Going Straight Home? The Role Of Stable Housing In Reducing Reoffending Amongst Those Who Have Left Prison

Anika Terry, Alice Mills, Barry Milne and Cinnamon Lindsay Latimer, University of Auckland
In 2019, nearly 7600 sentenced prisoners were released from NZ prisons (Ara Poutama Aotearoa 2020a).

Of those released from NZ prisons in 2018/19, within 24 months:
- 60.8% were re-sentenced
- 41.2% were re-imprisoned

Figures for Māori – 65.8% and 45.8 % respectively (Ara Poutama Aotearoa 2020b)
REINTEGRATION AND STABLE HOUSING IN AOTEAROA

• Only around half of releasees able to settle into long-term accommodation (Johnston 2018)

• Corrections and partners provide over 1,000 housing places each year through various initiatives, including emergency accommodation, transitional housing and provision for specific groups

• Budget 2018 – $57.6 million for housing initiatives – Housing and Support Services Programme
IMPORTANCE OF STABLE POST-RELEASE HOUSING

• the ‘lynchpin that holds the reintegration process together’ (Bradley et al. 2001)

• ‘central to any attempt at re-integrating newly released prisoners’ (Ogilvie 2001:2)

• ‘More than any other factor, a lack of stable accommodation was the most critical contributor to negative post-release outcomes.’ (Morrison and Bowman 2017).


• Limitations of existing research
GOING STRAIGHT HOME

1. TO EXAMINE whether stable housing is associated with reduced recidivism in New Zealand

2. TO EVALUATE the role of stable housing in contributing to desistance from crime
HOW REPRESENTATIVE ARE SAMPLES IN LATER INTERVIEW TIMES TO THE INITIAL SAMPLE?
## Housing type before prison sentence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Stable</th>
<th>Unstable</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Housing type plans after prison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Stable</th>
<th>Unstable</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Location participants served their sentence

- **Waikeria**
  - Time 0: 18%
  - Time 1: 21%
  - Time 2: 24%

- **Spring Hill**
  - Time 0: 5%
  - Time 1: 8%
  - Time 2: 4%

- **Northland**
  - Time 0: 17%
  - Time 1: 10%
  - Time 2: 12%

- **Hawke’s Bay**
  - Time 0: 28%
  - Time 1: 24%
  - Time 2: 27%

- **Christchurch Men’s**
  - Time 0: 14%
  - Time 1: 20%
  - Time 2: 18%

- **Auckland Women’s**
  - Time 0: 17%
  - Time 1: 18%
  - Time 2: 14%
Sentence lengths of participants interviewed at each stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>2+ Years</th>
<th>1-2 Years</th>
<th>Less than a Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time 0</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### STABLE HOUSING MEASURES

Two measures of stable housing:

- **Housing type** - Stable/Unstable

- **Number of moves** in 6 months prior to the interview

#### Housing type before prison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing type before prison</th>
<th>0-1</th>
<th>2+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owned</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State housing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing first/NGO</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/family</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel/motel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostel/boarding house/etc.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stability of housing participants had before each interview:

- **Time 0**
  - Unstable: 56%
  - Stable: 44%

- **Time 1**
  - Unstable: 34%
  - Stable: 66%

- **Time 2**
  - Unstable: 41%
  - Stable: 59%

Number of moves of participants before each interview:

- **Time 0**
  - 2+: 39%
  - 0-1: 61%

- **Time 1**
  - 2+: 75%
  - 0-1: 25%

- **Time 2**
  - 2+: 44%
  - 0-1: 56%
Re-imprisoned participants interviewed at each stage

Time 0:
- Yes: 25%
- No: 75%

Time 1:
- Yes: 25%
- No: 75%

Time 2:
- Yes: 15%
- No: 85%

Re-sentenced participants interviewed at each stage

Time 0:
- Yes: 48%
- No: 54%

Time 1:
- Yes: 40%
- No: 60%

Time 2:
- Yes: 36%
- No: 64%
Of those who reported having stable housing at the first post-release interview, 7.4% were re-imprisoned within a year.

Of those who reported having unstable housing at the first post-release interview, 34.0% were re-imprisoned within a year.
Of those who reported having stable housing at the first post-release interview, 29.6% were re-sentenced within a year.

Of those who reported having unstable housing at the first post-release interview, 45.3% were re-sentenced within a year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Re-sentenced</th>
<th>Stable housing First post-release interview</th>
<th>Unstable housing First post-release interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of those who reported moving 0-1 times by the first post-release interview, 20.0% were re-imprisoned within a year.

Of those who reported moving 2+ times by the first post-release interview, 31.4% were re-imprisoned within a year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Re-imprisoned</th>
<th>0-1 moves First post-release interview</th>
<th>2+ moves First post-release interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of those who reported moving 0-1 times by the first post-release interview, 31.1% were re-sentenced within a year.

Of those who reported moving 2+ times by the first post-release interview, 51.4% were re-sentenced within a year.
Interested in the causal effects of stable housing after prison, as measured either by type of housing or the number of moves.

To find causal effects, all other variables that could have been affecting both stable housing and reoffence (confounders) should be properly controlled for. The confounding variables would ideally be accounted for in models either by inverse probability weighting or covariate adjustment.
The confounding variables that should be controlled for are:

- Demographics (such as age group, gender, ethnicity)
- Family supportiveness
- Employment after prison
- Stability of housing before prison
- Support after prison
- Criminal history
- Whether they cared for others after prison
- Who they were living with after prison (such as alone, with whanau, etc.)
- A measure of alcohol abuse
- A measure of drug abuse
CONCLUSION

• Initial analysis confirms international research that stable housing might reduce the risk of recidivism

• Next steps
- Cultural considerations in conceptualisations of stable housing
- Unpacking the category of ‘family and friends’
- Continue to explore inverse probability weighting and covariate adjustment
- Explore the possibility of creating many models for the subsets of variables.
ANY QUESTIONS?

Anika Terry – ater928@aucklanduni.ac.nz
Alice Mills – a.mills@auckland.ac.nz
Barry Milne – b.milne@auckland.ac.nz