

Key to Success

Clients who had experience of holding a tenancy and worked for many years before becoming homeless were more likely to have settled than those who had long histories of homelessness.

- Clients who formed a social network and engaged in activities after being resettled were more likely to be housed after 24 months than clients with few social ties and interests. Resettlement workers should encourage and help clients who are isolated and have few interests as this plays an important role in tenancy sustainment.
- The clients who saw their housing support worker frequently during the early months were twice as likely to remain housed than those who had irregular contact.
- Clients in independent and sheltered flats were more likely to settle than clients who were moved into shared housing. Housing needs should be properly assessed and suitable housing should be available.
- Thorough assessments are required of older homeless people's housing and support needs. Assessing daily living skills should always be undertaken for those moving to independent housing.
- The interval between a person being offered a tenancy and moving was often short. In some cases more time is needed to prepare for the tenancy.

Conclusion

Resettlement for older homeless people succeeds in many cases. It should be encouraged by all organisations that work with this client group.

This study provides evidence about the housing and support needs of older homeless people, and can be used to build training courses and guide staff involved in resettlement and tenancy support.

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The Sir Halley Stewart Trust, The Leverhulme Trust, the Henry Smith's Charity and the University of Sheffield.

Resettling Older Homeless People was written by Maureen Crane and Anthony M. Warnes. Further information available at http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/sisa/Research_Field_5.shtml

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Price £7.50, including postage and packing. Cheques payable to The University of Sheffield.

St Mungo's - Leading London's services for people who are homeless and vulnerable

We are best known for our outreach street work and hostels for rough sleepers. But hostels are just a few of our 60 housing projects and we do much more than simply provide shelter!

Each night over 1000 people sleep in safety under a St Mungo's roof in our high support projects and semi-independent housing or our short stay hostels. Our specialist workers meet a variety of needs, from help with mental health problems to drug abuse to support in setting up in a new home. We run two day centres and also provide London's largest directly delivered activity, training and employment programmes - giving 2000 homeless people a year a chance to improve their lives.

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“RESETTLING OLDER HOMELESS PEOPLE”

“Resettling Older Homeless People” describes the findings of a study of the resettlement of 64 older homeless people (aged 50+ years) in London, Leeds and Sheffield.

This study is unique because it is the first British study:
 (i) to examine resettlement outcomes among older homeless people
 (ii) to follow up resettled homeless people of any age for two years

Resettlement is Successful

The research revealed that 7 out of 10 older homeless people succeeded in their tenancies when they received resettlement support. The resettlement model at St Mungo's was able to help this very entrenched and difficult to reach group of rough sleepers.

The Study's Origins

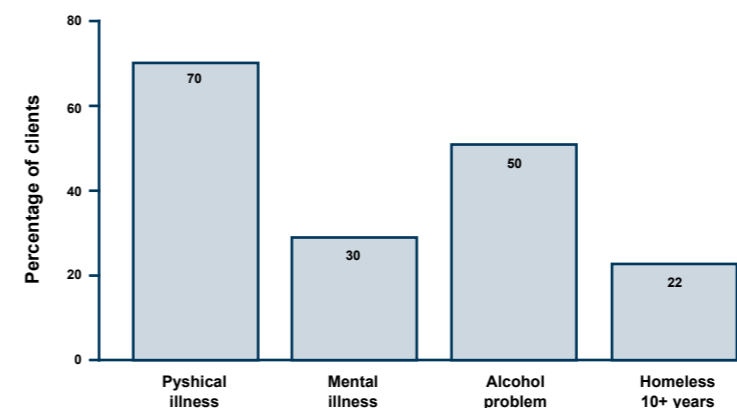
“Resettling Older Homeless People” was conducted by researchers Maureen Crane and Anthony Warnes from the University of Sheffield's Institute for Studies on Ageing. The study originated at St Mungo's Lancefield Street Centre in west London in 1997 in response to the unmet needs of London's older rough sleepers. St Anne's Shelter and Housing Action and St Martin In The Fields Social Care Unit also participated in the four year study. The Lancefield Street Centre was developed with financial support from The Henry Smith's Charity.

Resettlement at St Mungo's

Clients received assessment of their needs, help applying for housing, assistance with preparations to move and on-going support

The Clients

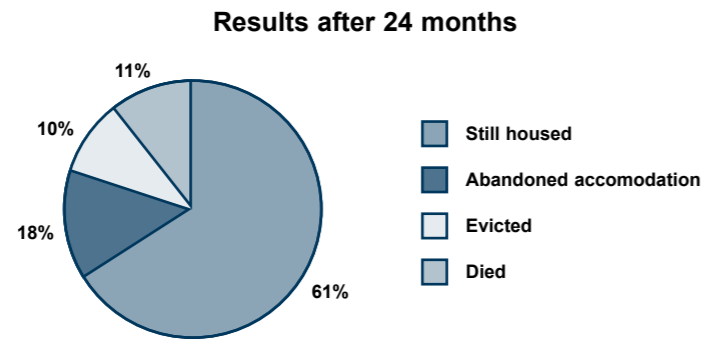
There were 59 men and five women in the study.



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The Results



Resettlement was successful for seven out of ten clients (excluding those who died).

History of Resettlement Programmes

Since the mid-1990s in Britain, resettlement programmes for homeless people have increased. Local variations affect the availability of these programmes. There have been few evaluations of these services and little is known about homeless people's success in sustaining tenancies over a prolonged period. This study was developed to increase our understanding of the needs of older homeless people who are rehoused, and of the types of services that effectively help them to sustain tenancies.

The Clients Backgrounds

The backgrounds and problems in this client group were diverse. Half had worked for years and became homeless after the age of 50. Widowhood, marital breakdown or financial difficulties triggered their homelessness after retirement. The remaining half of the client group had been homeless continuously or intermittently for several years. Nearly one in four of this group had experienced homelessness for more than ten years. Some had always lived with their parents and became homeless after their parents died. Others had been building labourers or served in the armed forces and 'drifted' into homelessness after stopping work.

The Lancefield Centre Provided

The Centre provided a pathway of services from the streets to long term housing, with street out-reach work, a 24-hour drop-in centre, a 33-bed hostel, and a resettlement programme. Because of its success, St Mungo's established in, December 2000, a replacement project at Harrow Road.

Preparing to Move

- The problems and housing needs of the client group varied.
- Some had been in a hostel where the resettlement worker had regular contact with them. Others had been known to the homeless organisation for less than three months when they were resettled.
- Most had been in hostels where meals were provided, so their household skills were not assessed.
- In some instances, their problems did not become apparent until after they had moved.

Rehousing Clients

- 13 were rehoused in local authority and housing association flats
- 13 in sheltered (warden-assisted) flats for older people
- 16 in residential care homes for older people
- 22 moved to shared houses where they had their own furnished bedroom but shared other facilities

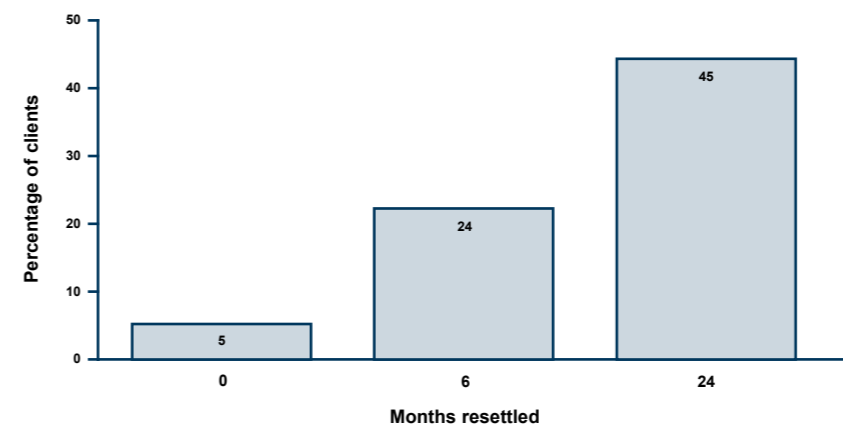
Resettlement Outcomes

After being rehoused, some clients

- settled quickly and began to rebuild their lives
- made their accommodation comfortable, socialised with relatives, neighbours and friends, and became involved in activities
- developed new interests
- reduced their alcohol consumption
- reduced their contact with homeless people and homeless services

Others found it hard to adjust and settle. They reported being lonely and bored, had no friends or contact with relatives, and had few interests.

Clients who had at least twice weekly contact with relatives and friends



- Resettlement had been successful for seven out of ten subjects (69%). This figure excludes those clients who died.
- Tenancy failures were most frequent in the first three months and peaked again after month 15.
- Early failures were associated with lack of motivation to settle and self-contained flats in poor condition where they could not cope.
- Many of the failures during months 16-24 were due to disagreements between tenants and their housing providers and the accumulation of long-standing personal problems.

Factors Influencing 'Settledness' and Tenancy Sustainment

Clients who received contact, at least once a fortnight, from housing support and care workers in the first 3 months were twice as likely to have a successful tenancy and remain housed. St Mungo's resettlement service ensures that clients receive at least one contact every fortnight.

