



homeless link

YOUNG & HOMELESS

2013 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our annual Young & Homeless report explores the reasons young people become homeless, the support available to them, and areas where improvements should be made.



HOMELESSWATCH



YOUTH HOMELESSNESS CONTINUES TO BE A PROBLEM

Young people who find themselves homeless face significant challenges in moving towards independence...

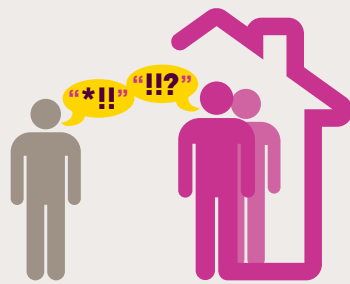
THE ISSUE...

For a young person on the point of making the transition to adulthood, homelessness is a particularly disruptive and often frightening experience. Research shows that, if left unsupported, those who experience homelessness at a young age are at greater risk of becoming homeless and develop complex problems in later life.¹

Government figures show that between 1 October 2012 and 30 September 2013, 15,680 households headed by young people were accepted as statutory homeless in England.² However, research by the charity Centrepoint in 2011, using wider data sets, estimated that at least 80,000 young people experience homelessness in the UK every year.³

Yet, because many young people spend time sofa-surfing or staying with relatives, their homelessness often remains 'hidden', making it difficult to fully understand the scale of the problem.

Young & Homeless 2013 aims to address this gap. Based on responses from 169 frontline homelessness charities and local authority housing departments, the report provides a picture of the experiences of young homeless people in England.



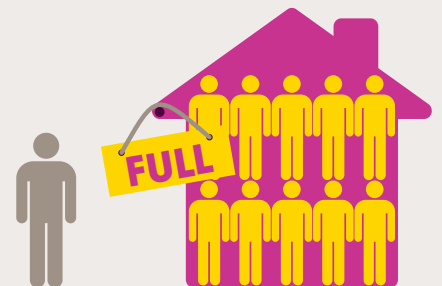
MORE THAN HALF OF YOUNG PEOPLE BECOME HOMELESS BECAUSE OF A **RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN**, MAINLY WITH THEIR PARENTS.

HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE FACE A RANGE OF **COMPLEX PROBLEMS** - **MORE THAN 40%** ARE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING FOR EXAMPLE.

AROUND **A QUARTER OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES** AND **TWO-THIRDS OF HOMELESSNESS AGENCIES** REPORTED THAT YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS WERE **MORE COMPLEX** THAN LAST YEAR.



68% OF HOMELESSNESS ORGANISATIONS SAID THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH YOUTH-SPECIFIC **EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION**, WHILE **43% OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES** REPORTED PLACING YOUNG PEOPLE IN UNSUITABLE **B&B ACCOMMODATION**.



6 IN 10 HOMELESSNESS ORGANISATIONS WERE UNABLE TO SUPPORT A YOUNG PERSON DUE TO **LIMITED CAPACITY** LAST YEAR.

THE EXTENSION OF THE **SHARED ACCOMMODATION RATE** TO INCLUDE UNDER-35s HAS SIGNIFICANTLY **INCREASED COMPETITION** IN THE ALREADY CROWDED PRIVATE RENTAL MARKET.

PROPOSALS TO **LIMIT HOUSING BENEFIT** FOR UNDER-25s WILL REDUCE SUPPORT OPTIONS EVEN FURTHER.

1. McDonagh, T., 'Tackling homelessness and exclusion: Understanding complex lives', Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2011); www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/homelessness-exclusion-services-summary.pdf
 2. www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263349/Table_781.xls
 3. www.centrepoint.org.uk/news-events/news/2011/august/york-research

BUT SOME THINGS HAVE IMPROVED

The report highlights a number of areas where progress has been made since last year...

SARAH'S STORY

Sarah is 18. She lived with her parents until she was 11, when they split up and she stayed with her father. When he became ill, she helped care for him, missing school as she needed to look after him. When her father passed away, Sarah went to live with her mother, but the relationship didn't last long until she kicked Sarah out. She first slept at friends' houses or "anywhere she could stay", and has now been living in hostel accommodation for a year and a half.

Since moving into the hostel, staff have supported Sarah to access counselling and training, and she says she now has a better relationship with her mother. Sarah had not attended school regularly, but now feels confident applying for training courses and bursaries as she has the support of the hostel staff. She is now at college, and feels she is ready to move on with her life and get a flat of her own.

74% OF SURVEYED LOCAL AUTHORITIES NOW PROVIDE **MEDIATION SERVICES**, PROVEN TO BE EFFECTIVE IN RESOLVING FAMILY CONFLICTS.

72% REGULARLY CONDUCT ROUTINE **HOME VISITS**.

TWO THIRDS REPORTED THAT **JOINT WORKING WAS EFFECTIVE** OR VERY EFFECTIVE, COMPARED TO AROUND HALF IN LAST YEAR'S SURVEY.



95% NOW HAVE A **JOINT PROTOCOL** BETWEEN THEIR HOUSING AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENTS TO ENSURE HOMELESSNESS 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS RECEIVE THE CARE THEY ARE OWED UNDER THE **CHILDREN'S ACT 1989**.

MORE LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE INTRODUCED A **POSITIVE PATHWAYS** MODEL, WHICH FOCUSES ON **HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION** AND **TAILORED ASSISTANCE** AROUND ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT.

MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE

Despite this progress, more needs to be done to ensure this good work can continue. Homeless Link and the National Youth Reference Group, a forum of young people that advise on youth homelessness issues, have a number of recommendations, including...

HOMELESS LINK

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for organisations working directly with homeless people in England. With over 500 members, we work to make services for homeless people better and campaign for policy change that will help end homelessness.

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GREATER EDUCATION AROUND HOMELESSNESS AND HOW TO SEEK HELP.

MORE PREVENTION SERVICES, SUCH AS MEDIATION, TO REDUCE INCIDENTS OF FAMILY BREAKDOWN.

INCREASED SUPPORT AND FUNDING TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE INTO **EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT**.

A WIDER RANGE OF **AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATION** OPTIONS.

ENSURING **WELFARE REFORMS** DO NOT INCREASE THE HARDSHIPS FACED BY YOUNG PEOPLE. IN PARTICULAR, A REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL TO RESTRICT HOUSING BENEFIT FOR UNDER-35s.

PROTECTING INVESTMENT IN HOUSING-RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES.

Pledge your support and join the End Youth Homelessness Alliance:
www.eyh.org.uk

Find out more about the National Youth Reference Group at:
www.nationalyouthreferencegroup.co.uk

Download the full report at:
www.homeless.org.uk/youth-homelessness



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