's provides supported accommodation.

It is critical for organisations like Jimmy's to know what they can claim through Housing Benefit to work out how much income they can get through that income source to make the project viable. Housing Benefit covers a specific range of eligible costs, including the tenant's rent, communal bills for energy and water, maintenance and insurance of the site. The support provision cannot be covered through Housing Benefit. Jimmy's uses other sources of income including donations or grants for the support that they provide for the residents.

Jimmy's pay all communal and non-communal bills (e.g., electricity bills of the units, TV licenses, etc.) and recovers some of the amount through a service charge payable by residents which is generally around £10 a week; the remaining running costs are recovered through charitable donations Jimmy's receives.

5. Jimmy's resident experiences

This section presents the resident life experiences before they move into their modular homes, including the causes of experiencing homelessness and their living conditions before moving to the modular homes, what they think about living in a modular home, and what they want to achieve while they are living there, including finding employment and securing permanent housing.

5.1. The cohort's profile

All the residents of Jimmy's modular homes are single male and female individuals who have been experiencing rough sleeping and whom the council does not have a duty to house. Their age ranges from early 30s to mid 60s. At the time of writing this report in Autumn 2022, based on the information provided by Jimmy's and analysis of the data from Charitylog:

- All 22 units across the four sites are occupied
- 3 out of 22 residents are women, and the rest are male
- Most of the residents identify themselves as white British
- Most of the residents are of medium to high support needs.

5.2. Life experiences before moving to a modular home

5.2.1. Causes of experiencing homelessness

This section presents some of the reasons that modular home residents shared with us about what led to the loss of their home. For the interviewed residents, the reasons behind experiencing homelessness were varied and often complex. Some did not have a home to go to after leaving the care system or prison, while others started experiencing homelessness due to escaping a violent or abusive relationship, breaking down of a relationship, losing a job, mental or physical health problems, or substance misuse. The interviewees also thought that being homeless can, in turn, make many of these problems harder to resolve. For example, one of the residents told us:

> *Basically, I was homeless like once before, when I was 17 my mum kicked me out, and then, I got a job, worked for 18 years. And then in one week, my*

> *girlfriend died and the house was in her name so I had to move out and in the same week I lost my job. (Resident at Site 3)*

Family tragedy, indeed, was mentioned by some residents as one of the main reasons of experiencing homelessness:

> *I had an unsettled childhood, but I was doing ok until 21 years ago. I was with a lady and I had a beautiful boy and I lost them both in an accident. That happened and the world just opened up for me. […] I didn't know what I was doing [...] I was completely lost. (Resident at Site 1)*

Many of the interviewed residents told us that when they were homeless, their health and wellbeing deteriorated and they faced exploitation and abuse.

5.2.2. Living conditions before moving to a modular home

Before moving to their modular homes, the interviewed residents were living in variety of different places, including other types of temporary accommodation like move-on shared houses, hostels, night shelters and B&Bs as well as sofa surfing, sleeping in a car, sleeping in a tent or campervan, and rough sleeping. Most of the interviewed residents have experienced moving between temporary accommodation and rough sleeping or sofa surfing before moving to their modular homes:

> *Five years ago, I had a house but I broke up with my wife and then I became homeless. I lived on the streets for about four years. I was living like, sofa to sofa. And living in my car for about a year or two. And it was hard to get somewhere to live. (Resident at Site 1)*

Another resident who had been living in one of the modular homes for a year when we talked to them told us about their experience of moving between being homeless and living in temporary accommodation:

> *I was in Jimmy's night shelter and other night shelters before […] I've been there like loads of times. Just was going round and round, hostel to hostel, hostel to street, street to hostel […]. (Resident at Site 2)*

Some of the residents shared with us the poor living conditions that they experienced:

> *I got kicked out [of a covid hotel] for letting my girlfriend in. And we lived in a tent in the graveyard for about six months. (Resident at Site 3)*

5.3. Experience of living in a modular home

This section reflects on the residents' experiences of living in a modular home. Most of the residents expressed their appreciation of the opportunity to have a home. The interviewed residents expressed their feelings by saying, for example:

> *Best thing ever happened to me [...] is to have somewhere to live. I don't need to wait for the public toilets to open in the morning. (Resident at Site 3)*

The following sections will discuss some of the main aspects of their experiences which the residents shared with us about their lives in the modular homes.

5.3.1. Sense of privacy and having an address

The first point that almost all the interviewed residents told us about was being able to have their own private space with a front door which is secure from the outside world. The following quotes are some of the examples of how residents feel about their modular home:

> *The privacy is the best thing, you can do whatever you want to do. Sometimes it's hard to engage with other people and you need to be on your own. (Resident at Site 1)*

> *I lived in hostels or shared houses for quite a long time [...], it is 10 years since I have a front door. And just that difference to have that door, you know, that is a major difference. (Resident at Site 2)*

> *I've got the security of knowing that I can leave my stuff at home and it's not gonna go missing. (Resident at Site 4)*

Whilst most of the residents appreciated the sanctuary and safety of their homes, some described occasions when they have not felt safe. For example, one of the residents who is living on a site which was targeted by County Lines[2] told us that sometimes they do not feel safe at their modular home and attempt not to go out later in the day:

[2] County lines is the name given to drug dealing where organised criminal groups use phone lines to move and supply drugs. They exploit vulnerable people by recruiting them to distribute drugs.

> *There's been county lines going on here [...] you can get threatened by them, and I don't feel safe there right now. I go out during the day only and not in the evening. (Resident at Site 4)*

Having an address was mentioned by the interviewed residents as a very important benefit of living in a modular home:

> *Well, it's always hard to do things if you're homeless, with getting stuff sent somewhere things may get lost [...]. Living here and having an address I could apply for my driving licence. (Resident at Site 2)*

5.3.2. The size of the space and the available amenities inside the unit

Most of residents expressed that they are content with the size of the units which is 25m^2 for the New Meaning Foundation units and 24m^2 for Hill units:

> *For one person it's [the size] fine. [...] I was living in a tent before so it's fine for me. (Resident at Site 2)*

Residents who talked to us expressed their satisfaction with most of the amenities that they have inside their modular home:

> *I have everything, I have microwave, fridge, television, washing machine, ironing board, iron, fan, hoover. (Resident at Site 2)*

Not having an oven in Hill's units was mentioned by some of the residents as something that could be improved:

> *[It] ain't got a proper oven, it is the only thing missing. It got little two rings [hob] and a microwave. (Resident at Site 2)*

However, they told us that if they want an oven or any other additional facilities inside their modular homes, Jimmy's endeavours to provide them with what they need:

> *I didn't have an oven, I asked for one when I moved in. I also asked for an air fryer which is great. (Resident at Site 2)*

For most of the interviewed residents, the living room which includes the kitchen area is the most favoured place to spend time watching TV, playing video games, reading books and for some, cooking in the kitchen. The bedroom was considered by most as the least used space.

In terms of the comfort of the units, some of the residents living in the New Meaning Foundation and The Hill Group units indicated that the thermal comfort of their homes is satisfactory in winter but not in summer as their unit can get very hot.

5.3.3. Neighbourly relations with other modular home residents

The interviewees shared mixed feelings about their modular home neighbours. While most of them mentioned that they live in harmony with their neighbours, some have experienced tensions. The following quote is an example of a neighbourly relationship:

> *We look after each other, check on each other, make sure we're okay, share shopping delivery among each other. (Resident at Site 2)*

However, the following quote shows a physical clash between two neighbours which resulted in eviction of the person who attacked the following interviewee:

> *A person used to live here [who] hit me in head with a baseball bat one night. He went to prison […]. I was expecting it, but I didn't think he would use a bat on me. (Resident at Site 3)*

On the contrary, two of residents living on Site 2 told us about a unique friendship that they formed as neighbours:

> *We keep feeding each other and look after each other. I make coffee and ask [name of the neighbour] to join me for breakfast […]. Sometimes we do our shopping together […]. (Resident at Site 2)*

Some of the residents also reported building relationships with neighbours beyond the modular home sites (an example of this relationship is provided in section 6.4.)

5.3.4. The support provided by Jimmy's team

This section overviews some of the accounts of residents about the support that they receive from the Jimmy's team. The topic of support will be further discussed later in this report in more detail. In general, most of the interviewed residents expressed their satisfaction with Jimmy's services and support. They told us that they think their support workers are helpful and available when needed:

> *Anytime I need [something], I just have to pick up the phone and call my support worker. (Resident at Site 4)*

In terms of the frequency of visits by their support workers, most of the residents showed satisfaction. The types of support that the residents said they may need are around helping with their benefit applications and other social services, registering on Home-Link, filling out various forms, applying for passports, driving licences and Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards, as well as supporting them to find employment. Here is a quote from one of the residents talking about the ways that Jimmy's team have supported them:

> *My benefit was stopped […]. So Jimmy's helped me to get to food bank, and they helped me to get into the benefit system again. My support worker helped me to get my CSCS card to start working again and he helped me to get my new passport and driving licence. Basically, if you ask anything within reason, they do it for you. (Resident at Site 3)*

5.4. Future plans

The interviewed residents shared with us some of their aspirations while they are living in their modular homes, ranging from managing their alcohol and drug consumption, to being able to find employment and get the necessary training and documentation required to get a job they would like to do, to being able to secure permanent accommodation where they can settle down. Here are two of the responses of residents about what they hope to achieve while they are living in their modular home:

> *I hope to get my own flat that I could stay in. (Resident at Site 2)*

> *I want to get fully clean […] and find a removal job, I need to be a busy man. (Resident at Site 2)*

Some of the residents told us that they still need time to figure out what they want to do.

The interviewed residents described the different and complex reasons that led them to experience homelessness. They explained how, before moving to their modular homes, they were living in a variety of different places, some in very poor conditions. Most of the residents expressed their appreciation of having the opportunity to have their own home and their satisfaction with their homes and with Jimmy's services and support. The residents shared with us a range of outcomes that they would like to achieve while living in a modular home.

6. Reflections on different aspects of the modular homes

This section reflects on some of the key aspects of the modular homes by summarising the views of Jimmy's staff, as well as the accounts of the modular home residents and other interviewees.

6.1. Admission setup

6.1.1. Referral criteria and selection process

Modular homes vacancies are considered at the Temporary Hostel Allocations Panel (hereafter: the panel). In the panel, applications are considered in line with the referral criteria discussed below and the decision power is 50% for Jimmy's and 50% for Cambridge City Council.

Jimmy's and Cambridge City Council hold regular panels to determine who is approved and then place them on a waiting list which allows for future residents to receive pre-tenancy support before moving to a modular home. The pre-tenancy support period was introduced recently to address some issues (as discussed in 5.2.2 section). The key referral criteria for future modular home residents are as follows:

- Currently in vulnerable accommodation;
- Eligible for the "one bedroom" rate of Local Housing Allowance;
- Locally connected to Cambridge City;
- Struggling in the cycle of homelessness by being a 'repeat visitor' of homelessness services and facing difficulties fitting into other supported housing pathways;
- Willingness to accept support to maintain the tenancy.

The modular homes are conceived as an alternative to the 'housing-ready' hostel pathway and the 300+ supported bed spaces in the city. Generally, the residents admitted to live in modular homes are those who are unlikely to succeed in other types of temporary housing offered in the city and generally are of higher needs than those living in shared houses, except for the first scheme for which the selected residents were of low to medium need.

6.1.2. Challenges with the referral system

In the first scheme, candidates were personally known to Jimmy's staff, and were selected based on who would benefit most from living in a modular home. However, for the three other sites and subsequent residents of Site 1, the decisions were made by the allocation panel who rely on referral applications made by other homelessness agencies. As a result, some referred residents may not have been previously supported by Jimmy's. In some cases, Jimmy's staff felt a lack of transparency in the referral applications, which can limit the understanding of an applicants' background and impairs Jimmy's ability to provide the appropriate level of support:

> *Some referral agencies [...] may portray the resident in a positive light because they want them to get into the modular homes. But then by doing so, we don't get a true sense of the person and that's not to say if we did, we wouldn't accept them. That's to say, if we did, we might say actually, we're gonna give you a mod, but in four months, and we're gonna spend time working with you on these issues first. (Interview with Jimmy's management team)*

As will be discussed further below, the modular home residents are encouraged to engage with support, but they are not obliged to do so. As mentioned by support workers, if the residents have higher needs (e.g., susceptible to substance misuse or dealing with mental health issues) and have not had previous engagement with Jimmy's support team, they may face difficulties in improving their circumstances while living in a modular home.

6.2. Tenancy setup

6.2.1. Tenancy agreement

The length of tenure for all the modular homes is temporary with a maximum length of two years under planning application requirements. However, in practice, if the residents are not able to move on to permanent accommodation within this timeframe for a variety of reasons, including unavailability of suitable social housing options to move to and the residents not being ready to move on into independent living, the tenancy agreements can be extended beyond the initial two-year timeframe, subject to agreement from the council.

For the first scheme the residents were initially offered a licence similar to that used for shared houses and hostels. However, this has subsequently changed and now for all of the residents of the four sites, assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) are in place, under the planning application requirements. If an eviction is unavoidable due to serious violence or serious criminal activity, this type of tenancy agreement has implications for the eviction

process. In case of the need to evict someone, those with a license can be evicted at short notice, while for those with ASTs the process can take two months or more if a court application for eviction is needed. This can create difficulties for the other residents living on that site:

> *There are massive issues with ASTs for this kind of accommodation. At the moment if you live in a shared house or in a hostel and if you beat someone up then we can review your licence tonight. If you breach the license agreement, we can immediately evict you for that reason. Typically, you have to move out in 7 or 28 days. But with ASTs, we need to serve a Section 21 notice […]. The whole process including court application can take four months. (Interview with Jimmy's management team)*

Section 21 enables landlords to repossess their properties from assured shorthold tenants without providing a reason or ground for possession (known as the no-fault ground for eviction). The Queen's Speech 2022 committed to a Bill in the 2022-23 session to abolish 'no-fault' Section 21 evictions in the rented sector (Wilson et al., 2022). If the Bill comes into force, it will make it challenging for organisations like Jimmy's to proceed with eviction in circumstances that an eviction is unavoidable. Although there are proposed changes to the legislation around supported accommodation and the type of tenancy offered, it is not yet certain how this may or may not benefit organisations providing supported accommodation.

The National Housing Federation (NHF) (2019) raised the same issue by publishing a briefing which discusses the potential ways that the repeal of Section 21 might affect social landlords and the providers of temporary housing. They argue that there are circumstances in which no-fault possession is essential and the statutory regime needs to provide for this (NHF, 2019). The government has said they will introduce new, specialist grounds for possession for supported and temporary accommodation (Wilson et al., 2022).

In the case of Cambridge modular homes, if the reason for eviction is dangerous anti-social behaviour, not being able to evict the violent person on the no-fault ground can impact the management of the site and the safety of other residents. The below example highlights this issue:

> *We've got someone on site who beat up a neighbour with a golf club. He's still living there [at the time of interview]. We have two empty modular homes at the moment because we can't put anyone next to him. (Interview with Jimmy's management team)*

6.2.2. Pre-tenancy work

For the first scheme (Site 1), the Jimmy's team had already established relationships with the residents who later moved into the modular homes. However, some of the residents who were referred to the allocation panel by other service providers moved in without having any relationship with Jimmy's support workers. Jimmy's support workers and the management team think that the recently introduced pre-tenancy work could help in understanding the needs of the residents and in creating a relationship with them before they move in.

During the pre-tenancy work, which could be between four to six months, the residents are assigned to a support worker and have a chance to develop a relationship with them and to understand what they can expect from living in a modular home. One of the support workers explained to us what can be covered during the pre-tenancy period:

> *We can go through the tenancy agreement with them, the support plan, the expectations, the importance of their engagement, the cost of things, that they need to be respectful of the neighbours and other residents. We can also start their Home-Link application, discuss what we could offer them in the future in terms of getting them a housing band and getting their own tenancy, finding volunteering and employment opportunities, getting CSCS cards, and attending health and safety courses. (Interview with one of the support workers)*

6.3. Support setup

6.3.1. Supporting the residents

Jimmy's offers generic floating support to its modular home residents. Typically, each full-time support worker at Jimmy's supports 10 residents. The allocated support worker prepares a support plan with the resident in which they will assess the person's needs. Depending on the support required, the support worker provides it directly or helps the resident by referring or signposting them to the right organisations:

> *If they need help sorting out their benefits [...], then we're going to help them with that. But if they're interested in a detox, for example, then we would engage them with the drug and alcohol services. (Interview with Jimmy's management team)*

The support plan contains the following six sections:

- Resettlement (e.g., future accommodation options for the residents, if a Home-link application is made)
- Engagement (e.g., agreeing the level of engagement with the support team, whether the residents need to engage with external professionals)
- Financial wellbeing (e.g., if the resident needs support to budget, if he/she has any debts)
- Keeping healthy (e.g., what might impact on the residents' ability to maintain a good level of health?)
- Staying safe (e.g., if the resident fleeing or is at risk of violence, if the resident is at risk of exploitation)
- Promoting independence (e.g., whether the resident is able to cook, clean, budget)

There is no fixed number of hours per week for engagement with support workers, it depends on what is agreed in the support plan between the residents and their support worker. Some of the support workers aim to see their allocated residents regularly but they do not always find this to work:

> *I try to see them about 3 hours a week [per person] […] I set an appointment with them but due to their lifestyle it's not guaranteed that I can see them for 3 hours per week. (Interview with one of the support workers)*

In general, residents of the first scheme are reported to be more receptive to engaging with support compared to the other three sites. Limited engagement of some of the residents with support was mentioned by support workers as one of the main barriers to the residents' progress to move on to independent living. As mentioned by the support workers, because the residents have ASTs for their modular home, engagement with support is optional. In hostels and shared houses, as the residents are given licences, Jimmy's may be able to encourage the residents to be engaged with support more effectively by issuing non-engagement letters.

Support workers apply different strategies to have effective engagement with the residents by, for example, building a relationship with them and understanding when and how they can be more receptive to support. One of the support workers shared with us some of the strategies that he uses:

> *They don't wanna spend more than about 20 minutes with you […], if you go first thing in the morning, they're too poorly to do any interaction. If you go too*

late in the afternoon, they may be under the influence [...]. Sometimes I don't book appointments, I just turn up on site. Because then I get a better picture of what's going on. (Interview with one of the support workers)

Some of the support workers and those in the management team told us that having a support worker 24/7 on-site is not an ideal approach as the residents may feel that they are being watched and that Jimmy's does not trust them.

6.3.2. Level of support need

Jimmy's staff assess the level of residents' needs by considering the main issues they are facing and how they are managing those issues; residents are then categorised into low, medium and high support needs:

Essentially, it's based on two concepts. One is what are the actual issues that person is facing. So are they using drugs and alcohol, do they have mental health issues that are affecting their daily lives? So that's one part. But its second part is how are they managing those issues? Because, if you got an alcohol problem, but actually you're managing it and you are gradually reducing your alcohol consumption, that's not high need [...] if you're using crack and you drink hard, and you're refusing to get any help for that, and causing anti-social behaviour, then you'd be high needs. (Interview with Jimmy's management team)

Determining the level of need can be subjective as there is no concrete standardised categorisation of the needs and the residents may move between categories depending on their life circumstances. For Site 1, current residents are mostly of low to medium level of need while for the other three sites they are mostly of medium to high level of need. The level of support need of the residents being lower in Site 1, as explained by the support workers, is one of the reasons that has resulted in the site being less problematic to manage compared with other sites. The other reasons for Site 1 working better than the other sites includes more engagement of the residents with support and the pre-tenancy work that the residents at Site 1 had before moving in.

6.4. Physical setup

6.4.1. The design of the sites

The land provided for the construction of the modular homes is either not suitable for other types of housing development or earmarked for future development and is available

temporarily. Jimmy's does not have control over the allocation of sites. However, the size and shape of the land can have implications for the design of the sites and the quality of the built environment.

Site 1 and Site 3 have a green space in front of the units. For Site 1, the green space is generously sized which gives the option to expand the onsite facilities, such as having a gardening space and adding a tool shed for one of the residents. The green space at Site 1 is fenced off from the surrounding area which provides some privacy for the residents. For Site 3, the size of the green space is small, but it has still created a nice space for residents.

Site 2 and Site 4 are in more compact settings and are surrounded by housing estates. For both these two sites, a public footway goes through the site which limits the level of privacy compared with Site 1 and Site 3. Support workers told us that they think the site layout (a public footway going through the site and not having a fence) contributes to the vulnerability of these sites to be targeted by County Lines. Hence, the design of site contributes to making the site safer and more private which should be considered in the future design of modular home schemes.

In addition, the orange colour of Hill's units was considered by some of the interviewed residents and support workers as not being the most appropriate colour as it stands out and visibly distinguishes a group of individuals who are already marginalised and discriminated against.

6.4.2. Number of units per site

In terms of the number of units on a site, both the Jimmy's team and the residents suggested that six modular homes on a site should be the maximum number. This is due to reasons such as avoiding complications of managing the scheme and the mix of residents on a single site. One of the residents shared with us that:

> *I think six is enough. Because I think more people can cause more arguments and you don't know what kind of people are coming around and they could cause trouble. (Resident at Site 1)*

However, Cambridge is short of accommodation and maximising the number of units on a site means more people will be given the chance to live in the modular homes. Perhaps, if a site has more homes, then the service provider should consider accommodating people with lower needs on the site, and/or expanding the support offer by increasing the number of support workers or by providing onsite support.

6.4.3. CCTV

All the four sites have CCTV in operation. Interviewed residents told us that they feel safer having cameras on sites. In fact, one of the residents mentioned that they specifically asked for CCTV to be installed on their site. In answering the question as to whether the residents feel as though they are being watched having cameras on site, most of the interviewed residents said no and one commented:

> *I asked [the name of the support worker] about the CCTV and he said it's recording and we only check it if something happens. So it is not monitored. (Resident at Site 2)*

6.4.4. Maintenance

The Jimmy's maintenance team who is responsible for all the yearly services and routine check-ups of the modular homes and the other temporary accommodation that Jimmy's manages, told us that compared to shared houses, modular homes require less maintenance. They reflected that in shared houses, where people share facilities, residents have less interest in maintaining their living space. Whereas the modular home residents generally take pride in their homes and look after their space more.

The team also shared with us that the maintenance of the modular homes is mostly straightforward unless a new technology is involved (e.g., heat pumps for Hill's units) in which case they need to learn how that technology works. The maintenance team also mentioned that sometimes they have difficulties accessing the units due to residents' availability and the lock system.

7. Outcomes

This section reviews some of the outcomes of the four Cambridge modular home schemes. It is important, however, to begin this section with a caveat: it is challenging to ascertain what is a good outcome. For the modular home residents, desired outcomes can vary from one person to another depending on their life experiences and their goals. Whilst for some reducing alcohol consumption might be an important outcome, for others, it might be moving into settled long-term accommodation. A person-centred support plan which is prepared individually for every resident with their support worker serves as a good starting point to agree on goals and desired outcomes.

7.1. Housing outcomes

7.1.1. Moving-on, surrenders and evictions

Since the opening of the Cambridge modular home projects (Site 1 in June 2020, Site 2 in December 2020, Site 3 in January 2021 and Site 4 in July 2021), one resident moved on to a social tenancy, several surrendered their tenancy and moved to other types of temporary accommodation, and a few have been evicted from their modular homes. The reasons behind these outcomes are discussed below in turn.

Cambridge City Council allocates council and social housing through Home-Link which is the choice based letting scheme. So far, one of the modular home residents who used to live at Site 1 moved on to a flat with a secured social tenancy. Finding a suitable home took longer than expected for this resident as he owned a dog and finding a property where keeping a pet is allowed was more difficult.

Some of the residents moved from their modular homes to another type of temporary accommodation, mostly to a shared house, for two protective reasons; one, being targeted by County Lines and the other, being at risk as result of anti-social behaviour of another resident on the site. Jimmy's support workers told us that one of the issues that the modular home schemes are facing is the County Lines operations on the sites. County lines are organised criminal groups using phone lines to move and supply drugs. They exploit vulnerable people by recruiting them to distribute the drugs or using their home as a base for dealing drugs, a process known as cuckooing (Metropolitan Police, n.d.). As the modular homes are occupied by a single person, the residents can be more susceptible to abuse by County Lines than in a shared house. Hence, if someone is at risk of exploitation by gang groups, Jimmy's, as a protective measure, will move them to a shared house.

The other reason to move someone to another type of temporary accommodation is to protect them from the anti-social behaviour of the other residents. For example, in one case, when a physically violent resident was in the process of being evicted, Jimmy's had to move two of the other residents to other temporary accommodation for their safety. To move the person from the modular home to another type of temporary accommodation means that resident surrenders their modular home tenancy agreement.

The main reason for issuing an eviction notice for modular home residents is threatening behaviour to staff or other residents. No eviction has been issued so far for someone living at Site 1 while the other three sites have all witnessed incidents which led to an eviction.

7.1.2. Diversity of desired housing outcomes for residents

The interviewed residents shared with us what the desired housing outcome is for them. Whilst for most of the residents, eventually moving on into a secured social tenancy is the most desired outcome, a few residents expressed that for them being able to stay in their modular home permanently is what they perceive as the best outcome. This group of residents are generally older in age and feel comfortable in their modular homes and the support that they receive from Jimmy's.

For example, one of the residents explained to us their reason for the preference to stay in their modular home:

> *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. (Resident at Site 1)*

Of those residents who expressed the hope of moving on to a secured social tenancy, some felt that they are still not ready for that move and they still need support before feeling confident to live fully independently. Mental health and substance misuse were the main issues that the residents felt they needed to overcome before being able to move on. Some of them perceived that a two-year period is not enough for them to become fully independent.

However, a couple of residents, mostly younger ones, expressed that they would like to move on and have their own independent life as soon as possible. A couple of the residents felt frustrated with the housing band system and the bidding process. For example, one of the residents told us:

I think I am on Band C, which is why it is taking so long to get a place […]. I want to go about my life […], find a decent partner […]. When I moved in here, I was told I will move on in 2 years but at the minute I think I'm stuck here. (Resident at Site 1)

7.2. Physical and mental health outcomes

Homelessness often results from a combination of adverse events and experiences in one's life which affects the physical and mental health of those experiencing homelessness. Evidence shows that the health of people experiencing rough sleeping is significantly worse than that of the general population (Local Government Association, 2017). In fact, 46 per cent of people experiencing rough sleeping reported a long-term physical health problem and 50 per cent had a diagnosed mental health problem, compared with 28 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively, in the general population (Local Government Association, 2017 and Public Health England, 2020). According to ONS (2018) data, between 2013 and 2017, average death age for rough sleepers was 44 years for men and 42 years for women, compared with 76 for men and 81 for women in the general population (Public Health England, 2020).

The residents who talked to us reported that most of them have experienced physical and mental health problems. In terms of physical health, they reported that before moving to their modular home, they suffered from dental problems, chronic diseases, accidents which severely affected their health, and physical issues related to alcohol and drug misuse. In terms of mental health, they shared with us their experiences of anxiety and depression as a result of living in insecure conditions. Some of the residents expressed how experiencing abuse at a young age at home, growing up in the care system, being in custody for a period of time, exploitations that they faced, and life traumas, deteriorated their mental health.

Living in the modular homes and receiving support from the Jimmy's team helped the residents to access specialised health services by booking appointments and signposting them to appropriate services. The residents told us that access to some of the services including GPs and hospital appointments are easier and Jimmy's support workers facilitated the access, but for some services including dental appointments and specialised mental health appointments, they felt the waiting times were too long.

In addition to access to services, the residents told us that for some using substances, drinking and sleeping outside as well as a lack of life skills (e.g., to eat well and take care of one's hygiene), before moving to their modular home affected their health adversely. Having

their own home and receiving support from the Jimmy's team enabled them to take care of themselves and improve their physical and mental health. Having a shelter from the outside world was mentioned by residents as a very important part of their health improvement. The following quote from one of the residents exemplifies this:

> *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. (Resident at Site 1)*

To provide in-house mental health support, Jimmy's has hired an in-house mental health support worker to address the needs of its residents.

7.3. Drug and alcohol use management

Homeless Link (2014) reports the high prevalence of drug and alcohol misuse among those using homelessness services. Using information supplied by over 2,500 people, Homeless Link (2014) highlights that 39% of participants reported they take drugs or are recovering from a drug problem and 27% reported that they have or are recovering from an alcohol problem. Rates of alcohol and drug use are four times higher for people experiencing homelessness than in the general population, the situation is worse for rough sleepers (Crisis, n.d.).

Some of the modular home residents that we talked to reported that they have had an experience of substance misuse. Most of the residents expressed that they are on track to manage their alcohol and drug use. For example, one resident told us:

> *It's been two months that I stopped taking drugs. […]. Only for Jimmy's that I'd be on this footpath. […] my lung died because of my crack misuse for over 10 years. (Resident at Site 1)*

Whilst a few residents have overcome their drug misuse when living in the modular homes, some shared with us the difficulties they have faced in manging their drug and alcohol use, including the length of time that they have been misusing, temptations in the environment around them (e.g., availability of drugs or being around friends who are using) and lack of specialised support. The following quote shows how breaking this habit is challenging for one of the residents:

> *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. (Resident at Site 2)*

Interviewed residents also reflected on how their dependence on alcohol and drugs has adversely affected their chances of having a job.

7.4. Social integration and relationship with family

As discussed earlier, the interviewed residents have mixed feelings about their modular home neighbours. Some of the residents formed a good neighbourly relationship with each other and some prefer to have little interaction with their neighbours. In terms of the wider neighbourhood, most of the residents and Jimmy's support workers reported that the residents live in harmony with their neighbours living in the surrounding areas and except for a few minor occasions they have not had any issues with one another.

One of the residents shared with us his experience of integrating with the local community:

> *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. (Resident at Site 4)*

Most of the interviewed residents reported that after living in the modular homes they managed to improve their relationships with their family and friends. One of the residents told us about his plans to move to a social tenancy to be able to take custody of his son. However, the level of improvement in family relations is not the same for everyone and some residents reported the difficulties of rebuilding relationships.

7.5. Skills and Employment

All the interviewed residents, except for a couple, told us that they are looking forward to finding employment or learning a new skill. The only resident who is currently employed (by the Big Issue) had the job before moving to the modular home. The areas of work that residents said they would like to work in include construction, delivery and driving, catering, and retail. Some of the interviewees have done some voluntary work since they started to live at their modular homes, but have yet to secure a job. One of the residents who is actively looking for a job told us:

> *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. (Resident at Site 1)*

Another resident who has done some volunteering moving jobs told us how much they enjoyed that experience as it was the first time in their life doing any work and they are looking forward to doing more. However, they acknowledged that before being able to secure a job, they need to overcome their drug misuse. The main barrier to find a job, as support workers told us, relates to drug and alcohol misuse as well as physical and mental health issues.

In terms of training and skill development, at the time of writing this report, none of the residents were attending a training course but a few of the residents expressed their willingness to sign up for a course in future.

8. Conclusions: the role of modular homes in addressing homelessness

This final section of the report summarises the key findings of the research, proposes some recommendations for other service providers and local policy makers who are managing or planning to manage modular home schemes as temporary accommodation, and finally reflects on some of the main conclusions drawn from this research.

8.1. Summary of findings

The aim of this research was to provide local and national policy makers and modular home service providers with an evidence base about the use of modular homes to temporarily house people experiencing homelessness by studying the schemes in Cambridge managed by Jimmy's Cambridge. Jimmy's provides 22 modular homes across four different sites for people experiencing rough sleeping in Cambridge. In 2020, Jimmy's launched its first modular homes scheme which was designed and built by a team including Allia and New Meaning Foundation. In 2020 and 2021, 16 more modular homes designed and provided by housebuilder The Hill Group were installed on three sites owned by Cambridge City Council. All the modular homes are self-contained accommodation, backed up with wraparound support provided by Jimmy's.

For this research we interviewed a variety of stakeholders, including the modular home residents, to understand their views on the modular homes and to what extent living in a modular home has affected their lives. The residents shared with us the different and complex reasons that led them to lose their home. Before moving to their modular homes, the interviewed residents were living in a variety of different places, some in very poor conditions. Most of the residents expressed their appreciation of having the opportunity to have their own home. They said that their modular homes gave them sense of privacy and security and expressed their satisfaction with the homes, as well as with Jimmy's services and support. The residents shared with us a range of desired outcomes that they would like to achieve while living in a modular home, including managing their alcohol and drug consumption, being able to find employment and get the necessary training and documentation required to get a job, and being able to secure permanent accommodation where they can settle down long-term.

To better understand the benefits and risks of using modular homes as a type of temporary accommodation, in this report we reflected on some of the key aspects of the modular

homes including the allocation process, pre-tenancy work, tenancy agreements, support provision and the physical aspects of the modular home schemes.

An allocation panel determines who receives a modular home tenancy. Generally, the applicants allocated a unit are those who are considered unlikely to prosper in the other types of temporary housing offered in the city and generally are of higher need (e.g., having drug misuse issues and dealing with mental health issues) than those living in shared houses. The allocation panel relies on referral applications made by other local homelessness agencies.

Pre-tenancy work has recently been introduced by Jimmy's for future residents to establish relationships between the support workers and the prospective residents before they move into the modular homes. It is hoped that this could improve engagement with the support offered by Jimmy's (e.g., more interactions with the support workers) and facilitate the transition to living in a modular home (e.g., paying the service charge on time and managing their alcohol and drug consumption).

Modular home residents are offered assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs). This security of tenure is working well in most cases. However, in the case of an unavoidable eviction (e.g., because of threatening behaviour from a tenant living on a modular home site), processing times for the eviction of AST holders can be long which may affect the safety of other residents on the site.

Jimmy's offers floating support to the modular home residents. Every resident works with an allocated support worker to prepare a support plan based on the person's expressed needs. Depending on the support required, the support worker provides it directly or helps the resident by referring or signposting them to the most appropriate organisations. Residents of the first scheme are reported to be more receptive to engaging with support compared to the residents of the other three sites. It is believed that this is because pre-tenancy work was carried out with the residents of the first scheme and they were carefully chosen based on their perceived readiness to live independently. However, for the subsequent schemes, units were allocated based on referrals and there was not necessarily any pre-existing relationship between the resident and the support workers, nor was there any requirement to engage with support as a condition of receiving a tenancy.

The support workers felt that the residents who chose not to engage with the support offered were least likely to be able to move on to permanent accommodation and maintain a tenancy independently, because without addressing some of the issues such as substance use, it could be challenging to maintain their tenancy. Pre-tenancy work with prospective

residents is understood to help to ensure that they are engaged with support when they move into a modular home.

In terms of the physical setup of the modular home schemes, the research suggested that the layout of the site and provision of green space can affect the experience of the residents. Although organisations like Jimmy's do not have a choice about the land provided for the construction of the modular homes, the interviews with residents showed that Site 1 scheme, which has a generously sized fenced green space, provided a more private and desirable living experience for residents than the other three schemes. In addition, support workers felt that the site layout of two of the sites, for example, with a public footway going through the site and not having a fence, could contribute to the vulnerability of the sites being targeted by County Lines.

To be able to successfully manage a scheme and the mix of residents accommodated, the Jimmy's team and the residents suggested that six modular homes on a site should be the maximum number. For a scheme where the residents have relatively high needs, as is the case in the Cambridge schemes currently, it was felt to be better to keep the number of units on a site small, given the need for ongoing support for residents and the need to be able to manage a community made up of diverse people. If a scheme has more homes, then the service provider may need to consider accommodating people with lower needs on the site, and/or expanding their support level by providing onsite support or increasing the number of support workers.

Despite the general view that the best outcome for people living in temporary accommodation is to move on to a permanent tenancy, the research showed that what is considered a good outcome varies from one person to another depending on their life experiences and goals. Whilst for most of the residents, eventually moving on to a secure long-term tenancy is a desired outcome, some felt they needed more time before feeling confident to move on. A few residents expressed that being able to stay in their modular home permanently is what they perceive as the best outcome. This group of residents are generally older in age and feel comfortable in their modular homes and the support that they receive from Jimmy's.

A key purpose of temporary accommodation, including the modular homes, is to support people experiencing homelessness to move on to permanent long-term accommodation and live independently. Although the modular home residents have ASTs, live in their own homes and are responsible for some of their housing costs (including paying a service charge), they receive extensive support from Jimmy's. Moving on means independently managing all aspects of their lives, including paying their rent and bills. When people move

on, they will not receive such intensive support from Jimmy's or other service providers. The transition from living in supported accommodation to living fully independently can be challenging for some, according to the support workers.

Physical and mental health improvements as well as managing drug and alcohol use were reported by residents and the support workers as important desired outcomes while living in the modular homes. Having their own home, receiving support from the Jimmy's team, and having access to the health care system enabled residents to take care of themselves and improve their health, and manage their substance use to some extent. However, long waiting times to receive some types of specialised support including mental health support and drug and alcohol support were reported as a barrier for some of the residents to improve their mental health or manage drug and alcohol use. To be able to live independently, some of the residents felt they needed more support around mental health issues and substance use.

Most of the interviewed residents reported that after living in the modular homes they managed to improve their relationships with family and friends, although this can take a long time and is not easy.

Although most of the residents would like to find employment, except for one resident who was employed before moving to the modular home, none have yet secured a job and they all reported finding it very difficult to do so. Some of the residents said that they had done some voluntary work and they were willing to do more. The main barrier to employment, according to support workers, relates to drug and alcohol misuse as well as physical and mental health issues. In terms of training and skills development, at the time of writing this report, none of the residents were attending a training course but a few expressed their willingness to sign up for a course in the future.

8.2. Recommendations

Reflecting on the outcomes of the Jimmy's modular homes suggests the following recommendations to maximise the outcomes of living in temporary modular housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Allocation process and pre-tenancy work:

- Selection process: to enable wide access to the modular homes, referral-based selection is preferable. However, where the admission of residents relies on referrals from other agencies, detailed information about an applicant's background should be

provided to help the support provider (in this case, Jimmy's) put in place an appropriate level of support for that resident.

- Pre-tenancy work: a period of pre-tenancy work between the support provider and the prospective resident before moving to a modular home can help to facilitate the transition to living in relative independence in the modular homes. Pre-tenancy work is helpful to set out expectations and build a relationship between the support worker and resident, making it more likely that they will engage with the ongoing support offered, such as support to manage drug and alcohol use, when they move in.

Tenancy agreement:

- Tenancy agreement: while offering assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) to residents mostly works well, in the case of an unavoidable eviction (for example, because of threatening behaviour of a resident on a site), the processing times for evictions can be long which may lead to safety issues for other residents. In addition, the possible repeal of 'no fault' Section 21 evictions will mean that organisations managing modular home sites will face challenges if they need to quickly evict a resident. Although there are proposed changes to the legislation around supported accommodation and the type of tenancy offered, it is not yet certain how this may or may not benefit organisations providing supported accommodation. Jimmy's would prefer to be able to offer residents of modular homes a licence, which means they can process an unavoidable eviction faster, ensuring the safety of the rest of the residents.
- Length of tenure: whilst the official length of tenancy offered to the residents of the modular homes is currently two years, similar to most other types of temporary accomodation, the research showed that many of the residents may need more time to be able to move on to independent living successfully. Being flexibile with the length of tenancy and extending it beyond the initial two-year period will help residents, especially those with higher needs, to have more time to improve their circumstances before moving on.

Supporting the residents:

- Support plans: a person-centred support plan which is prepared by the residents and their support workers is a crucial starting point to agree on goals and desired outcomes. Following good practice and using available resources to prepare a

support plan can be helpful (e.g., The National Consortium for Sheltered Housing (n.d.) resource[3]).

- Specilised support: a key issue that needs addressing to improve outcomes for residents is the lack of provision of specialised support, including mental health support services and drug and alcohol support services. A lack of national funding for mental health and drug and alcohol services restricts local provision. Without support to tackle mental health and drug and alcohol issues, some residents will struggle to be able to manage tenancies independently.
- Employment support: Jimmy's Cambridge, in collaboration with other agencies, provides opportunities for residents to undertake voluntary work. However, the residents need a lot of support to eventually find employment. There is an overall national need to improve support for people experiencing homelessness to find and maintain employment by providing them with relevant skills and training support as well as helping them with the practical aspects of finding a job, including CV writing and applying for jobs online.

Site design:

- Site design: although finding appropriate land (in terms of size and layout) might be challenging, the research showed that providing good quality green space can improve the residents' quality of life. Having generously sized outdoor space can give the option to expand onsite facilities, such as enabling provision of gardening space, as well as facilitating social interaction between the residents.
- Number of units on a site: on the Cambridge schemes the number of units on a site is four to six units. The optimal number of units on a site is not a fixed measure and shoud be decided according to various factors including the level of need of the residents and the intensity of the support provided by the service provider. In the Cambridge case, the support workers and residents felt that a maximum of six units was appropriate, in order to provide the necessary level of support and manage relationships between residents.

8.3. Concluding remarks

Modular homes providing temporary accommodation for people experiencing homelessness are a unique form of housing provision. Although they are a type of temporary accommodation, they are different from other types of temporary accommodation including

[3] https://housingcare.org/downloads/kbase/2324.pdf

hostels, shared houses and B&Bs. Offering the residents ASTs, providing them with the option to engage with support, and living to a greater degree independently with their own front door are some of these differences.

At the same time, the modular homes are different from the Housing First model as the expectation is that the residents of the modular homes will move on to long-term accommodation in the social or private rented sector, usually after engaging with support, while in the Housing First model permanent housing is provided without conditions. In addition, in the Housing First model providing housing is prioritised over support provision, but in the modular homes model it is perceived that housing and support should be provided in tandem with one another.

The research suggests that modular homes are a type of accommodation in-between traditional types of temporary accommodation and fully independent living accommodation (such as living in the social or private rented sector), which can be understood as a quasi-independent housing type. Our research suggests that using modular solutions as temporary accommodation to prepare people to live independently is dependent on the housing offer being combined with support. Overall, modular homes are innovative solutions to address homelessness and have brought about positive outcomes for residents. These outcomes can be improved further by addressing the issues discussed in this report.

The findings of this research are based on 22 modular homes across four schemes in Cambridge. A useful next step would be 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 be able to compare them robustly with other types of temporary housing provision. The evaluation metrics that were developed (see appendix) can serve as a starting point to facilitate wider comparison of modular home schemes across the country to better understand the outcomes of this quasi-independent housing type to provide evidence for a greater national rollout.

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10. Appendix- Evaluation metrics

As part of this project, to allow for wider comparison of modular home schemes in future we prepared a set of evaluation metrics to capture some of the key aspects of this type of temporary accommodation. The designed evaluation metrics cover ten main topics and their subtopics (see table below).

Evaluation metrics for TA modular units for people experiencing homelessness	
Identification of the project	
Local authority area	Autofill
Name of the site	Open text
Postcode	Open text
Stakeholders	
Service provider (or Homelessness charity)	Open text
Landowner of the site	Open text
Units' owner	Open text
Units' builder/supplier	Open text
Planning dimension	
Length of planning permission	Temporary/permanent/ Not known
Date of site opening	Open text
Physical dimension of the scheme	
Total number of units on a site	Number
Number of units with exclusive use of bedroom, bathroom and kitchen	Number
Number of units with exclusive use of bedroom but shared kitchen/bathroom inside the unit	Number
Number of units with exclusive use of bedroom but communal facilities	Number
Construction type	Modular/shipping container
Size of the units	Number
Facilities provided inside each unit (please tick all that apply)	Dropdown list of amenities
On-site facilities (please tick all that apply)	Dropdown list of amenities
Maximum number of storeys	Number
Type of cohort	
Which genders do you provide residency to?	Men only/Women only/Mixed gender
Minimum age	Number
Maximum age	Number

Client groups accepted into project (please tick all that apply)	Dropdown list of client groups
Client groups specifically excluded (please tick all that apply)	Dropdown list of client groups
Level of need of the cohort (please tick all that apply)	Dropdown list of client groups
Do you mix residents with various levels of needs	Yes/No
Support and services dimension	
What types of support are offered directly by the project? (Please tick all that apply)	Dropdown list of support types
What types of support are offered by other services or organisations visiting the project? (Please tick all that apply)	Dropdown list of support types
Would the use of alcohol jeopardise a resident's tenancy?	Yes/No
Would the use of controlled drugs jeopardise a resident's tenancy?	Yes/No
Are residents allowed to keep pets?	Yes/No
Are residents allowed overnight visitors?	Yes/No
What type(s) of staff coverage does the project offer? (Please tick all that apply)	Dropdown list of staff coverage options
Staff/resident ratio	Number
Do volunteers work in your project?	Yes/No
Legal and tenure dimension	
What type of tenure is offered by the project? (Please tick all that apply)	Dropdown list of tenures
What is the expected length of stay?	Dropdown length of stay list
What is the actual average length of stay of residents?	Dropdown length of stay list
Who can refer into the project? (Please tick all that apply)	Dropdown referral source list
Funding and management dimension	
How is the project funded? (Please tick all that apply)	Dropdown list of funding sources
What is the total annual project budget for the last financial year?	£
What proportion of the annual budget is paid by housing benefit?	%

What proportion of the annual budget goes toward management and support (operational costs)?	%
What proportion of the annual budget goes toward capital costs (interest payments, capital repayments, payments to landlords, maintenance and repair costs)?	%
What is the amount of weekly rent for a unit?	£
What is the amount of weekly service charge for a unit?	£
What proportion of the residents are in arrears for their rent?	%
What proportion of the residents are in arrears for their service charge?	%
Outputs	
What proportion of tenants experienced abandonments from the project over the past year?	%
What proportion of tenants moved on from the project into other emergency or temporary accommodation over the past year?	%
What proportion of tenants moved into longer-term accommodation over the past year?	%
What proportion of tenants were evicted from the project over the past year?	%
Outcomes	
Which of the following outcomes do you measure? (Please tick all that apply)	Dropdown list of outcomes

Table 2- Evaluation metrics