

Somewhere to Call Home: Improving young people's access to affordable, safe and secure housing



The facts about youth homelessness and social housing

- Centrepunkt Databank statistics show that in 2022, more than 112,000 young people in England presented to their Local Authority requiring homelessness prevention and/or relief.
- As of 2020-2021, just 2% of total Local Authority and 3.1% of Housing Association social homes were let by young people.
- In 2022, Private Registered Providers built 549 fewer social rented homes than 2021, while Local Authority providers built around 9,300 fewer homes of this type.
- Allocations to new general needs social housing for single people in England decreased from 80,986 in 2015/2016 to 52,674 in 2021/2022.

Our report and selected findings

'I guess once you kind of close the door, then you can make the inside as nice as you like. If you're permitted, and if you have the will to do it, then you can always do things to improve what it's like on the inside. You know, you can still make it your own like little sanctuary.'

This research explores the housing aspirations of young people with experiences of homelessness and examines how young people can be supported to access social housing in England. In doing this, the research investigates the role of contemporary housing providers, the importance of preparing young people to live independently and approaches to unblocking housing pathways. Through this, the research found that:

- The young people participating understood that social housing was the most affordable option on the market. Moreover, the young people valued the security and safety that social housing can provide.
- The young people understood that a stable home could provide them with opportunities to think in the long term and set future goals.
- Participants from Local Authorities and Housing Associations highlighted that issues such as high demand for services, the age of housing stock and diminished funding had reduced their capacity to support young people.
- Young people with experiences of homelessness often need support to prepare them to move into independent accommodation. Participants highlighted that this support should be empowering and aimed at building confidence and capacity.
- Young single people can experience a double disparity of reduced allocations and access to a limited pool of one-bedroom and studio social housing.

Selected recommendations

- **Incentivise the development of more social housing** - Registered providers should be incentivised to create a more even split between market rent, affordable and social developments. Moreover, they should be encouraged to build a greater supply of one bedroom and studio social housing.
- **Support the development of innovative solutions to the housing crisis** - DLUHC should provide funding and regulatory support to organisations to develop innovative housing offers such as Centrepunkt's Independent Living programme.
- **Improve guidance to address Local Authority gatekeeping** - DLUHC should create clearer guidance detailing the statutory responsibilities of Local Authorities to prevent gatekeeping.
- **Provide under 25s living independently with the same Universal Credit rate received by over 25s** - DWP should align the Universal Credit standard allowance for under 25s with that of over-25s.
- **Ground move on support in confidence and capacity building** - Local Authorities should work with supported accommodation, schools and social care to develop co-ordinated approaches to promoting confidence and capacity building before young people transition into independent accommodation.