

LIFE AFTER CARE: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON NAVIGATING HOUSING STABILITY AND SUPPORT FOR YOUTH EXITING CARE

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Background

- Youth homelessness has risen in the past decade, leading to an increasing global awareness and need for action [1,2].
- Navigating the transition from State care to independent housing often represents a precarious journey for many youths, placing them at higher risk of housing insecurity and homelessness [3,4].
- Since 2017, organisations like Peter McVerry Trust (PMVT) in Ireland are assisted by government “Capital Assistance Scheme” (CAS) funding to purchase properties for housing and supporting young people from care backgrounds [5].

Research Questions

1. What were youths’ experiences of availing of housing and social support from PMVT through this funding scheme?
2. What were the experiences of PMVT staff in delivering housing and social support?

Methodology

- 11 semi-structured interviews with young people (aged 18-25 yrs) living in PMVT-supported properties between 6 months to 5 years.
- 3 focus groups (inc. 9 PMVT frontline staff, management and directors).
- Data was transcribed verbatim, inductively coded and thematically analysed.



For Full Report:



References

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4. Mayock, P., & Parker, S. (2020). Homeless young people ‘strategizing’ a route to housing stability: Service fatigue, exiting attempts and living ‘off grid’. *Housing Studies*, 35(3), 459-483.
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“I could never plan to the future because I didn’t know where I was going to be, what was going to happen. So, I had the security, it was like a foundation to build from. Yeah, without it I don’t know where I’d be. I don’t know what I’d be doing”
- Kevin

“I never had a proper family home that’s mine and now I can look after it and do what I like” - Lucy



Findings

From 2018, Peter McVerry Trust has successfully housed 53 young people with a tenancy sustainment rate of 96%.

The young people interviewed:

- All spoke on histories of unstable living prior to accessing CAS funded housing, yet valued the high-quality, 1-bed apartments provided. This fostered feelings of ownership and belonging.
- While the transition into the properties were overwhelming and lonely, youth benefitted from relationships built with staff when in crises.
- While confusion regarding the longevity of the tenancy and property maintenance were highlighted as concerns, all youth spoke on desires for continuing their further education and employment.

From service provider perspectives:

- The organisation provided a wide range of tailored services which supported youth maintain their tenancies (see figure below).
- The importance of providing fully furnished and stocked homes from the turn of a key was imperative.
- Yet, acting as landlord and social carers impacted frontline staff abilities to engage, but added an additional level of care and security around tenancy management.

Conclusion

CAS funded housing acts preventatively and can intervene against youth homelessness. The provision of stable housing, in conjunction with wraparound support services, served as a foundation for youth progression towards independence. Further support for education and employment can enhance youth outcomes. Along with clarity on long-term housing programme aspects.

The research was funded by the Irish Housing Agency Research Support Programme for 2023.