

YOUTH HOMELESS PARLIAMENT REPORT 2019



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VOICE**

SPEAK UP FOR CHANGE

It was a privilege to attend the Youth Homeless Parliament for a second year in my role as Minister for Housing and Homelessness, following an unforgettable experience in 2018. Firstly, I would like to reflect on what was a truly wonderful and inspiring day. The bravery and courage displayed by the young people who delivered such powerful and heartfelt speeches will stay with me for a long time.

Joanna, Emily, Rhyss and Tisharna shared their stories with the room on the realities of experiencing homelessness and put into sharp focus the issues that I was committed to tackling as the previous Minister for Homelessness. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them, and all the other young people in attendance, for sharing their experiences with us.

I would also like to thank all the staff at St Basil's. Organising and delivering such an excellent event is no easy feat, and to have done so for six consecutive years is even more commendable. I know that a huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes to plan the Youth Homeless Parliament, including preparing the young people attending and producing this insightful report.

Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping is a key priority for this Government. That is why we committed in our manifesto to halving rough sleeping by 2022. Over the past year and a half, we have taken steps to tackle this issue by implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act, creating the Rough Sleeping Initiative and publishing our Rough Sleeping Strategy. We have supported this work with £1.2bn worth of funding.

I know my officials at the time worked very closely with St Basil's; I appreciate this collaborative relationship and hope it continues. I look forward to further considering the recommendations of this report. Some of the recommendations are for other government departments, as tackling homelessness and rough sleeping must be a unified effort. We understand the importance of cross-government working, which is why we set up the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Implementation Taskforce. The taskforce enabled me to work closely with my colleagues across government, so we could move closer towards our ultimate goal of ending rough sleeping.

It was positive to hear that all Youth Homeless Parliament members collaborated effectively with my officials throughout the day. I was pleased

to learn there was a focus on scoping the Young Futures Fund, which we committed to in the Rough Sleeping Strategy. This constructively builds on the work undertaken at last year's Youth Homeless Parliament, where we worked together to scope the LGBT+ policy proposals for the Rough Sleeping Strategy.

While we realise there is more to do, we have already seen encouraging signs. From 2017 to 2018, the annual rough sleeping count numbers declined by 2% overall and by 19% in the 83 Rough Sleeping Initiative areas. This included the number of rough sleepers under the age of 25, which declined by 20%.

I am pleased to announce that the Department committed to funding St Basil's again over the next financial year. I wish my predecessor all the success in tackling this important issue.

Mrs Heather Wheeler MP, Former Minister for Housing and Homelessness (January 2018-July 2019)

Chairing Youth Homeless Parliament is one of my favourite days in the year. Knowing the work that has gone into the preparation for the event by young people and their supporting organisations; framing the questions by young people for young people; consulting across the country in a way that encourages and maximises responses; illustrating impact through lived experience and then, the time, care and effort taken by young people in formulating recommendations with the objective of improving the future for other young people.

On the day, the anticipation and excitement and some nerves, the rehearsal and importance of hearing your voice in a large space in front of lots of people; the support by YHP members for other YHP members and the encouragement and applause when each member makes their contribution. The compassion when sensitive or traumatic experiences are described and the respectful silence when hearing responses from the Minister and others.

It is much more than a meeting in Parliament, it is an expression of collective commitment and determination to use your experience and learning to make things better for others.

A huge thank you to all who take part and all who make it possible.

Jean Templeton

Chair, Youth Homeless Parliament



The Youth Homeless Parliament 2019 has been commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to consult and offer key recommendations on four fundamental areas, these are: Crisis Prevention, Targeted Prevention, Universal Prevention and The Youth Housing Offer.

Historically, the consultation process has included face-to-face and paper based questionnaires for young people to complete. However, this year, for the first time in the Youth Homeless Parliament history, the young people were asked to consult on these areas digitally using a purpose built and accessible online consultation platform, Youth Radar. This enabled 167 young people from across England to contribute directly to the Youth Homeless Parliament consultation questions. The young people involved offered over 650 responses to the questions posed by MHCLG. An additional consultation took place where face-to-face workshops were completed with a further 24 young people. This process ensured that a wide range of experiences and views were captured from the young people impacted by homelessness today.



There are a number of reasons why young people become homeless, these can include family breakdown, leaving care, poor mental health and financial difficulties. Having the opportunity to consult and make recommendations on services to support the prevention of youth homelessness, is imperative to eradicating youth homelessness across England in the future.

Young Homeless Parliament members attended Westminster as representatives of young homeless people across England. They were asked to answer a number of questions relating directly to four fundamental areas, these were: Crisis Prevention, Targeted Prevention, Universal Prevention and the Youth Housing Offer. Based on the four fundamental areas, throughout this report, young homeless people answered questions posed; highlighting the impact and experience of homeless young people, and offering recommendations for change to current service provision.



TOPIC 1, CRISIS PREVENTION

In this section of the report young people discuss their experiences and recommendations directly related to crisis prevention

Q1: When young people face homelessness what do they expect from Local Authorities? What response did you receive and did it meet your expectations?

Expectations have been identified in the following areas; Staff support, service and partnership working, family support, EET, and additional support needs.

Staff support

Youth Homeless Parliament members explain that they expect local authority staff to be trained to deliver a consistent and knowledgeable service; offering advice and guidance in relation to current homelessness legislation, local accommodation, welfare support and homelessness services; are respectful, non-judgemental and listen to our individual needs as homeless and vulnerable young people.

Service and partnership working

They state that local authorities should actively practice partnership working, where external agencies are linked into the young person's housing plans, as identified by their needs. These partnerships include; social services, educational provision, police and housing charities. Although, partnership working has been highlighted, it has been stated that young people do not expect to be passed from service to service but offered a joined up working approach with one lead officer. Youth Homeless Parliament members have stated that when accessing accommodation managed by local authorities, the accommodation should be appropriate, safe, accessible and available for all young people from a range of diverse

backgrounds.

Family support

Young people felt that local authorities should support the development and maintenance of positive family networks, however it has been recognised that this is not always possible, therefore young homeless people should not be forced to return home or made to feel that they have become 'intentionally homeless'. This label can have a detrimental impact on their wellbeing. Youth Homeless Parliament members know that priority needs are important, however, non-priority young homeless people do not expect to be informed that they do not meet criteria to receive homelessness support, further investigation should be completed in these cases.

Education, Employment and Training

Youth Homeless Parliament members expect local authorities to consider the disruption homelessness can have on education or employment; and how homelessness can impact motivation to access educational provision and/ or maintain education. They felt that in order to engage with education during this turbulent time, local authorities should offer support to ensure access to education is maintained as smoothly as possible. Support suggestions include access to travel, food and flexible assessment appointment times.

Additional support needs

Youth Homeless Parliament members recognise that young people suffer from physical health and mental health conditions and expect local authorities to consider ways in which isolated or vulnerable young people may access services and support - other than face-to-face. It has been highlighted that when accessing local authority

support, at times, young people felt; distressed, vulnerable, as though they were a hassle, judged and not listened to. They have agreed that at times the assessment process was lengthy, repetitive and tedious.

Young people have made recommendations for local authorities to help support homeless young people and manage expectations.

1. For local authorities to have one main base for homeless young people to access information, advice and guidance, prior to crisis and when crisis hits. These bases should offer support for young people to contact and maintain current education provision, or have opportunity to register at a new provider. The main base should hold regular information clinics on all areas affecting young people's lives; if young people are unable to be housed immediately, to be offered floating support through these bases, until suitable housing is identified.
2. Local authorities to employ compassionate and empathetic staff, with training to offer advice around benefits, education, mental health, sexual health, wellbeing and prevention services. To identify the needs of vulnerable young people and refer to relevant agencies as soon as possible.
3. Local authorities to promote information around homelessness and housing throughout schools and colleges
4. For local authorities to ensure active partnerships are developed between the Police, job centres and housing providers to reduce risks of benefit sanctions.

5. Young people should be settled into accommodation as soon as possible, with minimal risk of being moved unnecessarily. Throughout assessments, young people should be offered clear pathways to housing options, services and expectations of the young people as well as the service they will receive.

Q2: What information would you expect to be given when moving into crisis accommodation?

Youth Homeless Parliament members made recommendations for information that they expect to receive prior to moving into crisis accommodation, these are:

Information packs

They felt that information packs should be consistently available to all young people accessing crisis and support accommodation. Packs should include direct information of the specific accommodation such as: support workers, project service times and house rules, benefit entitlements, bills and service charge information. As well as information for the local area such as; local amenities, local youth groups, engagement or volunteer opportunities, financial support services, mental health services and; foodbanks, job centres, move on services for all needs and educational information. Information packs should be clearly explained when young people initially access services and copies given for young people to refer to.

Pathways or step plans

Youth Homeless Parliament members felt that there should be a clear pathway or step by step plan to show exactly what they need to do whilst accommodated, to move onto independent living successfully. This should be clear to follow and realistic, identifying what they are expected to do to obtain and

maintain a tenancy and the external factors that will impact and support this.

Identification and important documents

It has been identified that during crisis, young homeless people do not always have access to their identifying documents, such as birth certificates, passports or driving licenses, as these can remain in their family's possession. Youth Homeless Parliament members state that, to reduce delays for benefits, housing support and stress; young people should be supported financially to obtain one or more of these documents.

Q3: Local Authorities should write a personal housing plan, to help you move into permanent accommodation; what would you expect this to look like?

Youth Homeless Parliament members expect personal housing plans to be: individualised to suit the needs of individual young people; based on personal circumstances; embedding ways to achieve the ambitions and goal of young people, as well as reducing fears and anxieties of living alone. Housing plans should build in ways for young people to develop practical life skills throughout their homelessness journey, with the ability to apply these to their day to day lives; with realistic steps and timescales; without professional jargon so they are young people friendly. These plans should contain a moving out guide book, developed with the young person, covering; financial, housing, positive relationships, health and mental health information. Housing plans should be reviewed regularly and amended with young people, where necessary to ensure they are moving on because they are ready to, not just because their placements have ended or due to their age.

Q4: How can Local Authorities help you maintain education and family relationships when moving into accommodation?

The Youth Homeless Parliament have made collective recommendations for ways in which local authorities could support young people to maintain education and family relationships when moving into accommodation. These are broken down into three sections duties of local authorities and education providers; and family maintenance.

Duties of local authorities

They agree that there should be a single point of contact, when supported by the local authority, for example; educational and housing link workers to be based within local authorities to give advice and information of local education providers, offering accommodation options within a set mile radius of these providers. With links to travel and financial support to ensure education is maintained for 16- 25 years, including support with health appointments and educational resources that may affect attendance. These workers should complete educational or academic progression plans combined with the local authority housing plans, so they can maintain education and tenancies using step by step guides and information. Both of these plans should be shared with relevant housing and education agencies, when they plan to move on. This service should be consistent across the country.

Family maintenance

Youth Homeless Parliament members have made suggestions that local authorities should consistently offer services such as, family mediation and/ or counselling with options for these to be held in formal or informal settings. They felt that these services should be compulsory for family members and individual young people to help us to rebuild relationships,

however local authorities will need to consider sensitive circumstances, for example where young people are at risk to or from other family members. They would like local authorities to offer safe social spaces for young people to rebuild sibling bonds and relationships away from the main family unit, as this is not always possible.

Duties of education providers

Youth Homeless Parliament members have stated that educational providers should have designated staff members, such as welfare officers or personal tutors to ensure that once young people have entered their educational provision, they are supported to maintain their education and attendance. The Youth Homeless Parliament suggest that these staff members should be accessible to young people to discuss their circumstances and educational progress on a regular basis; allowing young people some flexibility to complete work remotely if they are struggling to maintain attendance. The welfare officers or personal tutors would feedback information to the education board, ensuring that young people are supported from the top down.

Q5: If you needed accommodation urgently, what would make you feel safe and secure?

The Youth Homeless Parliament have identified how they would feel safe and secure when needing urgent accommodation. The needs highlighted are; area, accommodation and additional support.

Area

Youth Homeless Parliament members agree that young people would feel safer being housed in areas they know well, close to family members and education, employment or

training. This would alleviate stresses and anxieties of trying to navigate a new area, potentially reducing the risk of becoming involved in negative relationships.

Accommodation

Youth Homeless Parliament members state that having prior information about the accommodation would be helpful to reduce their anxieties, before moving in. This would include house rules, expectations and service times. Having clean and warm accommodation would be a help with friendly, non-judgemental and knowledgeable support staff to help young people feel safe and secure. Youth Homeless Parliament members state that the accommodation should be secure for personal belongings as well as personal safety where access to individual rooms and communal kitchens is consistent, with food parcels, toiletries and bedding; as a lot of young people do not have this when they become homeless. Young people stated that they would like options to be housed with other young people of similar ages and support needs or gender specific accommodation. As experiencing homelessness can be very traumatic and unnerving, being in a safe environment with likeminded people may be reassuring, as opposed to being housed with older young people or adults with substance misuse or poor mental health.

Additional support

Youth Homeless Parliament members would like access to quick and easy information for urgent situations, where they can find homelessness support information alongside local authority support. Young people would like this information to be accessible 24 hours a day with specific information for translation services, crash pads, finances, food banks and engagement or volunteer services.





Youth Homeless Parliament members were asked to consult on questions specific to targeted prevention, throughout this section of the report young people discuss their experiences and recommendations of this.

Q1: Is there anything that could have been done earlier to help you and your family before you experienced homelessness?

Youth Homeless Parliament members have stated that there are a number of ways in which they could have been helped prior to becoming homeless. These have been identified as; services for families and services for young people.

Services for families

Youth Homeless Parliament members state that consistent support should be made accessible to families. This would include access to counselling services, mediation and financial advice and support, with specific and specialist advice around anger management, conflict resolution, mental health needs, careers advising and employment opportunities. As well as having initial access to social services prior to crisis arising. They felt that these services should be open to receiving referrals from family members and young people directly, as soon as they feel they need additional support within the family unit; and to ensure these services complete a thorough investigation when receiving referrals and treat people as humans not numbers.

Young people suggest that local authorities should have mentors or role models, to encourage positive and healthy relationships between siblings and family members; supporting families to attend fun social activities together to help reduce the risk of relationship breakdowns. Youth Homeless Parliament members state that there is a need for emergency beds, to act as a respite space for when tensions arise within the family unit.

Services for Young people

Youth Homeless Parliament members suggest that young people need informal spaces where they can learn, socialise and have fun. They suggest that youth centres are developed as an outlet for young people, providing informal education and experiences away from the family unit.

Q2: What was your experience like when accessing local authorities? Did it meet your expectations?

Youth Homeless Parliament members have experienced varying levels of service received from local authorities, where expectations were and were not met. They felt that local authorities should:

Listen to the needs of young people and take our individual circumstances into account when assessing our needs. Staff should be understanding, compassionate, respectful, empathetic and sensitive to young people experiencing homelessness; staff should act effectively and efficiently when issues are identified prior to and during crisis.

Local authority staff should be trained on mental health first aid and the importance of understanding the diverse needs of young people, including our limits and capabilities.

Some Youth Homeless Parliament members stated that, at times they received a good quality of support and information, including good partnership working between agencies such as; children’s services, the Police, education, social services and mental health team. As well as access to safe and appropriate accommodation in a timely manner, however this is inconsistent across the country. Therefore, Youth Homeless Parliament members state that when service provision and partnerships are good, they really work, however when they are lacking, this can



have a detrimental effect on the level of service and experience to the individual young homeless person. This can leave some young people feeling overwhelmed, scared, isolated and anxious where they are not aware of the processes or next steps that should be completed. It is suggested that local authorities offer clear pathways or step plans to inform young homeless people of the service they should be receiving, ways in which they should be supported and what to do if this does not happen.

There are additional points raised in which Youth Homeless Parliament members felt as though there should be a clear transitional period for all young people aged 17 turning 18, as services available at this time can change; and secondly, it has been highlighted that local authorities and other services should be aware of their staffing/ service user capacity, ensuring that they are able to offer a consistent high quality support service; the impact of low staffing, funding and overcrowding can affect both the young people's lives and effective service delivery.

Q3: What could have been better or what could have been improved?

Based on points highlighted in Q2, Youth Homeless Parliament members discuss ways in which service delivery, staffing, accommodation and additional support needs could be improved.

Service delivery and staffing

They note that local authorities should have a standardised housing offer across the country, where all young homeless people accessing support will receive a consistent service and the same opportunities. This would include local authorities being the first point of call for young homeless people, but actively working in partnership with other agencies and

departments, i.e.; education, housing, social services, DWP, charities and Police.

Local authority staff should effectively and efficiently complete assessments with young people considering all needs impacting their lives, alongside homelessness; immediate applications made to DWP for benefits; realistic housing options to be discussed with young people but taking the individuals areas of choice into consideration.

Youth Homeless Parliament members state that young people should not receive assessments in open spaces, this has been noted when attending local authorities. Young people would feel more comfortable discussing their circumstances in a private room and if local authorities make contact with young people's families, this has been highlighted as useful to do face-to-face, where possible, rather than over the phone.

Accommodation

Local authorities should have suitable, safe and secure accommodation for young people to access at short notice, with a plan in place for a move on to permanent or more stable accommodation. Accommodation services, expectations for young people and service provision should be advised and understood by the individual, prior to moving in. Accommodation staff should be non-judgmental, approachable with the ability to appropriately support the varying needs of young people to a high standard and sign post homeless young people to external agencies for more information of local amenities and services.

It has been identified that young people would like to receive clear information, when closer to move on, around the expectations of obtaining and maintain a tenancy, i.e. benefits, tenancy rights and responsibilities, expectations of landlords and local maintenance services.



Youth homeless Parliament members consulted on questions related to universal prevention, this section will discuss their experiences and recommendations.

Q1: What would be useful to young people to help them avoid becoming homeless? How would this information be accessed?

Youth Homeless Parliament members have provided ideas that would have helped them to avoid homelessness, these include suggestions for education, employment and training providers; family support; and accommodation providers.

Family support

Youth Homeless Parliament members felt as though mediation should be accessible, prior to crisis to help reduce tensions within the family unit. It was also stated that families should be offered additional financial support to access counselling services, mental health services and substance misuse services. Youth Homeless Parliament members stated that if they had access to respite services and social activities, this may have helped to reduce issues surrounding family breakdown.

Education, employment and training

Young people felt that having access to homelessness, housing, and wellbeing information at schools may have helped them to avoid becoming homeless. Alongside, practical life skills being taught throughout each school year within citizenship or personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons. These types of lessons would allow young people to have a fuller understanding of what is expected in adulthood; these types of skills would benefit the individual

as well as the family unit, supporting young people to make confident contributions to the upkeep of the household, as well as developing skills for open conversation with family members about emotions, mental health and wellbeing.

Youth Homeless Parliament members felt that there should be emergency spaces within educational settings that young people in crisis can access, like a calm room or school based youth zone. This space could be used to complete mediation with family or siblings and discuss and train young people to deal with issues affecting them directly such as; domestic violence, conflict resolution and mental health.

Accommodation providers

Youth Homeless Parliament members felt that having easier access to the private rented sector and social housing would have helped them to avoid homelessness. Due to a lot of young people earning low incomes and / or being employed on zero hour contracts, it is not always possible to apply for private housing. Social housing waiting lists can be a lengthy process, where some young people are not able to apply to a housing provider as they are seen as suitably housed, at the family home. However, some young people have experienced, whilst being on the waiting list, the occurrence of a family breakdown and so have been asked to leave the home, prior to independent housing being obtained, leading to homelessness.

Access to information

Youth Homeless Parliament members advise that information should be easily accessible and without the need for registration or declaring of personal information, so that young people can remain anonymous, if they wish.

Information should be provided using platforms accessible and used by young people through social media platforms such as; Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, information websites and apps. Ways in which access to the information should be promoted can include, in schools, public areas such as shops, youth centres and sports venues.

Q2: What are your expectations of the information that schools should provide to prevent homelessness?

Youth Homeless Parliament members are passionate about having accessible information within schools and other educational provision. To ensure this reaches as many young people as possible. The information needed, should be promoted in creative and innovative ways, these include:

Workshops and discussions around homelessness; mental and physical health; finances including budgeting and debt management; independent living skills; crisis management and resilience; and communication skills. These workshops should aim to reduce the stigma surrounding people who face these issues as well as normalise and humanise those who it affects. These workshops should be a combination of developing emotional and practical skills, and so young people have suggested that employability skills, tenancy management and cooking programmes should also run alongside the workshops, with the possibility of achieving accreditation at GCSE level. Young homeless people have also made suggestion that information should be accessible throughout the year, and state that if running programmes to support promotion of the informative workshops interferes with the curriculum, that summer schools could be set up specifically to deliver these.

Schools should hold regularly updated information of services available to young people within the local area such as, social activities, health and wellbeing, volunteering, work experience and further academic progression. As well as family related support such as, early intervention, mediation services, counselling and family fun activities.

Q3: Thinking about homelessness prevention what role should schools and health services provide?

Education providers

Youth Homeless Parliament members discuss that schools should actively make referrals to external agencies, if they identify issues arising around homelessness, mental health, physical health; after investigation with the young person and family (where appropriate). If there are young homeless and/ or vulnerable young people known to them, they should support with accessing appointments (health and housing related), including flexible timetables and finances to attend.

Young people stated that teachers and tutors within educational settings should be trained in mental health first aid and in noticing signs of homelessness and/ or other risks or vulnerabilities from students, triggering a red flag prior to crisis; there should be a welfare officer or family worker to raise these issues to, as this could be the first point of contact to start family mediation.

Health services

Youth Homeless Parliament members identified ways in which they felt health services should help, this includes;

A set of health workers regularly completing informative

talks within schools in their local borough. If young people regularly see and speak to the health workers, this may help reduce anxieties around asking for help and attending appointments when issues first arise rather than accessing only when crisis has hit.

Health services should offer chaperones to young vulnerable people, to support with attending health related appointments and act as an advocate if necessary. Health providers should be understanding, supportive and empathetic to young people and not clock watch when information is disclosed. If vulnerabilities are identified during a health appointment, health providers should contact local authorities or a relevant agency to discuss the young person's needs, with consent from the young person.

Young people state that having access to online booking forms to make appointments would be useful, as this would stop young people needing credit or cash to make telephone appointments. Online bookings can be made more directly, if a young person is in an abusive situation.

Q4: What was your experience with regards to prevention?

A number of Youth Homeless Parliament members stated that they did not receive support prior to crisis, therefore no prevention services were put into place. They have additionally stated that they were not aware of information available to them about what services and provision they could access.

Other Youth Homeless Parliament members stated that they received support through homelessness charities rather than

local authorities directly, however due to funding cuts these services have dramatically reduced or have closed.

Q5: Thinking about prevention services, what are your recommendations to improve the experience of young people becoming homeless?

Youth Homeless Parliament members have made the following suggestions for prevention service improvements;

If prevention services are available to young people, these services should obtain information from the individual face-to-face with opportunities to speak to all family members. This could help to decide whether family mediation is suitable and the young person can remain at home, or if the young person is at risk and should be supported into other accommodation. If alternative accommodation is to be sourced, this should be discussed with the young person, taking their needs into consideration; making this a planned and smooth move from the family unit.

Young people at times, felt dismissed for not having 'enough' support needs. It is imperative that young people are listened to, valued and supported to either help prevent them becoming homeless or support them to move into appropriate accommodation.

They suggest that respite services be made available to young people, where they can 'cool off' away from the family unit and supported by staff to return home. This could include reflective practice, conflict resolution and resilience training.



36 young people from across the 9 regions of England attended Youth Homeless Parliament 2019, to share their lived experiences and offer recommendations to Heather Wheeler Parliamentary under Secretary of State (Minister for Housing and Homelessness). Young people's thoughts of Youth Homeless Parliament 2019 were:

Becky Miles – Youth Voice National

Going to YHP 2019 was honestly one of the most inspiring days of my life so far. Being around so many strong and determined people all trying to improve the lives of others is a truly uniquely uplifting experience. Receiving training beforehand to get a clear idea of our goals, and putting that into action really boosted all of our confidence.

Wanting to go into Politics myself, this experience really helped solidify that this is something I really want, and need to do. I want to engage with similar groups of people for as long as I possibly can, and this is just the start of an amazing journey, both for myself and for Youth Voice.

Thelma Zunzanyika – Youth Voice Peer Mentor

Youth Homeless Parliament to me is a movement that is fundamental to the lives of other young people that are bound to be homeless or still homeless which helps to give them a fair chance to life. Being involved in digital consultation was an exciting new experience where new generational communication techniques were used to gather young people's journeys and experiences of homelessness in order to make an impactful change.

Attending the Youth Homeless Parliament is always a day when you learn something new and appreciate the work that both young people and Ministers put in in order to create a better future for other homeless young people. This year as a Peer Mentor is facilitating a session at parliament with peers and Civil Servants which was both nerve wracking and inspirational because it dawned on me that even from different walks of life we are all working towards a common goal which is to aid with youth homelessness which was a very comforting realisation.

Connor Rogerson - Youth Voice - Grimsby

Being a part of Youth Homeless Parliament was amazing because it was an fantastic opportunity which allowed me to use my voice to say what I felt was an issue based on youth homelessness.

I believe in youth voice and it's so important having a voice to hopefully make a change within Youth Homelessness. I felt happy that I was a part of the consultation and the main YHP event itself because it meant that I could have a say on what I believed was a cause of youth homeless from my experiences and opinion and I felt that our points got across really well.

Before doing YHP my confidence with talking in front of a group of people was very low. I would struggle even with eye contact so being a part of YHP / Youth Voice has helped me with my confidence and communication skills.

When it came to Parliament I was confident enough to speak on behalf of my peers. I want to thank youth voice and all the members for giving me confidence to read in Parliament something I never believed I could do.



The Youth Homeless Parliament is always well supported by professionals in the sector and from our partner organisations. It was fantastic to see professionals attend the event and listen to the key recommendations and lived experience of young people from across England.

Danny Slater, Team Leader, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, MHCLG

This was the first year that I have been involved in the Youth Homeless Parliament and I was really blown away.

Having the opportunity to see how the young people progressed, from the first training sessions to the main event – how they developed their voices, supported each other and worked through the issues – was great to see.

As well as the Minister for Housing and Homelessness, we had officials from MHCLG, DWP, DHSC and DFE in attendance, and all of us came away from the YHP talking about the points made and the stories told, and thinking about how these experiences can better shape the work that we do.

I know that many of the young people are now taking steps into volunteering, work and higher education, and all with a real passion for making a difference to the lives of young people. I wish them well as they continue their journeys!

Zaynah Bilal – Youth Voice Facilitator St Basils

Youth Homeless Parliament was very inspirational, and a big eye opener for what St Basils and Youth Voice National do for Young Homeless people. With it being my first YHP, I found the young people to be very confident in themselves and the report they were relaying. The young people worked together in perfect cohesion, clearly articulating themselves & they showed a great deal of respect for civil servants and MPs during group activities.

Hearing them share their homeless journey and how they have overcome barriers is something that will stay with me forever and will have an impact on how I work with young people going forward. They are an inspiring group to watch as each individual represented themselves and their peer group in a positive way, they shared a bond towards achieving a greater good. Working on changing the views of homeless youth, services available to them and how to best support them going forward.

I am honoured to be part of this and cannot wait until next year to see how our suggestions will be implemented in the future.

Tom Gellatly Digital Marketing and Communications Officer LandAid

I was lucky enough to attend Youth Homeless Parliament this year, and it was my first time attending the event. I have to say that I was completely blown away by the quality of the young people's speeches – both the content and delivery were at an astonishing level.

What I enjoyed most about the day was seeing the way the young people supported each other throughout – they were so kind and enthusiastic about all of the speeches, and seemed to function so well as a team that it was honestly just so heartwarming to see. I can't wait to see what is in store for next year's event, and to see if it can top such an excellent showing this year.

OUR ASK

The Youth Homeless Parliament ASK that the Minister for Homelessness and the Ministry continue to consult with young people and provide young people with the opportunity to share their lived experiences to help shape government policy.

That young people have continued opportunity to work in partnership with Government to bring about change.

The young people welcome the opportunity to work with other Government Departments to look at wider issues of Youth Homelessness.

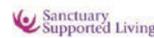
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I N P A R T N E R S H I P W I T H



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Charity No: 1080154
Homes and Communities Agency No: H3994
Company Limited By Guarantee No: 3964376
and Registered in England

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