

Institution: The University of Edinburgh & Heriot-Watt University (the Alliance)
Unit of Assessment: 16 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
Title of case study: 1: Preventing homelessness through evidence-based interventions
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Alliance research has driven forward a radically different, prevention-based approach to homelessness, internationally. Good practice guidance for Government contributed to a steep decline in 'statutory homelessness' in England in the late 2000s (48% in the period 2006-2009) and directly led to the establishment of a national government framework for monitoring homelessness prevention activity. The same study influenced the Federal Governments of Australia and the US and influenced guidance by the US National Alliance to End Homelessness. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has said of work on multiple exclusion homelessness "<i>its impact on thinking and on practice cannot be over stated</i>". The research has re-shaped the national strategic approach to homelessness prevention in England, is a key underpinning of LankellyChase's new £5M per annum investment strategy and has been used by stakeholders globally, including the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless and the Council to Homeless Persons in Australia.</p> <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Homelessness and exclusion are known to be attributable to a complex range of factors, from systemic challenges within housing markets to individual circumstances that increase vulnerability. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that many policies and strategies to tackle homelessness tend to be reactive, rather than anticipatory and prevention based. This case study highlights the work of researchers to provide the evidence base underpinning activist interventions to prevent homelessness: an extensive programme of work supported by major funders including the ESRC, AHRC, European Commission, UK Government and Joseph Rowntree Foundation. In particular, it describes studies led by Prof Hal Pawson (1995-2012) and by Prof Suzanne Fitzpatrick (2010-present; University of York, 2003-2010).</p> <p>Evaluating Homelessness Prevention. This government-commissioned study investigated the nature and effectiveness of a range of 'homelessness prevention' methods employed by local authorities. Detailed case study fieldwork involved in-depth interviews with local authority staff, local stakeholders and homeless applicants and, additionally, the researchers collected activity and performance data to triangulate (or otherwise) interviewee testimony. As well as revealing the potentially substantial impact of identified prevention techniques, the research highlighted the implications of an 'activist approach' in terms of staff recruitment, training and working practices. It also brought to light the complex, and potentially problematic, legal implications of attempting to anticipate and prevent – rather than react to – homelessness, and developed proposals for the quantification of prevention activity.</p> <p>The study ran from 2004 to 2007. Led by Pawson, the core research team also included Dr Gina Netto (1995–present) and Prof Colin Jones (1998–present). The emphasis on prevention, and the impact the study achieved, were of significant interest to Fitzpatrick, then Director of the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York. Her decision to relocate to Heriot-Watt University in 2010 was influenced by the study, as well as by her desire to work with Pawson and, in her new study (see below), with his colleague, Prof Glen Bramley (1994-present).</p> <p>Multiple Exclusion Homelessness. Based on a multi-stage quantitative survey of 'low threshold' support service users in seven UK cities, this ESRC-funded study provided the first statistically robust analysis of routes into 'multiple exclusion homelessness' (MEH) in the UK. It demonstrated the very high degree of overlap between homelessness and forms of 'deep exclusion' such as substance misuse, institutional living (e.g. prison) and 'street culture activities' (e.g. street drinking and begging). Our analysis (2010-2011) indicated that the temporal sequencing of MEH-relevant experiences was remarkably consistent, with substance misuse and</p>

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mental health problems typically occurring earlier in individual MEH pathways than homelessness. The study also identified five distinct 'experiential clusters' within the MEH population, with the most complex forms of MEH associated with men in their 30s and with childhood trauma.

The study ran from May 2009 to February 2011. The core research was undertaken by Fitzpatrick, Dr Sarah Johnsen (2010-present; York, 2005-2010) and Bramley. The last was responsible for the statistical analysis (the opportunity to utilise Bramley's analytical skills in the project having been a key factor in Fitzpatrick moving to Heriot-Watt University). The statistical analysis, including cluster analyses and logistic regression modelling, in conjunction with the unique character of the primary data, led to the project's particularly impactful findings on temporal sequencing and experiential clusters.

3. References to the research

Publications

Pawson, H. (2007) 'Local authority homelessness prevention in England: Empowering consumers or denying rights?', *Housing Studies*, 22(6): 867-884

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02673030701387572>

Pawson, H., Netto, G., Jones, C., Wager, F., Fancy, C. & Lomax, D (2007) *Evaluating Homelessness Prevention*. London: CLG <http://tinyurl.com/ablepwa>

Pawson, H., Netto, G. & Jones, C. (2006) *Homelessness Prevention: A Guide to Good Practice*; London: Department for Communities & Local Government <http://tinyurl.com/bcs96fa>

Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., & Johnsen, S. (2013) 'Pathways into multiple exclusion homelessness in seven UK cities', *Urban Studies*, 50 (1): 148-168. DOI: 10.1177/0042098012452329 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0042098012452329>

Fitzpatrick, S., Johnsen, S. & White, M. (2011) 'Multiple exclusion homelessness in the UK: Key patterns and intersections', *Social Policy & Society*, 10 (4): 501-512.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S147474641100025X>

Funding

Grant title: Evaluating Homelessness Prevention **Awarded to:** Hal Pawson (PI)

Sponsor: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) **Period:** June 2004-September 2007

Value: £91,000

Grant title: Multiple Homelessness Exclusion Across the UK: A Quantitative Survey

Awarded to: Suzanne Fitzpatrick (PI) **Sponsor:** Economic and Social Research Council

Period: May 2009-February 2011 **Value:** £299,806.05

4. Details of the impact

The Homelessness Act 2002 obliged all local housing authorities in England to implement a strategy for preventing homelessness. By 2006, while this had led to a reduction in the number of homeless individuals and families, it was felt that implementation focused too much on what the Housing Minister criticised as "*gatekeeping... that discouraged people from applying for assistance*". By setting out a radically different approach to homelessness practice, based on improving the options for people who seek help, the Pawson-led study for ODPM enabled local authorities and their partner agencies to fulfil their obligations more effectively. In the period 2006-2009, following implementation of the study's *Guide to Good Practice*, homelessness, as officially measured in England, declined by 48%.

Directly arising from the research recommendations, a new official framework for monitoring homelessness prevention activity was put in place in 2008. In April that year, data collection on local authorities' actions under legislation was expanded to include figures for homelessness prevention and relief taking place outside the statutory framework. 2011/12 was the fourth annual release of statistics by the Department for Communities and Local Government, reporting 199,000 cases of extra-framework homelessness prevention or relief (a 5% increase from

2010/11; see 5.1, below). Additionally, the release noted that the data series was no longer considered 'experimental', due to confidence in the response rates and quality of the figures.

In May 2008, the study was cited, in support of UK Government measures and statistics, in the 'Models of innovation and good practice' section of the Australian Government's Green Paper *Which Way Home? A New Approach to Homelessness* (see 5.2). In the USA, its *Guide to Good Practice* has been described as "*the inspiration*" for the *Creating Programs that Work* toolkits produced by the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), with [text removed for publication], Advisor to NAEH, saying "*I suggested that NAEH develop these guides, based on Hal's previous work*" (see 5.3). In 2009, the study informed US Federal Government activity, undertaken within the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Programme championed by President Obama. Focusing on at-risk individuals and families, this \$1.5bn programme has been credited with helping to prevent US homelessness "*soaring*" during the recession (again, see 5.3).

In the UK, with an increase in homelessness since the recession, particularly in England, preventative work continues. People affected by 'multiple exclusion homelessness' (MEH) are one of the most socially marginalised groups, experiencing the sharpest end of problems such as poverty, substance misuse and engagement in damaging 'street' activities. High proportions have been a victim of violent crime (43%), have attempted suicide (38%) or have self-harmed (30%). The Alliance's MEH study has already had demonstrable impacts in this field, as described below.

The MEH study has had particular input into the work of the Ministerial Working Group (MWG) on Preventing and Tackling Homelessness, established by [text removed for publication] the then Housing Minister in 2010. Following high-level briefings to the MWG's Officials Working Group, researchers were informed that "*the MEH work is very much informing the direction of travel for the MWG's second report*" (source at Department of Work and Pensions) and Fitzpatrick was invited to speak directly to Ministers at the House of Commons. This briefing resulted in Ministers deciding to "*re-shape*" the national strategic approach to homelessness prevention in England around the study's identified intervention points, with Fitzpatrick's assistance. A representative of the Government's Homelessness and Support Division describes the influence of the MEH research, in this regard, as "*fundamental*".

Published in August 2012 as *Making every contact count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness* (see 5.4), the Government's report makes extensive reference to the MEH research and replicates one of its data tables in full. In particular, the focus on early intervention points owes much to Bramley's sequencing analysis, which demonstrates that 'visible' forms of homelessness are typically rather late signs of MEH. This insight has been of particular value in emphasising the need for schools, drugs and alcohol services, and the criminal justice system, to play a central role in preventative interventions. A Specialist Advisor to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), has said "*on every occasion, whenever I'm talking about tackling single homelessness I mention your conclusions; both local authorities and third sector providers seem very interested*".

The MEH study was described by [text removed for publication] the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as "*utterly game changing*" and of having "*reversed the view – strongly held over decades by most in the field – that homelessness itself contributed to the other features of exclusion*" (see 5.5). It has influenced service planning for distinct segments within the MEH population, prompting national and local service providers to consider how best to design tailored services for different subgroups of users with specific combinations of experiences and needs. Users of the research to date include major service providers, umbrella bodies at a range of scales, from the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) to the Glasgow Homelessness Network, and local authorities. In December 2011, The City of Westminster Council, which has by far the largest concentration of rough sleepers in the UK, arranged a bespoke seminar on the MEH findings for its commissioned service providers. [text removed for publication] Thames Reach has described the study as "*required reading*" (see 5.6) and [text removed for publication], Homeless Link, has said "*I use it on an almost daily basis in*

meetings and in consultation responses. [I've also] given it to Ministers in [the] Home Office and DWP and to senior health officials."

In addition to high-level briefings, the research has been disseminated to stakeholders via concise 'Briefing Papers' (freely downloadable from the Heriot-Watt website). Findings were presented at a National Launch event chaired by journalist Jon Snow in September 2011 and to more than 120 local policy makers and practitioners in feedback seminars across all seven case study cities (between July and October 2011). In Australia, 200 stakeholders – mostly practitioners – attended a plenary address on the research in Melbourne in May 2013 at the Council to Homeless Persons conference. Homelessness agencies in Victoria have also promoted the work internally.

Due to interest in the research in Australia, Fitzpatrick was invited to submit an article to *PARITY*, the national magazine for Australian homelessness professionals (published June 2013). In addition, tweets and blog posts have generated coverage in *The Observer*, *Inside Housing*, *Community Care*, *Third Force News*, *Professional Social Work*, *Drink and Drugs News*, *Health Service Journal*, and *The Psychologist*. In October 2013, Fitzpatrick gave a plenary presentation on MEH to an International Symposium on Health and Homelessness in London, leading to interdisciplinary work with medics and clinical psychologists. In September 2013, she gave the keynote address to the Glasgow Homelessness Network conference, briefing 150 delegates from across the statutory and voluntary sectors in Scotland's largest metropolitan area.

The LankellyChase Foundation is using the work as the evidential basis for a £5M programme of investment in interventions, as well as research, to address severe and multiple disadvantage across the UK (see 5.7). The research is also central to the Disadvantaged Groups element of the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership's 'single outcome agreement' with the Scottish Government: a ten year 'plan for place' that sets out some of the shared priorities for service provision in the city over the next decade, including those related to the priority areas of alcohol, youth employment and vulnerable people. It has been used by the Economic and Social Research Council to bring housing research to practitioners, most recently in the newsletter of the KE project, *Evidence* (June 2013). On the strength of its major impact on policy and practice, as well as its scientific quality and exceptional research contribution, the study achieved 'outstanding' status in its final impact assessment by the ESRC.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Copies of these web page sources are available at
<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/REF2014REF3B/UoA+16>

5.1 *Homelessness Prevention and Relief: England 2011/12...* <http://tinyurl.com/alnfu9f>

5.2 *Which Way Home? A New Approach to Homelessness*. See p 59... <http://tinyurl.com/bbltc34>

5.3 Authorised quote from e-mail correspondence. An Advisor to the National Alliance to End Homelessness in the US, can be contacted to corroborate the impact on US homelessness prevention policies (details provided separately).

5.4 *Making every contact count...* <http://tinyurl.com/af3kqrm>. See pp 8,9,10,13,18. Also see... <http://tinyurl.com/b45bjoh> (agenda item 4). Email correspondence from Government representatives can be made available on request and contact details have been provided separately for the Specialist Advisor to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

5.5 A factual statement from [text removed for publication] the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has been made available in support of this case study.

5.6 Authorised quote from e-mail correspondence. Contact details for further corroboration from [text removed for publication] Thames Reach have been provided separately.

5.7 Authorised quote from e-mail correspondence. Contact details for further corroboration from [text removed for publication] LankellyChase Foundation have been provided separately.