

# **HOMES FOR EX-PRISONERS: HOUSING PROVISION AND SUPPORT AFTER RELEASE IN NEW ZEALAND**

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# Accommodation and recidivism

- 57% of ex-prisoners and 63% of Māori ex-prisoners re-offend within two years (Dept of Corrections 2015)
- Stable accommodation can reduce the risk of reoffending by around 20% (Social Exclusion Unit 2002; Lutze et al. 2014; Metraux and Culhane 2004)
- 65% of prisoners who needed help with finding a place to live were reconvicted compared to 45% who did not (UK Ministry of Justice 2010)

# The importance of stable accommodation (Baldry et al. 2006)

- Pre- and post-release interviews with 339 prisoners
- Of those who had moved twice or more, 59% reincarcerated
- Of those who had not moved or moved once, 22% reincarcerated
- Controlling for other factors, people who moved often were 2-8 times more likely to be reincarcerated.

# Barriers to accommodation

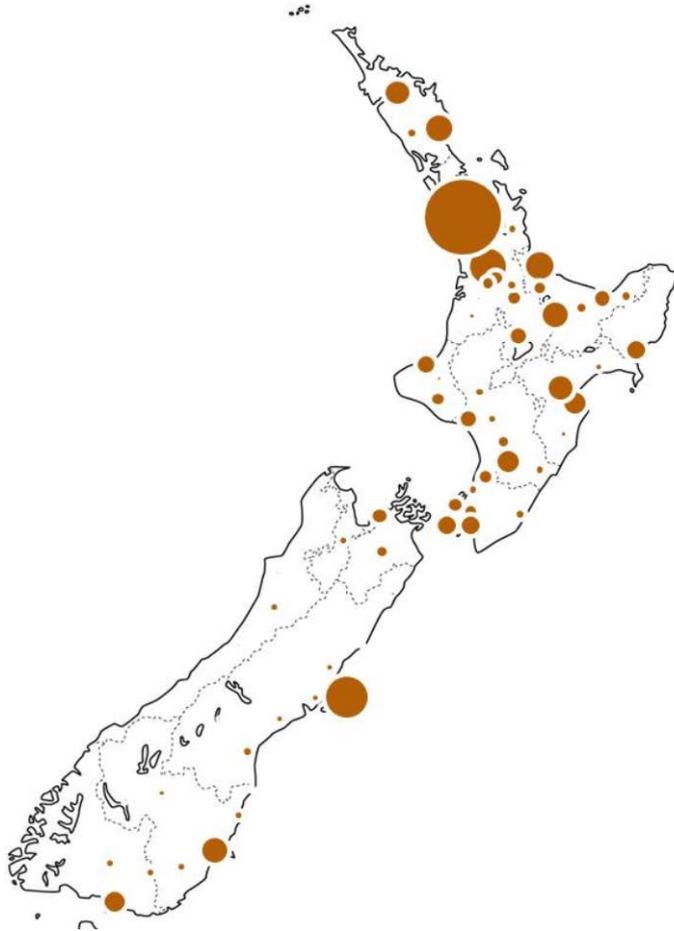
- Financial difficulties and stigma of conviction
- Barred from living with family members e.g. in state housing
- Parole and supervision conditions
- Over-representation of Māori in prison and homelessness populations

# Reducing re-offending in New Zealand



- Target to reduce re-offending by 25% by 2017
- Reducing Crime and Re-Offending Result Action Plan (Ministry of Justice 2012)
- Predominantly prison-based initiatives (\$65m)

# Prisoner release



- Approx 15,000 people released from prison annually
- 1 / 4 released to Auckland
- Issues of affordability and supply
- Small community housing sector
- Out of Gate contracts (\$10m)
- Supported Accommodation

# Aims

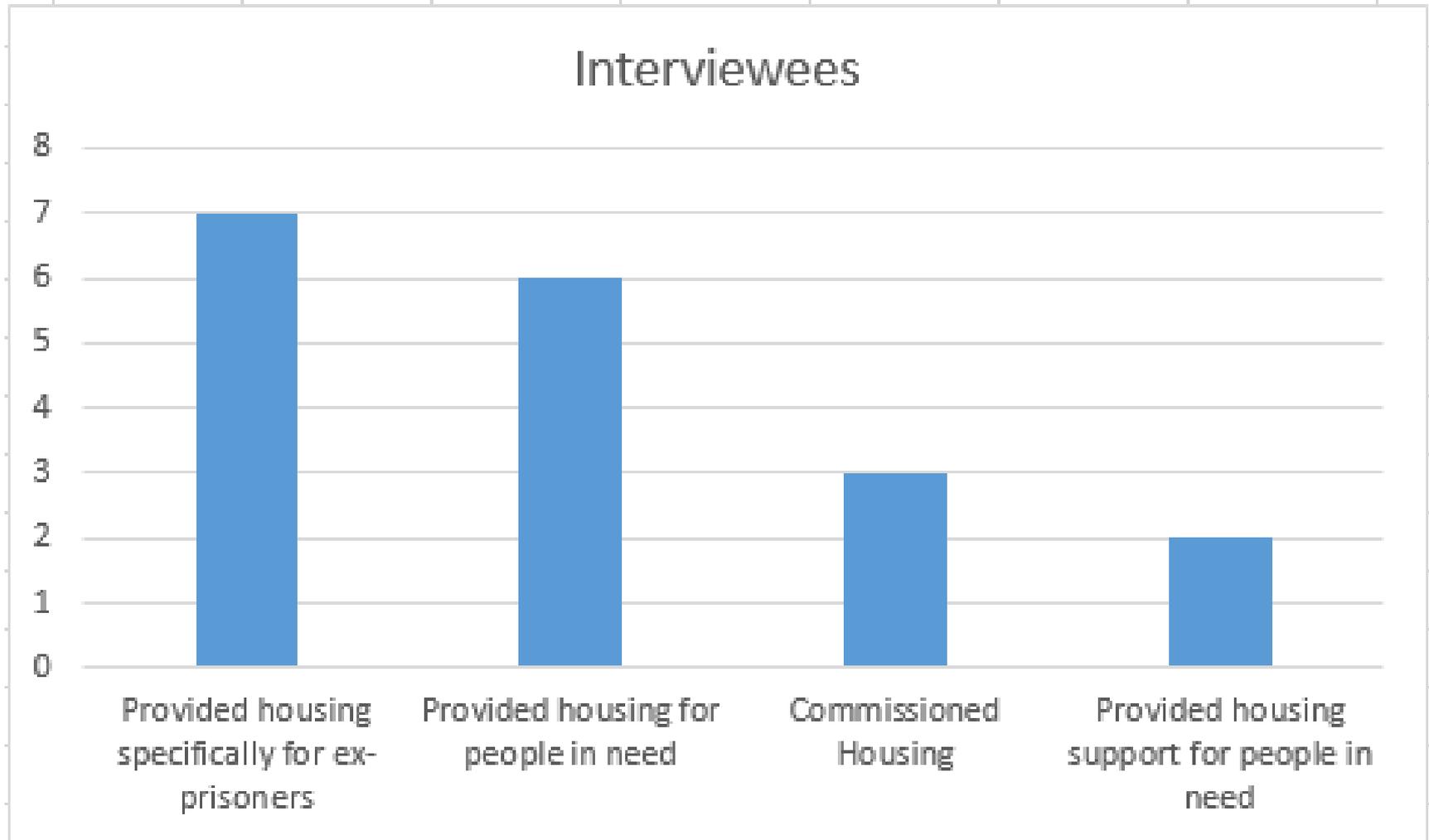
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- To ascertain the nature and extent of current specialist housing provision in New Zealand
- To analyse strengths and limitations of current approaches to housing ex-prisoners.
- To inform future research in this area

# Methods

- Structured telephone interviews with providers and agencies
- 18 interviews completed
- Strength: Cost and time efficient
- Limitation: No face-to-face interaction
- Frequency counts used to analyse initial quantitative data
- Thematic analysis was used to understand qualitative data

# Who were our interviewees?



# Housing provision for ex-prisoners

- Supported Accommodation is estimated to house 356 ex-prisoners per annum
- 300 beds for short term accommodation for ex-prisoners
  - ▣ 45 beds in RTT Programme (Rotorua, Tokoroa & Taupo with Mental Health NZ)
  - ▣ 160 beds in Tiaki Tangata Programme (Dunedin with A3 Kaitiaki)
  - ▣ 100 extra beds contracted elsewhere
- 250 beds for emergency accommodation (in Auckland with NUMA and Goodwood Health)

# Housing provision for ex-prisoners

- Specifically housing ex-prisoners:
  - ▣ Supported Accommodation 1: 42 beds for 3 months at a time
  - ▣ Supported Accommodation 2: 26 offenders for 3 months at a time
  - ▣ Supported Accommodation 3: 26 offenders for 3 months at a time
  - ▣ Organisation in Christchurch: 6-8 ex-prisoners per year
  
- House people in need:
  - ▣ 10 beds in a supported living centre
  - ▣ Wellington City Council: 2,200 properties
  - ▣ Housing NZ commissions 67,000 homes
  - ▣ Community housing providers

# What other housing is available in NZ?

- Specifically housing ex-prisoners
  - ▣ Salisbury Street Foundation (17 people at a time)
  - ▣ Moana House (17 people at a time)
  - ▣ Grace Foundation (7 properties)
  - ▣ RAW (2 houses with 4 women in each)
  
- House people in need
  - ▣ James Liston Hostel (26 single rooms and 8 double rooms)
  - ▣ Odyssey House (5 houses)
  - ▣ Monte Cecilia Housing Trust (12 family homes)

# Housing support for ex-prisoners

- Housing support
  - ▣ refer clients to landlords/social or community housing, help with housing applications, tenancy support and treatment support
  
- Specifically for ex-prisoners
  - ▣ Out-of-gate (2150 navigations)
  - ▣ Prisoners Aid (PART)
  - ▣ Prison Fellowship
  
- For people in need
  - ▣ Auckland City Mission

# What ex-prisoners are excluded from housing and housing support?

- Short serving ex-prisoners:
  - ▣ Emphasis on accommodating longer serving prisoners
  - ▣ Ex-prisoners that were imprisoned for a long sentence are less likely to reoffend (Department of Corrections 2015)
  - ▣ Short serving ex-prisoners don't often know their release date (Gilbert, Gordon and Elley, 2014)

# What ex-prisoners are excluded from housing and housing support?

- Young People:
  - ▣ Majority of interviewees provided housing or housing support for individuals aged 18 and over
  - ▣ Two interviewees only provide housing provision or support for ex-prisoners who are 20 or 25 years and older
  - ▣ Spier (2002) look at reoffending rates two years following release for youth and adults
    - Youth: 91% reconvicted; 59% reimprisoned
    - Adults (aged over 40): 43% reconvicted; 17% reimprisoned

# Affordable and liveable housing

- State of housing in New Zealand is poor
- Liveable accommodation is too expensive
- Competition for social housing:
  - ▣ Ex-prisoners tend to be at the bottom of the priority list
  - ▣ “There needs to be a growth of [housing] stock in Auckland. Currently there is a pressure on existing houses which is resulting in overcrowding and homelessness”

# Perception of ex-prisoners

- Society, and more importantly landlords, need to change their perception of ex-prisoners
  - ▣ Reduce stigma around ex-prisoners
  - ▣ Be more accepting to ex-prisoners: “More people in society need a social heart”
  - ▣ “[We] have struggled to secure new accommodation with either real estate agents or owners because of ‘the people we work with’”.

# 'Housing first' model

- More transitional housing needed with other services available on-site
- One interviewee suggested that ex-prisoners are most vulnerable in their 1<sup>st</sup> month of release and need the most support at this stage
- Slow release back into the community:
  - ▣ More houses with an intentional focus on meeting the needs of ex-prisoners

# Long-term support

- Housing and housing support for ex-prisoners should not “happen just outside the wire, but needs to happen through the wire”.
- “The gap is too large pre-release and post-release”
- Ex-prisoners are becoming “hot-potatoes and are being pushed in between agencies (different organisations)”.
- “Someone there consistently through the wobbles”

# Building and maintaining relationships

- Half of the interviewees stated that the main strength of their organisation was that they focused heavily on building relationships with their clients
- “Our clients become part of our community”
  - ▣ It is more than just a home; you need to make them feel supported and part of something
- The importance of therapeutic relationships between offenders and those that are there to help (Asay and Lambert 1999)

# Conclusion

- Higher number of places than expected and less exclusions
- Housing as a 'stake in the community'
- Importance of 'ontological security' (McNaughton and Sanders 2007)
- Out of Gate or 'In the Gate'?
- Next steps – need for collaboration