EFFECTIVE ACTION

**RESETTLEMENT
FROM HOMELESSNESS SERVICES**

homeless link

EFFECTIVE ACTION TO END HOMELESSNESS…

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RESETTLEMENT
FROM HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

Resettlement is the most common gap in provision for homelessness services, with 38% of projects reporting that funding cuts have reduced the number of clients moving on.[1]

This guidance includes information both for local authorities and service providers. Each section includes a checklist and these are combined in appendix 1. The document is arranged as follows:

- ➢ Section 2: considerations for local authorities
- ➢ Section 3: how changes to housing and welfare benefits will affect resettlement
- ➢ Sections 4-9: guidance for service providers
- ➢ Appendix 1: resettlement checklist

1.1 What is resettlement?
Resettlement is the move a homeless person makes from temporary housing or the streets into more permanent, often independent, accommodation.

Resettlement has typically been achieved in stages, with clients moving from hostels to supported housing before being given the opportunity to live independently. As the homelessness sector adopts a more personalised approach to support, linear resettlement pathways are being replaced by flexible responses, for example moving clients directly from the streets to independent accommodation if this meets their needs.

Resettlement also includes the support that is provided to sustain people in their tenancies, for example from floating support teams.

1.2 Why is resettlement an issue?
Resettlement is an area of concern for many homelessness services: housing demand exceeds supply in many parts of the country; changes to welfare benefits are making it harder for claimants to access the PRS; and access to social housing may be more restricted as councils introduce revised allocations policies under the localism agenda. In addition, funding cuts have reduced the resources available within services to support homeless people through the resettlement process.

A lack of resettlement creates a number of risks. Long stays in temporary accommodation increase the risk of eviction and abandonment. There is also a risk of dependency on support which makes successful resettlement harder to achieve. The silt-up of temporary accommodation means fewer beds become available for rough sleepers, increasing the risk of deteriorating health and well-being for those on the streets.

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[1] Homeless Link's Survey of Needs and Provision (SNAP) 2012

2. CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

A local strategic approach to resettlement is required because of the number of agencies involved in delivery and because clients' needs change over time. Reviewing and, where necessary, reconfiguring services will help to minimise silt-up and ensure that an appropriate and timely range of move on options is available.

2.1 Move On Plans Protocol (MOPP)

The Move On Plans Protocol (MOPP) toolkit enables local authorities to audit resettlement needs in homelessness services. An audit can show, for example, where clients do not have access to the right move on options, leading to the silt-up of temporary projects. The MOPP gives local authorities a basis from which to develop new resettlement options. For example, analysis of the review might indicate that access to rent bonds or a change in referral pathways is needed. This type of review can also highlight gaps in specialist provision, for example 'wet' supported housing or specialist floating support.

Many local authorities have introduced housing pathways to streamline the process of move on by monitoring empty bed spaces and allocating supported accommodation from a central system. Inflexible pathways can create unintended consequences. If, for example, only the outreach team has referral rights into hostels, people may have to sleep rough to access this accommodation. If rent deposit schemes can only be accessed by supported housing tenants, people may have to live in hostels and supported housing when they were able to live independently much earlier. The MOPP can help to draw out these issues so that alternative processes can be introduced.

Access the MOPP here: www.homeless.org.uk/mopp

In addition to reviewing move on for existing residents, the point at which resettlement becomes available during homeless people's engagement with services should be considered. If a service is seeing people as they become homeless but before they sleep rough (e.g. sofa surfers), could that service be given referral rights into housing or access to rent deposits? This could enable early intervention and prevent street homelessness. If resettlement is too late or too linear, the support required is likely to increase in intensity and, therefore, cost.

2.2 Private Rented Sector

Getting access to the PRS and building relationships with landlords is a challenge for homelessness services. As local authorities can now discharge their homelessness duty into the PRS there will be increasing engagement with this sector from statutory services. A local strategic approach can minimise the risk of multiple homelessness agencies working separately to engage the same landlords. There may also be opportunities for homelessness agencies and local authorities to pool resources and information about engaging with landlords, ensuring properties are of a decent standard, informing tenants of their rights and responsibilities, tackling rogue landlords and so on.

As demand for PRS exceeds supply in many areas, competition between services to access PRS properties will be an issue. It is to the benefit of all agencies that PRS landlords have a positive experience of accepting homeless tenants. A strategic approach should identify

which homelessness agencies are working with the PRS locally and look for opportunities to pool their resources e.g. to achieve the most effective publicity, promotion and engagement with landlords. This may include development of social letting agencies or private rented schemes with expertise in resettling homeless people.

> **Crisis** has a dedicated PRS website that includes a wide range of information and resources relevant to developing a strategic approach: www.privaterentedsector.org.uk

2.3 Resettlement via a single point of access

Local authorities are increasingly using a single point of access (also known as a gateway or pathway) so that all move on between local authority funded housing is administered by one team, for example via an online referral system. This allows services to flag up imminent voids when clients are being resettled into non-statutory housing.

This approach can streamline referrals and promote equal access, unlike informal procedures which may prioritise referrals based on staff contacts rather than client need. It also allows central collection of data about voids. There are risks that if the system fails, if workers don't use it correctly or if the administering team falls behind, silt-up will occur even while there are empty bed-spaces available. Regular review and user feedback can address these risks.

> **Checklist: Considerations for the Local Authority**
>
> ☑ Issues with services silting up are addressed by the local authority and voluntary sector
>
> ☑ The local authority has looked at using the MOPP
>
> ☑ There is a coordinated approach between services engaging with the PRS
>
> ☑ The local authority keeps its single point of access under review

3. THE IMPACT OF HOUSING AND WELFARE REFORMS

Services will need to adjust their approach in response to policy changes. Resettlement procedures are shaped by external factors and, without an ongoing process of evaluation and adaptation, there is a risk that they become redundant and this leads to silt-up.

Some key reforms to consider:

Universal Credit (including direct payments)

Universal Credit is being phased in between 2013-2017, replacing many existing benefits and combining amounts for rent and subsistence. Most people will receive a single monthly payment that includes rent. There are provisions for payment exceptions such as increased payment frequency or rent paid direct to landlord, but these are at the discretion of DWP. Claimants have to explain why they need an exception, such as vulnerability due to homelessness, when they first make a claim. Otherwise they might only receive a payment

exception once their arrears have hit a trigger level[2], by which time their accommodation is already at risk.

Impact on resettlement: Additional preparation and support will be needed for clients around monthly budgeting in order to pay rent and bills under Universal Credit – including those whose benefits have not yet been transferred to the new system. Clients will need a fully functional bank account that includes the ability to make direct debits and standing orders. Post Office Card Accounts and many credit union accounts do not have this functionality.

Shared Accommodation Rate

Claimants under 35 years old can only claim for a single room in a shared house. There is an exemption for those aged 25-34 who have received support for at least 3 months from a hostel specialised in rehabilitating and resettling people in the community, and who have been offered and accepted support. The 3 month period does not have to be consecutive, can have been at any point in the person's life and the exemption does not expire once awarded. People subject to MAPPA levels 2 or 3 are also exempt from the age extension, but the exception may expire if they come off MAPPA.

Impact on resettlement: Restricted options for under-35s and landlords increasingly reluctant to accept under-35s as tenants. Services need to support clients to collect the right information to meet the exemption, and reassure private landlords that the exemption is valid and not time limited. With more people needing shared accommodation and a limited stock, it is possible that under-25s will also be adversely affected in the competition for shared housing and pushed further from private rented accommodation.

Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants

Crisis loans and community care grants stopped in April 2013. The budget has been allocated to local authorities to deliver local welfare assistance schemes of their own design. In most areas there has been a move from cash to goods in kind e.g. furniture schemes, pre-loaded utility payment cards and food parcels. There are a range of organisations delivering these schemes, with access and eligibility criteria varying between areas.

Some DWP loans are still available in the form of Budgeting Advances and Short Term Advances. These are primarily to cover gaps in payments, for example while a claim is being processed. Repayments are over a shorter period of time.

Impact on resettlement: Services should find out how clients can access the local welfare assistance scheme and the type of support it offers. Alternative or additional sources of funding for deposits, rent in advance and household goods may be needed. It may be possible to apply for a discretionary housing payment for some of the costs of resettlement, as well as rent, but this fund is under a lot of pressure due to the shortfall left by multiple welfare reforms.

Council Tax Benefit

As of April 2013 Council Tax Benefit is administered locally and the budget has been reduced. People who were previously eligible for this benefit may be liable to pay council tax.

Impact on resettlement: People are less likely to receive full council tax benefit, and will be expected to top up council tax payments from their other benefits.

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[2] As of May 2013 this has not been confirmed but in pathfinder areas an automatic 'switchback' of rent to landlords at 8 weeks of arrears has been used.

Benefit cap

Claimants will have their weekly benefits – including rent – capped at £350 for a single person without dependents and at £500 for couples and people with children.

Impact on resettlement: An individual's total benefit claim should be taken into account when assessing the affordability of rents.

LHA rates

LHA is now set at the lowest 30% of market rents, so benefits claimants can only rent housing at the lower end of the market (it was previously set at the lowest 50%).

Impact on resettlement: Fewer properties are affordable for LHA claimants. A wider geographical area may have to be considered to find affordable housing options.

'Affordable' rents and changes to tenure

The Government's affordable rents programme means that social housing rents can be set at up to 80% of market rents. Local authorities can also choose not to offer assured tenancies and replace them with fixed term tenancies.

Impact on resettlement: Some social housing will become less affordable, so tenants may find it harder to move into employment or to remain within the benefit cap (see above). Tenants on fixed term tenancies may need support to know how to renew the tenancy or move again when the term ends.

Housing allocations

Housing need will no longer be the key factor in the allocation of social housing. Other factors, such as service in the Armed Forces or being in employment, could give applicants higher priority. Each local authority has its own allocations policy.

Impact on resettlement: Services that usually resettle clients via the council's housing list may find that this option becomes limited, and alternative resettlement routes need to be found. There may be opportunities for homelessness services to influence the drafting of their local allocations policy.

> **For regular updates and further information about welfare reform, including simple factsheets and checklists to help services adapt visit:**
> **www.homeless.org.uk/welfare-aware**

Checklist: The impact of housing and welfare reforms

- ☑ Frontline staff are aware of changes to welfare benefits and housing policy
- ☑ Risk areas for the resettlement process have been identified
- ☑ New or revised information and procedures are in place
- ☑ Information on the changes has been shared with clients
- ☑ Support is available to clients e.g. monthly budgeting
- ☑ Service managers ensure information and training is updated as changes happen

4. RESETTLEMENT OPTIONS

The availability of resettlement depends on the local context, so there is no generic list of options. Most services will be able to access more than one type of resettlement. Ideally routes should be developed into housing with different lengths of stay and levels of support or independence, in order to meet the varying needs of individuals, for example:

- ➤ Social housing (council or Housing Association)
- ➤ Private rented sector (including shared houses)
- ➤ Training flats
- ➤ Residential detox & rehab
- ➤ Supported housing (including specialist provision e.g. drinkers' projects, foyers)
- ➤ Sheltered housing
- ➤ Reconnection (with support)

Services should also consider options such as a mediating a return to the family home, which may be appropriate for some people.

> Support workers need at least a basic understanding of tenancy law and different types of occupancy agreements so that they can advise clients of their rights and responsibilities. For advice and information on tenancy law, see the **Shelter** website.

4.1 Social housing

Social housing has the advantage of being cheaper and often more generous in size than the private rented sector, typically with more security of tenure. At the time of writing, clients are often offered a 'starter tenancy' of one year which becomes an assured tenancy if they keep to the terms of the agreement. Some clients will be given an assured tenancy from the start. Assured tenancies have no time limit. There are proposals to make greater use of fixed term Assured Shorthold Tenancies in social housing (see Section 3 above).

There are also disadvantages to social housing. Properties are usually unfurnished, often without flooring and may be in a poor state of repair. Some local authorities and housing associations have a single offer policy that removes client choice.

Access to social housing is increasingly limited, but it continues to be the main source of move on from many services in the homelessness sector. Changes to local authority housing allocations may introduce new grounds for priority, such as employment, service in the Armed Forces or income (each local authority has its own policy).

While these processes may change with the new allocations polices, at the time of writing social housing can be accessed by:
- ➤ General applications to the local authority housing register
- ➤ Referrals via local authority teams such as Supporting People, or a single point of access system, which are often given a higher priority on the housing list to reflect the support needs of clients leaving homelessness services
- ➤ Housing Association quotas allocated to supported housing or hostels
- ➤ Direct applications to a Housing Association

Services should make contact with Housing Associations operating in their local area to check if any direct applications are possible (i.e. clients applying as individuals as opposed to organisational quotas). There may also be opportunities around accessing hard-to-let properties from the local authority or housing association.

General support for resettlement into social housing includes:
- Offer support e.g. viewings, travel costs, checklist of maintenance issues
- Check the proposed tenancy start date and advocate for a delay if necessary so that the client has time to prepare for the move (often the start date is as soon as the next week), including any impact on benefits, especially for Universal Credit claimants
- Check that the property is ready for occupancy – there have been cases of clients being signed up for uninhabitable properties e.g. Sitex metal sheeting not removed from the windows.

Choice-based lettings
Many local authorities use choice-based lettings (CBL) schemes. Void properties are advertised on a website and prospective tenants can choose to bid for those with appropriate eligibility criteria (e.g. number of beds). Priority is given according to position on the waiting list, with the top bidders invited to a viewing. If people with higher priority don't attend the viewing or don't want the flat, it's possible for those with lower priority to move first. Additional support may be needed when someone is bidding via CBL, in order for clients to use and understand the CBL system, including the codes used to describe properties, so that their bids are appropriate. Staff should also encourage clients to attend viewings as they may get priority if others stay away e.g. during bad weather.

4.2 Private rented sector (PRS)
Resettlement into the PRS has increased as social housing becomes less accessible. The PRS can offer greater flexibility of location, a higher quality of decoration and repair, and options for furnished or part-furnished accommodation. In many areas it is the only resettlement option available to non-statutory homeless people.[3]

The disadvantages of the PRS include the fact that clients are issued assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) and these can be for as little as six months. Provided they give the correct length and form of notice, landlords can evict tenants after the initial fixed term even if they have kept to the terms of their tenancy agreement. Rents are more expensive than social housing and there may be a shortfall from LHA. Tenants often need to provide a month's deposit plus rent in advance. Landlords can increase rents when they renew the AST and there are no limits on the level of increase. There may also be problems with slow responses to maintenance requests.

Homelessness services have found that changes to welfare benefits are making it harder to resettle people into the PRS. Landlords are reluctant to accept people who claim LHA because it might not cover the full rent or future increases, and if someone exceeds the benefits cap, the excess is taken from LHA. There is a particular reluctance to accept under-35s even if they are exempt from the shared accommodation rate, due to a lack of

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[3] PRS properties can now also be used by local authorities to discharge their statutory homelessness duty.

understanding about how the exemption works. Please see Section 3 for more information on welfare reform.

Despite these challenges, there is good practice in the homelessness sector around access to the private rented sector. Schemes to bring empty homes back into use are also being developed around the country.

Crisis funded the 3-year PRS Access Development Programme to assist single, non-statutory homeless people to overcome financial barriers to renting, match them with landlords, and provide support to all parties. This has enabled local homelessness services around the country to develop relationships with landlords and increase their move on rates.

Real Lettings is a specialist not-for-profit lettings agency set up by the homelessness charity Broadway. It is an accredited landlord, taking on properties on long leases, and letting them to homeless tenants, who are referred by local authorities, on assured shorthold tenancies. They offer support to the tenants as well as a full leasing service to the landlord which includes guarantees around rent and maintenance. A second scheme, Real Lettings South, has also been established in partnership with homelessness charity Two Saints.

Resettlement into the PRS is often reliant on good relationships with landlords or letting agents. Services can improve their access to PRS, for example by:

➤ Building relationships with landlords via local landlord forums or a dedicated worker
➤ Offering incentives for landlords to accept homeless clients e.g. agreeing continuing support for the tenant and a point of contact for the landlord if problems arise
➤ Showing that prospective tenants have attended pre-tenancy training
➤ Providing clear information and confirmation of shared accommodation rate exemptions for 25-34 year olds

See section 6 for an overview of the issues around costs for private rented resettlement.

4.3 Training flats
Some hostels use training flats as an interim stage between supported and independent accommodation. These are usually self-contained or shared flats away from the main hostel, but close enough for staff support to continue. This allows clients to adjust to independent living with a higher level of contact than floating support, and to maintain existing keyworking relationships with a familiar organisation. It is usually for a fixed period followed by a move to greater independence, unless issues have come to light that mean an alternative plan is more appropriate.

4.4 Reconnection
Reconnection is the process of supporting homeless people, who have a connection to another area where they can access accommodation and/or social, family and support networks, to return to this area in a planned way. This could be UK nationals who have moved away from their local area or people from outside the UK.

Reconnection may be the appropriate resettlement option at different stages of homelessness. For some rough sleepers it will be the best or only route off the streets, particularly for those who are not able to find employment and have no recourse to public funds. Others may live in temporary accommodation first and then choose to return to an area where they have connections. This could be because their situation has changed, for example when contact is re-established with family and friends, or because they can access a better standard of accommodation there.

Services can support reconnection by helping the client to collect the right information and evidence to access support services in their home area. Plans should be made to ensure the client does not become homeless on their return. This may mean accompanying them to an appointment with the local authority's housing department, contacting local support services who will work with the client or helping them to secure a PRS property.

> **Reconnection guidance:**
> www.homeless.org.uk/effective-action/Reconnectingroughsleepers

4.5 Supported and specialist resettlement

Resettlement isn't always into independent accommodation. Some clients will move on to specialist or supported projects, and may move again in the future. Services should find out what options are available and how to make referrals, for example:

- ➢ Hostels or supported housing: few direct access projects exist so referrals are usually via outreach or local authority housing team
- ➢ Young people's foyers via local authority housing team
- ➢ Specialist supported housing e.g. projects for long term drinkers, via local authority or social services
- ➢ Sheltered housing for clients over pension age via local authority housing team
- ➢ Nursing homes via social services referral and assessment
- ➢ Residential detox and rehab via local authority drug and alcohol team
- ➢ Non-statutory projects via direct referral e.g. Emmaus live/work communities.

Checklist: Resettlement options

☑ Staff & clients understand basic tenancy law and know where to get advice

☑ Staff & clients know how to apply for different social housing options

☑ Support and checklists are available for clients when viewing properties

☑ Staff know to request a later tenancy start date to give the client time to plan their move and establish any impact on benefits, especially for Universal Credit claimants

☑ There is a checklist for staff and clients to ensure the property is ready for occupancy

☑ Staff have the skills and tools to support clients with Choice Based Lettings

☑ Clients are supported and encouraged to attend viewings

☑ Staff & clients know how to access local PRS schemes

☑ The service has explored options for direct referrals to landlords and incentives to accept homeless clients e.g. offering post-resettlement support and point of contact

☑ The service supports clients to evidence exemptions from the shared accommodation rate for 25-34 year olds

☑ The service has considered the needs of particular groups e.g. young or elderly people

☑ Staff & clients have information about specialist resettlement options, eligibility criteria and how referrals are made

5. RESETTLEMENT PLANNING & PREPARATION

Services should have a planned approach to resettlement that integrates with local resettlement strategy. Each service should address the following areas in developing its approach.

5.1 What resettlement options are available?

Staff should be aware of the full range of resettlement options for their service. This is particularly relevant in services that have historically used one resettlement route, such as the local authority waiting list, and would benefit from diversifying their approach to meet a wider range of needs and to avoid silt-up if access to that route becomes limited.

It is good practice to inform clients about different move on routes and any eligibility criteria so that they can play an active role in identifying their preferred option(s) and preparing for resettlement. This may also mean addressing staff prejudices against certain move on routes so that their personal views don't discourage clients.

Individual services or organisations should have a review process to ensure that move on options continue to meet the changing needs of their client group(s). This may include influencing the local authority to use the MOPP to achieve area-wide change (see section 2).

5.2 Referral via other agencies

Homelessness agencies will not always have direct referral rights into move on, for example to residential treatment for addiction or to sheltered housing. Staff working on resettlement need to know what these external options are, who has referral rights, if there are any funding restrictions and what any subsequent housing options are likely to be. There may also be additional preparation stages, such as mandatory engagement with addiction service groups or a Social Services assessment, before a move can happen.

In some areas the majority of resettlement options are only accessible via the local authority's single point of access (often known as the gateway or pathway). Staff should be trained how to use this route effectively, for example how to complete the referral forms or use an online referral system. This process may also trigger incoming referrals to fill the upcoming void. For services receiving statutory funding, correct use of the system may form part of contract monitoring.

5.3 Who decides when a client is ready to move on?

There is an element of positive risk-taking in any resettlement. Support workers can become protective of their clients, prioritising other support needs over move on, which creates a risk of institutionalisation. On the other hand, resettlement without adequate preparation or ongoing support increases the risk of tenancy loss. Services should try to develop flexible options that are responsive to the needs and aspirations of each client, rather than setting a fixed term or pathway. Progress reviews will highlight any obstacles, whether these are practical or based on client or worker concerns. Outcomes progression tools, such as Outcomes Star, are an effective way of assessing clients' readiness to move on.

Where a client is ready to move on but there is no appropriate route, services should work with the local Housing Options team and/or the council's lead worker on homelessness to identify the gap in provision and look for a solution, for example allocating an individual budget for home adaptations or making a referral to Social Services.

5.4 Preparation for resettlement
Managing expectations

Most services have a limited number of resettlement options. Social housing is increasingly hard to access and changes to welfare benefits further restrict the type of housing people can choose (see section 3). Both clients and workers may have unrealistic expectations of what resettlement options are available. This is particularly the case for people who have been housed in the past and found social housing readily available. Services need to give clear and realistic information early on – if a studio flat or room in a shared house is the most likely resettlement option, clients need to know this. It may help to invite former clients back to talk about their experience of resettlement.

The timing of resettlement can be beyond the control of both provider and client. Services should be realistic about the potential for a quick turnaround between viewing and tenancy start date. Services can manage this by discussing the process in advance, for example thinking about the need for transport, a starter pack of essential items and how to cope until a property is furnished. Ensure clients know which costs they must cover and which the service can help with.

There may also be expectations around continued support from the service after resettlement. Support staff should explain what their role will be and if there are any restrictions on former service users returning to visit the service.

Discussing aspirations

While a service can't always move clients into their preferred type of housing, they shouldn't lose sight of clients' wider aspirations. Homeless people may struggle to see beyond the goal of moving into settled accommodation. It is the role of support providers to prompt discussions that go beyond the fact of resettlement to look at what the individual's hopes are for the future.

There is a risk that morale and wellbeing will be negatively affected by resettlement[4]. This can be due to the stress of responding to the practical requirements of living independently,

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[4] The FOR-HOME Study, Maureen Crane, Tony Warnes and Sarah Coward, University of Sheffield 2011

such as reporting disrepair or neighbour issues (see 'practical preparation' below). It is also common for people to report loneliness, isolation and boredom in their new home.

Conversations about how best to fulfil aspirations in their new situation can help clients to prepare themselves, both emotionally and practically. For example, if a client's aspiration is having their children to stay, their budgeting has to include additional amounts for food and activities. Involvement in employment, training or education has been linked to more positive morale and wellbeing after resettlement[5], and clients can be supported to either plan for or start these activities before they move.

Social and emotional preparation
Many aspects of resettlement can be challenging, for example moving to a new area; changing social networks; re-establishing contact with family or friends; or taking on practical responsibilities. Clients and support workers should discuss potential areas of difficulty in order to plan coping strategies. Be clear that acknowledging these issues is part of the process and not a criticism of the client's ability to move on. Training in motivational interviewing or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) skills can help support workers to have positive and constructive conversations.

Support should be tailored, taking into account that individuals have different priorities. For example, some people will prioritise the need for a radio or television to reduce feelings of isolation in a new home over items such as furniture in the short term[6]. Staff should be prepared to adjust their approach and be led by the client, as taking control of decision-making is a key part of the client's resettlement process.

Mentoring and befriending schemes offer informal support. Some schemes use peer mentors who bring knowledge and empathy from their experience of homelessness. Other schemes include volunteers from the general public. This type of social and emotional support is valuable, especially as mentors and befrienders can be more flexible in their hours and spend more unstructured time with people than contracted support staff. There can also be a benefit for homeless people to have a consistent relationship with someone that won't change when the rest of their situation changes. Services should look for opportunities to offer referral to mentoring and befriending schemes as part of the resettlement process.

The relationship that a client has with their support worker and peers in a service can be significant and something they want to continue after resettlement. Staff may not have capacity to provide support after someone moves on. It is possible that clients who keep returning to the service will:
- remain dependent on support
- struggle to move on from a damaging lifestyle
- be at risk of tenancy hijack ('cuckooing') by exploitative peers.

These risks will vary greatly between clients. It can also be beneficial to both ex-clients and workers to know how someone is getting on after resettlement, rather than the relationship coming to an abrupt end.

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[5] The FOR-HOME Study (2011)
[6] The FOR-HOME Study (2011)

Support staff should discuss concerns with clients and look for solutions. It may be that return visits to catch up with staff and peers are not a problem. Where visits are assessed as inappropriate, alternatives could be:

- keep in contact via social media, email, cards or letters
- help the client to build other social networks e.g. community groups or sports
- work towards visits in a different role e.g. as a peer mentor or volunteer.

Practical preparation

The importance of pre-tenancy training varies between clients. Staff should assess the individual level of need. Someone who has not had a tenancy before (e.g. a young person) is likely to need more support, but equally some older clients will have had a partner who took responsibility for household tasks and so their confidence and skills may also need development. Needs assessment and support planning tools (e.g. Outcomes Star) can help workers to assess the client's level of need.

Each service should have a programme of training to cover key areas of practical preparation, for example:

➢ What to check when viewing a property
➢ Planning the move, including transport costs and starter packs
➢ Budgeting
➢ Paying rent and bills
➢ Minor repairs and reporting maintenance
➢ Tenants' rights and responsibilities
➢ Cookery
➢ Neighbour relations
➢ Crime and safety (personal and property)
➢ Meaningful occupation and social activities
➢ Finding employment
➢ Where to get support

Training should be varied, e.g. group work, one-to-one sessions, worksheets or practical sessions. Involving current and ex-service users in the development and regular review of materials will ensure the areas covered reflect their concerns. It's particularly important to get feedback after clients are resettled in case issues arise that the training plan has missed.

Chapter 1 'The Limes' is a hostel in Manchester that has introduced an Accredited Tenancy Training Course. The 8-week course covers skills to sustain independent living such as budgeting, utilities and neighbour issues. Other homelessness projects refer their residents to attend sessions at The Limes. After completion, residents get a higher banding on the council's housing list, which speeds up the resettlement process. People who attend the tenancy training are also more likely to engage with other courses.

Free pre-tenancy training resources are available. Broadway's **It's Your Move** course includes a range of free training materials.

Services may want to develop resources in partnership with other local homelessness agencies to avoid repetition if people move between services, especially where there is a pathway. Pre-tenancy training should begin as early as possible to avoid people being resettled before they can finish the course.

Resettlement between support services (e.g. from street outreach to a hostel) will also require some practical preparation, e.g. understanding house rules, paying service charge or when to meet a new support worker. The client should have an opportunity to visit the service before they move in, if possible. Support workers should check what the service will provide in case the client is expected to bring their own bedding, towels or other items. A few joint meetings with the client and their previous and new workers may be beneficial for making the transition into a new service.

Local area preparation

For clients moving to a new place, local area inductions with a volunteer, peer mentor or member of staff can help with the transition and reduce feelings of isolation.

The induction can be quite simple e.g. print pedestrian-friendly street maps and go for a walk around the area to find local amenities (shops, markets, Post Office, library, Job Centre, bus routes, launderette, barber/hairdresser, sports centre, parks, utility PayPoints, places of worship etc).

It may be useful to identify local support or advice services in case a 'safety net' is needed e.g. a Citizens' Advice Bureau, advice centre, law centre, day centre or community resource centre.

Checklist: Resettlement planning & preparation

☑ Staff & clients know what resettlement options are available

☑ Staff have contacts with other agencies and know how to refer clients into their resettlement pathways

☑ Staff know how to use the local authority's housing pathway and how to report problems

☑ There is an assessment and review procedure that supports clients to move on

☑ The service has a point of contact at the local authority to help identify solutions for clients with complex needs

☑ Clients are given clear and realistic information about resettlement

☑ Peer mentors talk about their experience of resettlement

☑ The extent of staff support during and after resettlement is clearly explained

☑ The extent of service support with resettlement costs and transport is clearly explained

☑ Staff discuss clients' aspirations alongside the practical aspects of resettlement

☑ The social and emotional needs of clients are discussed

☑ Practical ways of reducing stress and isolation are identified

☑ Staff and clients look for ways to develop new social networks (education, volunteering, sports, community groups etc)

☑ Staff are trained in skills such as Motivational Interviewing or CBT

☑ Staff & clients can refer/have access to mentoring and befriending schemes

☑ The service has looked into developing a mentoring and befriending scheme where none exists locally

☑ Return visits to the service are discussed, risk assessed and plans are agreed

☑ The service has looked into training for ex-clients as peer mentors

☑ Staff send a house-warming card and consider keeping in touch via email, phone calls or post

☑ Clients are given a phone card or stationery and stamps in their starter pack

☑ The service has a flexible programme of pre-tenancy training that meets different levels of readiness for independence

☑ Staff seek client input and feedback on their pre-tenancy training

☑ Pre-tenancy training starts well in advance of resettlement

☑ Staff also offer support to clients who are moving between supported accommodation

☑ Local services look at using consistent pre-tenancy training as clients move between services

☑ Staff support clients with a local area induction to visit the new area and find local amenities and identify 'safety net' support services

6. MEETING THE COSTS OF RESETTLEMENT

Most forms of resettlement incur costs, primarily:

➤ Deposit and rent in advance
➤ Transport
➤ Household items
➤ Cash for key meters

Historically there has been reliance on statutory funds and loans such as crisis loans, community care grants, budgeting loans or the council's discretionary housing payment fund to meet these costs. However since April 2013 welfare reforms mean that these funds are either highly limited or cut entirely (see section 3 above).

Applications to local welfare assistance schemes might help with resettlement, but services will need to develop additional ways to meet costs, for example:

➤ Credit Unions – some schemes have partnered with credit unions to offer rent bonds, which may be cash or in the form of a guarantee. Tenants then save with the credit union so that they have a deposit in future. Find local credit unions via an internet search.

- ➤ Find a rent deposit scheme: www.privaterentedsector.org.uk/PRS_schemes.asp
- ➤ Deposit guarantees offered by the service (a bond rather than cash)
- ➤ Fundraising by the service for a dedicated resettlement fund
- ➤ Look for local small grants schemes that will fund individuals
- ➤ Donations of starter packs and furniture (e.g. local businesses donating in kind)
- ➤ Instead of food at harvest festival, ask for donations of gift cards e.g. Argos
- ➤ Set up referral rights into low cost furniture schemes
- ➤ Support clients to open a bank or credit union account and save towards resettlement
- ➤ Find out if other charities have access to transport, look for opportunities to pool or exchange resources
- ➤ Offer publicity to local businesses via newsletters, website or social media in exchange for their time e.g. removal firms
- ➤ Invest in reusable items such as storage boxes that can be returned after the move ready for the next client

The Purfleet Trust offers housing, employment and day centre services and focuses on pathways out of homelessness. They have developed a range of approaches to improve access to resettlement: a Crisis-funded PRS scheme, a rent deposit guarantee scheme with Norfolk Credit Union, and tenancy support. They work closely with a local Housing Association and offer maintenance and decoration of voids as part of their employment programme JOG ON, in exchange for referral rights.

Some services are looking to more ambitious funding solutions. **Broadway** has set up a property fund, using social investment to fund resettlement properties for homeless people.

Services should also support clients to protect any money invested in their resettlement, for example knowing their responsibilities as a tenant, as well as the law around tenancy deposit protection schemes. See the **Shelter** website.

Checklist: Meeting the costs of resettlement

☑ Staff are aware of changes to welfare benefits and have made alternative plans where needed e.g. to replace crisis loans and community care grants (CCGs)

☑ Staff & clients plan for costs including deposits, rent, transport, key meters and household goods

☑ Staff & clients know how to apply to the local welfare assistance scheme

☑ The service has explored alternative funding for resettlement including Credit Unions, rent deposit schemes, starter packs and donations in kind

☑ Staff & clients know how to access rent deposit guarantee schemes

7. SUPPORT AFTER RESETTLEMENT

There is a risk of resettlement breaking down, leading to repeat homelessness. Support during and after resettlement, taking into account practical, emotional and social needs, can reduce this risk. If continuous support is not required, there should be a plan so that the client knows how to request support if their situation changes. With access to preventative support, crisis and repeat homelessness can be avoided.

7.1 Support from previous service

Some services will have limited capacity to continue to offer support. Where direct support is not possible, contact via telephone, email or post at least maintains a point of contact during the transition to independence. As discussed above, services should also consider whether it is appropriate for clients to return after resettlement e.g. as a visitor, volunteer or mentor.

Where resettlement is between services or from the streets, overlapping support can be important where a relationship of trust has been developed e.g. a rough sleeper who has worked closely with an outreach worker before moving into accommodation. A balance can be struck between the need for clear boundaries to avoid dependence on an individual support worker, and the value of trusting professional relationships for achieving positive change.

7.2 Floating support

Floating support (also known as tenancy support) usually takes the form of teams contracted by the local authority to provide home support visits. In some areas these teams have specialist criteria for referrals e.g. mental health needs. Newly resettled clients, or those who begin to have problems post-resettlement, can be referred to floating support. This support should increase the likelihood of formerly homeless people remaining in their home by addressing issues before they reach a crisis point.

There are some disadvantages to traditional models of floating support. Workers often cover large geographical areas and have high caseloads, so contact time with clients is limited. This can also make it difficult for teams to close cases, leading to longer waiting lists or suspension of referrals. Clients needing generic support may not reach the eligibility threshold for some floating support teams.

Where floating support is effective it can have a positive impact on tenancy sustainment, and engagement with other services.[7] Personalised approaches and/or access to mentoring and befriending schemes (see below) can help to supplement traditional floating support models.

St Mungo's PAL (Peer Advice Link) offers advice and support in the community through home visits, a drop-in service and advice line. The service is mostly run by volunteers with experience of resettlement. They support people with the transition into independent living, and then provide an ongoing safety net; providing support when and only when people feel they need it.

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[7] p90 The FOR-HOME Study, Maureen Crane, Tony Warnes and Sarah Coward, University of Sheffield 2011

The Great Escape was set up in partnership between Derbyshire Dales District Council and Derbyshire Dales CVS. Clients in supported housing or receiving floating support access meaningful activity as a way of improving health and well-being. This addresses some of the challenges and isolation experienced after resettlement.

7.3 Personalisation

A range of homelessness services have started to adopt personalised approaches to support. This can involve choosing the type and intensity of floating support, and who provides it. Personalisation reflects good practice across the homelessness sector in shaping services to meet clients' individual needs rather than a 'one size fits all' approach. Any service providing support during and after resettlement should consider what opportunities there are for personalisation in order to increase clients' tenancy sustainment.

Thames Reach piloted a personalised approach at their Lewisham Reach service. Clients could choose their keyworker and the intensity of support. Individual budgets were used to sustain stability as cases were closed.

For details of principles and pilots see: www.homeless.org.uk/personalisation

7.4 Mentoring and befriending

As discussed above, mentoring and befriending can offer a more flexible, informal support relationship than that provided by teams within office hours. While primarily offering social and emotional support, the mentor or befriender is also well-placed to help the client to access more structured preventative support as needed.

At present, mentoring and befriending schemes are not widespread. This is an area that could benefit from increased focus and fundraising within the homelessness sector.

Checklist: Support after resettlement

☑ There is a plan in place for support after resettlement

☑ Clients have the information they need to access support at a later date

☑ The service has procedures to risk assess and plan for return visits from ex-clients and has considered options such as peer mentoring and volunteering

☑ Support workers are able to provide transitional support if requested when a client moves into another supported accommodation project

☑ Staff & clients know how to make a referral for floating support

☑ Services involved in resettlement have explored ways of personalising their service

☑ Staff & clients know how to access mentoring and befriending schemes

☑ The service has looked into developing a mentoring and befriending scheme where none exists locally

8. INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

A linear approach to resettlement can lead to services becoming silted-up as clients do not always meet the criteria to move through housing pathways. Projects have developed innovative responses, tailoring resettlement options to individuals to increase the rate and success of resettlement.

> During the **205 Project**, outreach teams worked with entrenched rough sleepers across London, giving them individual budgets and working closely with each client to identify the right resettlement option. Outcomes included moves to bed and breakfast, private rented accommodation and a caravan. www.homeless.org.uk/specialist-interventions
> **Housing First** was originally a US approach that placed clients with mental health needs into independent accommodation with a multi-disciplinary team providing intensive support. This model has been adapted by projects in the UK to work with entrenched rough sleepers, resettling them from the streets into independent accommodation. Crisis has produced a research report on this approach, and Housing First is now being piloted by a number of London-based services.

Models have also been developed that address needs in addition to housing, for example employment. Being in work can help to reduce the risks of isolation and boredom associated with resettlement, and may give clients greater choice in where they live. If councils choose to prioritise work and training in their social housing allocations, these projects may accrue unintended benefits by increasing the range of accommodation that clients can access.

> Norwich City Council & St Martins Housing Trust's **Learning Employment Accommodation Project (LEAP)** supports people to access employment, education and training, along with accommodation in the private rented sector. They focus on affordability so that housing is sustainable for people in employment, and offer tenancy support after resettlement. LEAP is currently developing an Empty Homes scheme.

> **Checklist: Innovative approaches**
> ☑ Services regularly review their approach and look for ways to be innovative in their resettlement practice
> ☑ Staff know about different schemes and keep an open mind about ways to approach resettlement, especially for clients with complex needs or a long history of homelessness
> ☑ Clients' wider needs, e.g. employment, are taken into account when planning move on

9. RESOURCES

Research

➢ The FOR-HOME Study (2011) is the largest study of the resettlement of homeless people in the UK. It provides an excellent insight into the principles and practice of resettlement: www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/sshm/scwru/res/roles/resettling.aspx

Tools and guidance

➢ The Move On Plans Protocol is for use by local authorities with voluntary providers to audit resettlement needs and use this as a basis to review provision: www.homeless.org.uk/mopp

➢ Homeless Link's regularly updated resources on welfare reform, including simple factsheets: www.homeless.org.uk/welfare-aware

➢ Reconnection guidance, including checklist for evidence collection and options for clients depending on their immigration situation: www.homeless.org.uk/effective-action/Reconnectingroughsleepers

➢ Removing Barriers: Reducing Exclusions guidance for staff to advocate on behalf of homeless clients who are excluded from services: www.homeless.org.uk/effective-action/barriers

➢ The Shelter website has advice and information for tenants, including rent deposit guarantee schemes: www.shelter.org.uk

➢ Personalisation principles and pilots: www.homeless.org.uk/personalisation

➢ Advice for accessing temporary and permanent housing for pet owners: www.dogstrust.org.uk/az/d/dogfriendlyhostels/default.aspx www.dogstrust.org.uk/az/p/petsandhousing/default.aspx

Private rented sector

➢ Crisis has a dedicated Private Rented Sector website with a wide range of resources and tools: www.privaterentedsector.org.uk

➢ Find a rent deposit scheme: www.privaterentedsector.org.uk/PRS_schemes.asp

➢ Working with the PRS & Developing a PRSO Policy Toolkit for Local Authoritie': www.nhas.org.uk

➢ Real Lettings is a specialist homelessness not-for-profit lettings agency operating in London and parts of the South-East: www.reallettings.com

Pre-tenancy and post-resettlement training and support

➢ Broadway's It's Your Move course includes a series of free training materials: www.broadwaysrealskills.com/it_s_your_move/overview.html

➢ Employment and JobCentre Plus guidance: www.homeless.org.uk/effective-action/employment www.homeless.org.uk/effective-action/workingwithjcp

➢ Transact is the National Forum for Financial Inclusion and support services delivering financial inclusion with good practice and networks: www.transact.org.uk

➢ Money Advice Service provides national advice and education, including a financial health check and budgeting resources: www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

➢ Support clients to access sport as part of developing meaningful activity: www.homeless.org.uk/sports-resources

➢ JPPG Kent (Housing) has produced 'Moving On or Moving In: a helpful guide for renting somewhere to live': www.kentjppbhousing.org/Housing

Mentoring & befriending

➢ Volunteering England mentoring and befriending resources: www.volunteering.org.uk/component/gpb/mentoring-and-befriending

➢ Housing Justice mentoring and befriending toolkit: www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/toolkits.html

➢ Mentoring & Befriending Foundation: www.mandbf.org/

➢ St Mungo's PAL (Peer Advice Link): http://www.mungos.org/services/recovery_from_homelessness/pal_peer_advice_link/

Other services

➢ Chapter 1 'The Limes': www.ch1.org.uk

➢ Emmaus live/work projects: www.emmaus.org.uk

➢ Norwich LEAP: www.norwichleap.co.uk

➢ Purfleet Trust: www.purfleettrust.org.uk

➢ Young people's foyers: www.foyer.net

APPENDIX 1: RESETTLEMENT CHECKLIST

Considerations for the Local Authority

☑ Issues with services silting up are addressed by the local authority and voluntary sector

☑ The local authority has looked at using the MOPP

☑ There is a coordinated approach between services engaging with the PRS

☑ The local authority keeps its single point of access under review

The impact of housing and welfare reforms

☑ Frontline staff are aware of changes to welfare benefits and housing policy

☑ Risk areas for the resettlement process have been identified

☑ New or revised information and procedures are in place

☑ Information on the changes has been shared with clients

☑ Support is available to clients e.g. monthly budgeting

☑ Service managers ensure information and training is updated as changes happen

Resettlement options

☑ Staff & clients understand basic tenancy law and know where to get advice

☑ Staff & clients know how to apply for different social housing options

☑ Support and checklists are available for clients when viewing properties

☑ Staff know to request a later tenancy start date to give the client time to plan their move and establish any impact on benefits, especially for Universal Credit claimants

☑ There is a checklist for staff and clients to ensure the property is ready for occupancy

☑ Staff have the skills and tools to support clients with Choice Based Lettings

☑ Clients are supported and encouraged to attend viewings

☑ Staff & clients know how to access local PRS schemes

☑ The service has explored options for direct referrals to landlords and incentives to accept homeless clients e.g. offering post-resettlement support and point of contact

☑ The service supports clients to evidence exemptions from the shared accommodation rate for 25-34 year olds

☑ The service has considered the needs of particular groups e.g. young or elderly people

☑ Staff & clients have information about specialist resettlement options, eligibility criteria and how referrals are made.

Resettlement planning & preparation

☑ Staff & clients know what resettlement options are available

☑ Staff have contacts with other agencies and know how to refer clients into their resettlement pathways

☑ Staff know how to use the local authority's housing pathway and how to report problems

☑ There is an assessment and review procedure that supports clients to move on

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☑ The social and emotional needs of clients are discussed

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☑ Pre-tenancy training starts well in advance of resettlement

☑ Staff also offer support to clients who are moving between supported accommodation

☑ Local services look at using consistent pre-tenancy training as clients move between services

☑ Staff support clients with a local area induction to visit the new area and find local amenities and identify 'safety net' support services

Meeting the costs of resettlement

☑ Staff are aware of changes to welfare benefits and have made alternative plans where needed e.g. to replace crisis loans and CCGs

☑ Staff & clients plan for costs including deposits, rent, transport, key meters and household goods

☑ Staff & clients know how to apply to the local welfare assistance scheme

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☑ Staff & clients know how to access rent deposit guarantee schemes

Support after resettlement

☑ There is a plan in place for support after resettlement

☑ Clients have the information they need to access support at a later date.

☑ The service has procedures to risk assess and plan for return visits from ex-clients and has considered options such as peer mentoring and volunteering

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☑ Services involved in resettlement have explored ways of personalising their service

☑ Staff & clients know how to access mentoring and befriending schemes

☑ The service has looked into developing a mentoring and befriending scheme where none exists locally

Innovative approaches

☑ Services regularly review their approach and look for ways to be innovative in their resettlement practice

☑ Staff know about different schemes and keep an open mind about ways to approach resettlement, especially for clients with complex needs or a long history of homelessness

☑ Clients' wider needs, e.g. employment, are taken into account when planning move on.