

NO EXPECTATIONS:

Access to and experiences of social and private accommodation for homeless young people

The report explores homeless young people's access to social and private rented accommodation using the following methods: a survey of front-line staff working for 30 organisations supporting over 800 young people across England; interviews with homeless young people and local authority staff; a comparison between social housing allocations and main housing duty rates (2021-22 & 2022-23) to show how local authorities are meeting homeless young people's need for social housing; and an analysis of LHA rates.



“It becomes a thing of, you can only be disappointed if you have expectations. And we have no expectations.” Josh, London

Social housing

- Over the financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23 in England, there was a **3.3 per cent shortfall** between the average percentage of young people who were entitled to social housing and the average percentage allocated to social housing in England.
- When examining the two years separately, there was a **3 per cent improvement** in the average shortfall for 2022/23 compared to 2021/22. This may be explained by the **net increase in social homes** between 2021/22 and 2022/23.¹ In particular, there was a **9 per cent increase in one bedroom** general needs social homes - the type of homes that the majority of young people with experiences of homelessness will likely access.

Over a third of respondents said that damp and mould was often an issue with the social homes offered to young people.

Private rented accommodation

- **78 per cent** of survey respondents reported that young people have become somewhat or much less able to afford their rent in the past year.
- **89 per cent** of survey respondents said that the cost of renting in the private rented sector is an extreme barrier for homeless young people.
- The majority (**84 per cent**) of survey respondents said the need for a guarantor and to pay rent upfront are extreme barriers for young people trying to move on into the private rented sector.
- Nearly all young people and stakeholders who were interviewed highlighted that discrimination from landlords was a barrier to accessing private rented accommodation.

Current LHA rates only cover the full cost of renting the cheapest 25 per cent of private sector rooms in **7 out of 211** local authorities in 2022/23.

Key recommendations

- Incentivise the development of more social homes, with a particular focus on studio and one bedroom homes. Additionally, ensure that homeless young people are considered a priority for social housing.
- Permanently unfreeze LHA rates and keep them in line with the 30th percentile of market rents each year.
- Limit the number of months of rent in advance which landlords and letting agents can request; and ban the requirement of guarantors.

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HOMELESSNESS**