

REDUCING CRIME, ENABLING DESISTANCE AND SUPPORTING VICTIMS

## COMMUNITY CAMPUS '87: GET MOVING PROJECT

CASE STUDIES FROM THE VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SECTOR

November 2013



Secure and appropriate housing is an essential component in recovery from substance misuse and as addiction and offending are closely linked it helps reduce associated reoffending. It is widely regarded that stable housing is key to successful treatment outcomes; it can be the difference between staying in treatment and returning to crime and anti-social behaviour. It can also help improve engagement with services providing opportunity to address wider issues such as training, employment and health.

The people they work with are often very chaotic and regularly access services at point of crisis, for example by being regular visitors to A&E departments, frequently being arrested for theft (especially from shops) and often getting sentenced to short periods in prison. They have often been excluded from every housing option because of their past failed tenancies which have been due to rent arrears, damage to the property and anti-social behaviour. In addition to this they will have a number of debts for non payment of water rates, Council Tax, utility bills and other purchases. This makes it almost impossible for them, without assistance, to prove themselves as a good tenant and progress up the housing ladder. In short, they work with people which others had given up hope on and who are widely considered to be lost causes. Without support their only options are hostels, B&B accommodation, sofa surfing, sleeping rough and regular periods in prison. With support from Get Moving however, the story can be very different.

Through providing training tenancies and stable accommodation, Community Campus '87 has enabled their clients to stop their drug use, desist from crime and enter productive society, no longer being a burden on public services. Get Moving shows the critical importance that stable housing provides in getting lives back on track and giving people the chances they need to do this. This case study presents the evidence which demonstrates the effectiveness of their approach in doing this, helping people to get back on their feet. This model of working could be used as a template for other areas where there is a desire to

address substance misuse and offending in a sustainable and committed way.

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*There needs to be a belief that people can change ... we know they can, with the right support you can bring people back in".* Get Moving project worker

## The organisation

Community Campus 87 was set up in 1987 in response to housing problems and homelessness affecting young people, aged 16 to 25, in Cleveland. It has grown in complexity and now provides a range of housing-related services to both young people and adults across Teesside, including tenancy deposit schemes, supported housing, floating support and construction training projects. There is also a construction arm to the charity that provides a route into employment for young people involved in training.

# The project

Get Moving provides a housing and support service in Hartlepool. It started in 2010 with funding from Hartlepool Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Northern Rock Foundation and their own capital. It has a total of 10 properties in Hartlepool, a mixture of houses and flats, which they use for transitional supported accommodation for clients. As well as housing people in their own properties, they also offer a floating support service to people in the community, helping them to find and maintain accommodation.

Prospective clients are referred into the project by substance misuse services or criminal justice agencies, such as the Criminal Justice Interventions Team. In the last three years they have received a total of 77 referrals. The referral criteria requires individuals to be stable in treatment with a DAAT service and to be not currently involved in offending or anti-social behaviour. Key to the criteria is that people are committed and motivated to recovery, engaging and cooperating with services.

# The problem

People with drug using histories or who have had offending careers can often be excluded from housing. They are likely to form part of the population known as the hidden homeless, those who do not show up on official figures as being in priority need for housing. They are the 'sofa surfers' or 'concealed households'. One local housing organisation said "at worst they sleep on the streets, at best they are in accommodation surrounded by other drug users, dealers and crime."

Their housing options are limited because they often have histories of failed tenancies or unacceptable behaviour. They may not be able to access affordable social housing and cannot afford the tenancy deposits of the private rented sector. Those aged under 35 face additional restrictions in the private rented sector with housing benefit limited to a rate for shared accommodation only. This type of accommodation is often considered not appropriate for people with substance misuse and offending backgrounds.

Not only are their housing options limited, their household management skills tend to be poor: never having paid utility bills, council tax or water bills; and never budgeting for food. This is again due to a history of homelessness, substance misuse and prison. It is also common for people to have significant debts, ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand pounds due to non paid bills. Without help and support, the future is more substance misuse, crime, ill health, experience of violence, children removed and other outcomes associated with excluded adults and poverty.

It is difficult to gauge how many homeless people there are in a given locality; the reason why they are called hidden homeless. However amongst these there will be those prolific offenders or problematic substance misusers that are known to many services. Get Moving is designed to help and support these homeless people to achieve stable and sustained accommodation.

# The approach

The project offers a degree of flexibility which can use different approaches to housing and support that takes account of the client's circumstance and the limitations of their housing options. One solution is transitional housing for up to two years in one of the project's own supported tenancies, followed by move-on to independent housing when a client demonstrates they are 'housing ready'. This provides a route to affordable housing in the social sector. The second solution works towards a Housing First model, first developed in America to tackle chronic homelessness. This provides floating support with an independent tenancy, generally in the in the private sector.

## Housing First

Housing First is an approach to address chronic homelessness that was originally developed in America in the 1990s by Pathways to Housing. It is now being recommended as a response to chronic homelessness by the European Commission and the OECD.

Existing homelessness services have sought to reduce chronic homelessness by making people who have experienced homelessness 'housing ready'. This means using a process of rehabilitation, training and support to bring someone who has been chronically homeless to a point where they are able to live independently in ordinary housing. In this approach, which is sometimes called a staircase or step model, the goal is that someone is receiving treatment for mental and physical health problems, not using drugs or alcohol and not exhibiting anti-social behaviour or criminality. Unlike some other homelessness services, Housing First does not attempt to make chronically homeless people 'housing ready'. Instead, Housing First works by immediately, or as quickly as possible, providing a chronically homeless person with housing and then offering a range of mobile support services that visit people in their own homes.

Housing First separates housing from support, which means that someone does not have to be assessed as 'housing ready' to access housing or to retain housing, providing that tenancy conditions are not broken. Housing First has been much more successful at engaging and retaining contact with chronically homeless people than many services that require major changes in behaviour to demonstrate that someone has reached a point of housing readiness. Housing First services have delivered much higher rates of housing sustainment, i.e. enduring exits from chronic homelessness, than most previous service models, meaning that Housing First services reduce chronic homelessness at almost unprecedented levels. Source: Pleace, N. and Bretherton, J. (2013) Camden Housing First: A Housing Experiment in London. Centre for Housing Policy, University of York.

Although not a pure Housing First approach, Get Moving uses some of these principles to overcome barriers that otherwise might mean a person remains homeless. Both approaches aim to help a client achieve stable housing and contribute to them building their recovery capital ; in other words, the resources they need to maintain their recovery and turn their lives around and to stop being an expensive burden on public services.



Upon referral, an appointment is made and the client has an interview and undergoes a detailed assessment of their needs. It is often the case that this first interview takes place sometime (between one and four months) before a tenancy becomes available. During that period a support plan is agreed and worked to that sets out goals and actions to be achieved. This includes sessions from the project's structured training and engagement programme called Move On Tools. The programme covers essential elements on tenancy awareness and sustainment, as well as health and well being, substances, managing money and relationships. It provides a framework of learning objectives for a client during the different stages of their support. These stages of support will differ depending on whether their housing journey follows the Housing First floating support model or transitional housing and housing ready approach.

The client is visited frequently, receiving support and training, dealing with immediate needs and preparing them for a tenancy. Once the client is offered a tenancy and moves in, they receive a period of intensive support, being visited a number of times a week. Here, they will receive help and instruction in setting up their household; moving in and registering the change of address with key agencies. Support continues with regular visits at least once a week, addressing issues such as paying bills, resolving benefits and organising repayment schedules with debtors.

Client progress is monitored and the support plan reviewed using the Outcome Star. This is an assessment and action planning tool which provides a visual means for a client and worker to see client development, the interrelationship

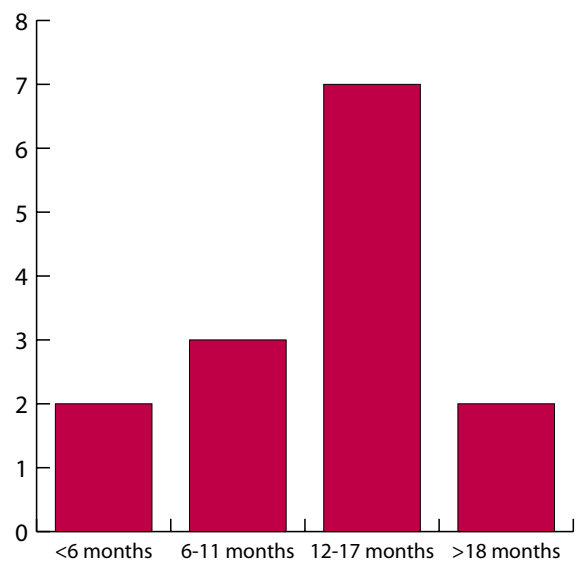
between life areas and to help priorities areas of support. It helps identify level of support need; and support stages such 'housing readiness' and progress towards exiting service. This helps with planning for move-on as well as reduction and withdrawal of support when a client has achieved the goal of settled independent housing.

## The results

The project has provided accommodation to a total of 14 people between 2010 and 2013 and have supported another 15 to find or maintain their own private tenancies. Three quarters of these have been men and one quarter women and they are aged between 25 and 44 years old. Many of those referred were not ready in their recovery journey to receive support, i.e. they were still too chaotic.

The key measure is the duration of the tenancies and as can be seen, the project is enabling tenants to keep their tenancies and stay in their homes. These are tenants who have never been able to keep tenancies before.

### Duration of tenancies to date



The project's Outcomes Stars which record progression of tenants in key areas such as emotional well being, substance misuse and offending, show significant progression: from low scores at entry to the project to high scores after receiving support.

## Conclusion

The specific client group in this case study are adults with complex and multiple needs. They are often excluded from any stable accommodation options and because of that, the likelihood that they will turn their lives around is slim. Get Moving is providing housing and support, with a focus on training in the techniques necessary to manage their own property. The other key method is not giving up or punishing them if they relapse and the recognition that recovery from

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*If you want to keep on the straight and narrow, you've got to have a nice house.”* Tenant

addiction or desisting from crime is a long process and is rarely linear.

As the evidence indicates, they have been very successful in giving people the tools they need to maintain and manage their own properties and turn their lives around.



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*I had a blip but I pulled it back in ... if it weren't for them I wouldn't have been able to do that".* Tenant

## Case study: John\*

John has been homeless for the last five years, spending regular periods in prison for a variety of offences including acquisitive crime and drug dealing. He has been a heroin addict since 1991 but in January of this year he successfully completed treatment and has had no relapses. He has currently reduced his methadone to five millilitres a day and is looking to stop completely. John's life since becoming addicted to heroin has consisted of offending in order to buy drugs, sofa surfing or sleeping rough and spending time in prison. His longest sentence was nine years for dealing in heroin. There have been a number of occasions where he has tried to come off heroin but these have been unsuccessful, which he puts down to his homelessness. He says, "you come out of prison clean and determined not to go on the gear again but they put you in a hostel full of other drug addicts, or you end up on the street or staying at mate's houses with other users and you've got to sort them out [buy drugs for them] to stay there so you have to go out grafting [stealing] to get money ... then that's you using again". John has been staying in a Community Campus house since March. He says it is the reason why he has been able to come and stay off heroin and stop offending. He says "I've got a nice house, I pay my bills, I never used to, never dreamed I would ... when you're on the gear, there's no way you pay your bills ... I'm sorted now ... it's the chance I've always needed".

\*Not his real name.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

These case studies are part of a series which showcases the work of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in the North East in reducing crime, promoting community safety and reducing reoffending. Clinks supports, represents and campaigns for the VCSE sector working with offenders. Clinks aims to ensure the sector and all those with whom they work, are informed and engaged in order to transform the lives of offenders. Clinks' work in the North East is funded by the Northern Rock Foundation and is delivered in partnership with Voluntary Organisations' Network North East (VONNE). The Local Development Officer for the North East, Natalie Maidment, works with the VCSE sector, supporting their work to reduce crime, promote community safety, and reduce reoffending. For further information, please contact Natalie at [natalie.maidment@clinks.org](mailto:natalie.maidment@clinks.org)

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