

Housing and Homelessness

A strengths-based approach to supporting children and young people experiencing homelessness

The myths, the truths and the feelings



Housing Crisis, the ‘big cloud’

New Horizon Youth Centre, what we see

- Young adults and whole families frequently falling through gaps of safeguarding and housing systems.
- Housing pathways are not suitable and accessible for significant number of young people.
- Lack of social housing options means whole families left at risk as unable to be moved- whole new cohort of children in social care



SEVERITY OF OFFENDING & COMPLEXITY OF MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS



No offending, no gang affliliation, no trauma, no substance abuse



Minor offending, mild mental health difficulties, edges of serious youth violence



Significant trauma, mental health difficulties, substance misuse, gang affiliated, moderate offending



Severe offending, repeated custodial sentences, complex PTSD and other mental health difficulties

Steadily reducing housing options

AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Shared housing suitable, any location is safe, secure relationships with others, trust in professionals



Shared housing manageable with support, some trust in professionals, some EET



Shared housing is too challenging, no trust, reduced EET options, increased barriers



Shared housing unsafe, automatic rejections from housing providers, PRS inaccessible





Some data/ Some numbers

- **123,934** young people approached their local authorities because they were homeless or at risk of homelessness in the UK between 2024-25, a 6 percent increase from last year's Youth Homelessness Databank
- This equates to a young person facing homelessness every four minutes in the UK in 2024-25.
- more than 60 per cent of young people surveyed said that thinking about their future housing situation is affecting their mental health. (MTVH, Housing Futures: The Vital Role of Home in young people's Future)

Centrepoint Data Bank

- Data from the Department of Housing, Communities & Local Government showed that 54% of homeless people reported experiencing homelessness for the first time when under the age of 25; and 48% experienced rough sleeping for the first time before this age.
- under-25s appear to constitute around 18% of homelessness presentations at councils and London's CHAIN data consistently shows that around 10% of those sleeping rough are young people
- Young Black people consistently make up over half of the young people who approach us in housing crisis (67%)
- Research from Heriot-Watt University found that **Black people are almost four times more likely to become homeless and six times more likely to live in overcrowded conditions.** The report also proved that only 10% of Black families gained social housing through the statutory homelessness system, compared to 24 of white families and 41% of Black families leave the statutory system to unknown destinations, compared to 28% for white families.





Data and Youth Homelessness

- Hidden Homelessness?
- Hidden Harm?
- The data that exists
- What is the impact of missing data?



VRU/ UCL Joint Research

‘There is limited research on housing instability caused by EFH in the UK. A systematic search of three large databases [2] covering a range of academic disciplines identified only eight peer reviewed articles on this topic. Additional ‘grey literature’ research, largely charity and government produced reports, provides further insights on young people’s experiences of EFH and homelessness, however, there is limited focus on EFH as a direct cause of housing instability. In most cases, analysis required drawing on ‘proxy’ indicators for both housing instability and EFH.’

When looking at the research, we see:

1. A high proportion of young people experiencing EFH are **also likely to be experiencing housing instability** (Southwark Council, 2017; Alma Economics, 2019; Davies & Dawson, 2022).
2. EFH **is likely to be a driver of missing incidents** and can create the need to be relocated in care. (Hutchings et al., 2019; Tansill et al., 2026; Holmes et al., 2024).
3. Young people experiencing EFH **experience housing instability at higher rates** than their peers. (Hutchings et al., 2019; Clarke, 2019).

Lack of EFH category: Youth homelessness statistics usually have a high proportion of family/relationship breakdown as the key cause (Alma Economics, 2019). This catch-all category masks the EFH drivers that create strain on family relationships. Though Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) data specifies 'Other violence or harassment' distinct from domestic abuse or racially motivated violence, practitioners feel that this category is underutilised and current statistics do not adequately reflect the scale of young people fleeing EFH.

VRU/ UCL Research, A Hidden Homelessness

A Harmful Cycle

Figure summary: Poor housing increases the likelihood of exposure to EFH, whilst EFH increases the risk of housing instability. If there is no intervention, in the form of appropriate accommodation and support, the vulnerability to further EFH increases.



Examples of push & pull factors caused by EFH

1. Threats of violence or harmful extrafamilial relationships make their neighbourhood or home unsafe.
2. Criminal activities in accommodation spaces increases risk of stigma & eviction.
3. CJS involvement limits housing options.

Examples of structural issues & system responses increasing housing insecurity

1. Policy relating to priority need & benefits can limit accommodation options.
2. EFH history may lead to stigma/ exclusion from housing.
3. Housing crisis limits access to private options.

Examples of accommodation options which can introduce new EFH risk

1. Limited placement options can introduce exposure to temporary & overcrowded accommodation.
2. Loss of support networks, lack of wrap around support, & continuity of care during relocations.
3. Lack of contextual safeguarding plans to support safety.

Examples of complex risk factors for EFH exposure

This can include: poverty, intra-familial harm, school exclusion, & poor housing.

The crisis?

A time of great disagreement, confusion or suffering

Is a crisis still a crisis if it is intentional? Created? Profited from?

Are we listening?



Some more numbers

- Inside Housing - Insight - Inside the economics of temporary accommodation:
- ‘Although temporary accommodation now costs the taxpayer more than £2bn a year, spending on this type of housing remains largely unexamined’
- The data gathered jointly by the *i* and *Inside Housing* reveals that housing association Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) received £84.8m for supplying temporary accommodation, mainly to central London boroughs Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster
- Theori Property Management, Elliot Leigh Properties and Finefair are also in the top four. They act as agents that offer guaranteed rents to private landlords, then bill local authorities to house homeless households. Each received more than £50m in local authority cash.



Provider	Amount received
Notting Hill Genesis	£84.8m
Theori Property Management	£69.1m
Elliot Leigh Properties	£51.3m
Finefair	£50.5m
AJ Bush	£36.3m
RMG Ltd	£35.8m
Midos Estates Ltd	£32.6m
Denhan International	£32.0m
Dabora Conway	£30.3m
Travelodge	£26.1m

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Priority need?

What other narratives exist?

we are in danger of becoming a dumping ground for all gang members from London.

'someone who is highly likely to murder someone'

We need to help 'actually' vulnerable people

difficult and dangerous clients



What can we do? ‘The Battle?’

You might not be able to house me, but you can still be nice to me

Reflection Points

What/ who is ‘the system’? Influencers and Implementers

Who does it serve?

How powerful can we be at disrupting ‘the system’?

Are we ‘the system’?

The importance of hearts and minds: What about the Law? Are narratives or legislation more powerful?



No gravtey

