

Young People In

a report on young people who
were assisted by the Everyone In
programme across the West Midlands
during the first national lockdown.

Foreword

'Everyone In' has been more than a programme, it has been an amazing achievement which has cut across process, boundaries, organisational divides and been able to focus on an important objective, the objective of bringing everyone In and keeping them safe and well. The reduction in loss of life and serious health consequences as a result is huge, as we can see from comparisons with other countries.

This report takes an in depth look at young people under the age of 26 who came in through the 'Everyone In' programme delivered by the Housing Authorities in the West Midlands. It looks at their reasons for homelessness, their routes into and out of the programme. It provides an opportunity for their voice to be heard and for our learning. It also captures the tremendous will and skill of Local Authorities and their partners to find solutions and the challenges they face.

St Basils has long made the case for systemic prevention through the development of the Positive Pathway models. Bolstering universal services to include young people and enabling them to thrive; targeting those at risk and preventing them reaching crisis; minimising crisis and providing a rapid and effective response.

All of this requires a housing offer which enables young people to live, work, earn and learn. We hope this unprecedented opportunity for learning helps the move in that direction.

We are particularly grateful to the members of national Youth Voice who helped facilitate the interviews with young people across the region and ensured that our inquiries were meaningful and respectful and held us to account for ensuring those voices are heard.

Jean Templeton

Chief Executive
St Basils

Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	5
Section 1: Introduction	10
1.1 Young people and the Covid-19 pandemic	10
1.2 Young people and homelessness	11
1.3 Methodology	12
1.4 The Positive Pathway as a tool for developing youth housing pathways and preventing youth homelessness	13
Section 2: Homelessness and young people in the West Midlands	15
2.1 Variations in homelessness services for young people	15
2.2 Rates of statutory youth homelessness in the West Midlands region	22
2.3 Young people and rough sleeping	25
Section 3: Lockdown, Everyone In and young people	29
3.1 Pre-lockdown actions by Councils/agencies	29
3.2 The 'Everyone In' directive and its interpretation	31
3.3 The different models deployed to manage Everyone In and their rationale	33
3.4 Preventing and relieving homelessness amongst young people during lockdown	36
3.5 A word on the data	38
3.6 The numbers and characteristics of the young people assisted through Everyone In	40
3.7 Where were young people staying before they were assisted by local authorities and what were the causes of their homelessness?	49
3.8 Care leavers and homelessness during Everyone In	55
Section 4: Accommodating and supporting young people during Everyone In	58
4.1 The types of accommodation which were available to young people as first stage emergency accommodation	58
4.2 Managing risks within accommodation during lockdown	60
4.3 Meeting the immediate needs of homeless young people	61
4.4 Identifying the support needs of young people	63
4.5 Partnership working to meet the support needs of young people	65
4.6 Access to health services	69

Section 5: The plans for young people assisted through Everyone In in the West Midlands	73
5.1 Move-on plans and housing options for young people	73
5.2 Young people’s aspirations and concerns about the future	78
Section 6: Reflections on Everyone In and the future of youth housing and support	80
6.1 Young people’s messages to local authorities and to the Government	80
6.2 Local authorities and other agencies’ reflections and learning on Everyone In	82
6.3 Local authorities views about the future for young people at risk of homelessness	86
Section 7: Conclusions	88
Appendix One	92
Appendix Two	93
Appendix Three	94
Acknowledgments / Thanks	96

This report was commissioned by MHCLG to understand and learn from the experiences of young homeless people supported through the ‘Everyone In’ campaign. The conclusions and recommendations are those of the report’s authors and reflect the findings of their research; they should not be read as a statement of government policy or future intent.

Executive Summary

On 26th March 2020, 2 days after the first national 'lockdown' commenced in England, all local housing authorities were sent a clear directive from the then Minister for Local Government and Homelessness to bring in to accommodation everyone who was homeless and rough sleeping or at high risk of doing so.

This report focusses on one specific group, young people aged 16 – 25, who were assisted through the 'Everyone In' programme from the beginning of lockdown into the summer months, across 1 region of England, the West Midlands. Whilst the contents of the report represent a 'snapshot' over a short period of time, its' purpose is to share the learning from this, which has resonance across all of England.

The report has been written during the latter part of 2020, when the 'second wave' of the corona virus is underway in the UK and England has gone into another national lockdown.

We talked to local authorities and their partners and asked them for some data on the young people they had assisted. We also spoke to 22 young people who had been assisted with accommodation through 'Everyone In'. Background data on homelessness which is available at the authority, regional and national levels also form part of the report.

We started by asking councils about the sorts of services and accommodation they usually had for young people in their areas. By using the Positive Pathway as a framework, we assessed that 11 of the 25 councils had youth homelessness prevention services, housing and support options which were either adequate or working well. These councils tended to be able to assist young people into more appropriate and safe accommodation in the short to medium term. But there were noticeable gaps for most of these authorities however, in particular for young people with multiple or complex needs.

A further 9 councils had significant weaknesses in their youth homelessness prevention services – they had some provision and did try to focus on prevention, but if a move was needed, there was very limited supported accommodation or suitable emergency provision for young people. And there were 5 councils which had virtually no services at all. Some of these had difficulties in finding any suitable accommodation for young people.

We also heard how in many areas, where services do exist, they are limited to specific groups of young people based on their age - usually up to 21 - or legal status as care leavers or 16/17s who have been homeless. By virtue of a selective safety net, some other young people were falling out of systems, because commissioned services fell well short of meeting the local needs of these young people.

Of the 30 housing authorities in the West Midlands, 6 had not needed to assist any under 26 year olds. These 6 councils tended to be smaller district councils. We spoke to one of these to find out more about their services and options. We talked to the other 24 councils and

some of their partners. In total 375 young people had been accommodated by these councils through Everyone In. This means that 15.1% of the 2,483 people local authorities told us they had assisted were aged under 26. This does not represent the total figure of young people in the West Midlands who were homeless over lockdown, because different councils had different models for service delivery over lockdown and interpretations of who should be within Everyone In. For example, Birmingham assisted 154 young homeless people under Section 189B of the Housing Act 1996, but these numbers are not included in the 375 Everyone In figure, because they were included in their 'business as usual' services. Some councils included all of the young people they assisted within 'Everyone In' because they were not running their 'business as usual' services. We estimate at least 700 single young people were homeless in the West Midlands.

We focussed in on data relating to 296 young people aged 16 – 25 and helped through Everyone In from 23 councils.

- 44 of these young people had been sleeping rough
- 36 had no fixed abode
- 38 young people were care leavers
- A fifth had an offending history
- A fifth were assessed as having mental health issues
- There were 14 young people with no recourse to public funds
- Two thirds were young men
- 17 young people were aged 16/17, with just over half coming from one council area
- The main cause of homelessness for 40% of young people was 'family no longer willing or able to accommodate'
- Councils reported that 30% of young people they assisted had experienced homelessness before
- The older the young person, the more likely they were to have no fixed abode or to have been rough sleeping

Assisted by practical help and compassion from unexpected quarters, including the hospitality sector, faith groups and individuals, councils have been at the forefront of supporting the most vulnerable people in our communities. Everyone In has shown what's possible and what can work. The people we spoke to, without exception, their teams and close partners had stepped up and worked tirelessly and with determination to accommodate people, including young people, trying to get them the support and services they needed. Their dedication has been nothing short of magnificent. But no one expected the process to be straightforward or perfect. However, there is learning in this report about what worked well as well as what didn't.

The voices of the 22 young people we talked with, their personal situations, insights and aspirations are a reminder of the differences in young people's lived experience. They didn't expect perfection either but perhaps the most consistent observation from them was, despite being grateful for the help they got, they felt there was a lack of communication from local authorities, which impacted on their levels of anxiety. Many were uncertain about their futures and where they would be living. This was particularly the case for young people who had no recourse to public funds. Their futures continue to be uncertain.

Because of a lack of youth specific supported housing options before the Covid-19 pandemic and during Everyone In, the majority of the 296 young people were in either hotels and B&Bs (67%) or all-age supported housing (13%). Only 8% were in young people's supported housing. Some had felt unsafe in their accommodation and many wanted more help with mental health issues.

When we asked local authorities about move on options, all councils were clear that young people are the hardest group to house. The supply of housing for single young people that is suitable and affordable is a challenge almost everywhere. Even where it existed, local authorities cannot easily open up new supply options to prevent or relieve homelessness when young people are already at a disadvantage compared to older people due to a lower rent entitlement if they are single and under 35 and lower personal income based on their age alone until they reach the age of 25. We heard that many landlords view young people as high risk tenants, due to their low income and their relative inexperience of managing independently. We found that these financial and attitudinal barriers apply as much to social housing, where councils do not own or manage their stock, as it does to private rented accommodation.

Local authorities and provider agencies were concerned about young people, recognised their particular vulnerabilities and the difficulties of finding them accommodation and the levels of support they needed. But they had few options with the right kinds of support in many areas. Of the 296 young people, around 16% had move-on plans into social housing and a further 15% were reported to have plans to go into private rented housing, 21% were moving on into all-age supported housing. Only 11% were moving into young people's supported housing, which, given the high level of repeat homelessness, and the support needs of young people, was low, as it is likely to have been a more appropriate option to meet their needs.

The young people we spoke to, along with thousands of other young people across England who have experienced homelessness during the first lockdown, will continue to navigate complex relationships, systems and situations. Many young people had aspirations to train or work and will need support, access to housing and lower rents to do so. Yet despite the many obstacles and hardships they've experienced, they will keep looking forwards to their futures as young adults.

The key question for local authorities, the provider sector and the Government is what more can be done to support young people already supported through Everyone In, so there is minimal repeat homelessness, including rough sleeping. And crucially, how can we, together, prevent future instances of youth homelessness, including rough sleeping, from occurring during the economic and social challenges which lie ahead for our country?

We conclude by urging swift action to improve the prevention and relief of homelessness amongst young people, as only by doing this will the commitment to end rough sleeping be realised. With access to more affordable, suitable housing options and investment in flexible support which truly meets young people's needs and supports their aspirations, it will be possible for local authorities and their partners to avert a looming crisis in youth homelessness – and rough sleeping.

Recommendations

Government

Department for Work and Pensions

- Increase the amount of Universal Credit payable to all single under 25s to the same level as over 25s in order to enable fair and equal access to housing options
- Bring forward the revised exemptions to the Shared Accommodation Rate for care leavers and young people in resettlement/supported housing. These were announced in the March 2020 budget and are due to commence in April 2023. We urge the Government to lay new regulations before Parliament as soon as possible, to commence no later than April 2021

Department for Work and Pensions and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government:

- Re-visit the system for setting and payment of supported housing costs, including in exempt accommodation, in order to enable young people to take up training and work opportunities

Department for Education:

- Continue with the funding to support care leavers at high risk of rough sleeping: Review the impact of the additional funding to previously identified children's services authorities to reduce rough sleeping amongst care leavers and its impact over lockdown. Identify with MHCLG any new areas with high levels of care leavers assisted through Everyone In.

Department of Health and Social Care:

- Create a dedicated funding stream for Health and local authorities to bid into together for specialist mental health provision specifically aimed at young people aged 18-25, including care leavers, living in supported housing and homelessness systems.

Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government:

- Create a 'Commitment to Collaborate', beyond the Duty to Refer, dedicated nationwide scheme which identifies and plans with all under 26 year olds in and leaving custody at risk of homelessness, learning from the HMPPS work with care leavers

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government:

- Lead on the creation of a new cross-departmental national investment pot for local authorities for supported housing options which is not contingent on the experience of rough sleeping but is for prevention and relief of homelessness for young people and other client groups. This should link to the KickStart Fund and ensure additional support to enable young people to take up training and employment, as well as housing related support for those with high and complex needs including offending behaviours, mental health issues and substance misuse.
- Continue to promote the Positive Pathway frameworks with local authorities through the Youth Homelessness Advisers and ensure they are continually updated to take into account changes needed due to Covid-19 and its impact

- Strengthen MHCLG guidance to local authorities on allocation of social housing to allow care leavers from other areas to qualify for the housing register through their time spent in care in the local authority district being accepted as meeting any local connection requirement , and to ensure that they receive the same 'reasonable preference' priority as care leavers for that local authority area without needing to present as homeless.

Homes England and Registered Providers:

- Ensure there is a truly affordable youth housing offer within affordable housing programmes which enables young people to live, work, earn and learn.
- Increase supply of social housing for single people including Housing First.

Local authority areas:

- Undertake an analysis of the numbers and needs of young people likely to require assistance with housing and support and map these against the options available, using the Positive Pathway frameworks to guide this work
- Establish youth homelessness prevention partnerships where they don't already exist and plan to address gaps in prevention and relief options specifically for young people, utilising Government funding for homelessness, including Homelessness Reduction Grants, Rough Sleeping Initiative and Next Steps funding

Sub-regions or combined authority areas:

- Develop regional versions of the CHAIN reporting systems, drawing on local intelligence on rough sleeping from outreach services
- Undertake 'deep dive' rapid reviews into the journeys into rough sleeping and hidden homelessness amongst young people in order to identify gaps in earlier upstream prevention and relief services/activity

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Young people and the Covid-19 pandemic

Many commentators, politicians and members of the public have noted how the pandemic has 'shone a light' on some aspects of life in our communities, including homelessness.

During lockdown and into the summer months, the Government's 'Everyone In' programme assisted over 15,000 people into accommodation if they were rough sleeping or at high risk of doing so.

This report looks at one specific group, young people aged 16 – 25, who were assisted through 'Everyone In' over this time, across 1 region of England, the West Midlands. It has been written during the early autumn of 2020, when the 'second wave' of the corona virus is underway in the UK and a second national lockdown is underway. Covering the first national lockdown and what happened in the summer months of 2020, the contents of the report represent a 'snapshot' over a short period of time. Its purpose is to share the learning from this, which has resonance across all of England.

Our hope is this will assist the Government and other public bodies in their planning for the future to prevent youth homelessness occurring. Only by doing this purposefully, area by area, is there a real prospect of the Government achieving its ambition to end rough sleeping.

The first period of national lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic started on the 23rd March 2020 with phased easing of lockdown from the 1st June. Our understanding of the impact of the first national lockdown on different groups in society is not well developed yet and our current ability as a nation to plan for some aspects of our future is curtailed until the pandemic is under control.

There is national awareness and concern about children and young people and the impact of national and local restrictions on their immediate and longer term life chances. Politicians, the media and the public have recognised that the pandemic and the measures introduced to manage infection and mortality rates are impacting adversely on young people's education, training and employment experiences as well as their emotional well-being¹. Together, these are expected in the longer term to damage their economic prospects and for some, their mental health. Aspirations, plans, social lives, relationships have been put on hold for young people, as well as exams, placements and jobs.

For young people who have experienced homelessness over this time, what might the impact be on their aspirations and will the assistance from local authorities and other partners have helped them with more than simply accommodation? Will it be enough to break the cycle of homelessness? As some light has shone on homelessness, what can we learn about young people as one of the groups affected?

¹ See the ONS report: Corona virus and the social impact on young people in Great Britain, published in May/June 2020: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsoneyoungpeopleingreatbritain/3aprilto10may2020#main-points>

1.2 Young people and homelessness

The Government's decisive action, to direct all English local authorities to offer accommodation to those who may not have otherwise have been able to access shelter, has been widely praised. 'Everyone In', along with other welfare and housing measures described later in the report, have aimed to protect people from homelessness and extreme hardship. For many single people caught up in the cycle of homelessness and in particular rough sleeping, there is already evidence that the Covid-19 pandemic has been a positive turning point. Is this the case for young people?

It has long been recognised and evidenced in research that becoming homeless at a young age is harmful to life chances and that there are groups of young people at higher risk of homelessness than their counterparts². Childhood trauma, abuse, neglect, living in poverty, not attending school regularly, domestic abuse, substance misuse, family homelessness, involvement in offending, and being a looked after child are all well understood as some of the main underlying risk factors.

The report will provide detail on what happened to the young people who were assisted, who they were, what caused their homelessness, what was known about their support needs, the assistance they received, how they experienced the support they had, and their plans for the future. Critically the voices of young people themselves will provide expert insights into their lives, their experiences and how they managed being homeless during a global pandemic.

The local authority and partner agency responses to young people will also be outlined, and the sorts of services and housing options available locally will form a key part of the report, in order to understand more about the levels of homelessness across different local authority areas.

² For example, see: Statutory homelessness in England: the experience of families and 16-17 year olds, DCLG, 2008 Youth Homelessness in the UK: A Review for The OVO Foundation, 2015, Beth Watts, Sarah Johnsen and Filip Sosenko. Institute for Social Policy, Housing, Environment and Real Estate, Heriot-Watt University No Place to Stay, Experiences of youth homelessness, 2019, Centrepont The Young and Homeless report s, 2018, Homeless Link

1.3 Methodology

We have used three main research methods in writing this report:

Firstly, we spoke to different key informants using semi-structured interview guides:

- 22 young people who have experienced homelessness and were assisted by the Everyone In scheme.
- 24 local authorities, all of which had assisted under 26 year olds through the Everyone In scheme. We had interviews with individuals or small groups, depending on what was suggested by the local authority. In some cases we spoke to small groups containing voluntary sector and local authority staff together.
- 1 local authority which had not had any young people under 26 approach them for assistance
- 3 voluntary sector providers of services in the West Midlands to young people who are homeless: Brighter Futures (Stoke), STAY (Telford) and St Basils (services in Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry, some areas of Worcestershire, some areas of Warwickshire)
- A Public Health England official for the West Midlands, who leads on homelessness and public health

Secondly, we looked at data that local authorities and other agencies have collected:

- Data returns from 24 housing authorities in the West Midlands regarding the young people they had assisted through Everyone In. There were 6 local authorities which had not had any under 26 years old and did not need to fill in the detail regarding this group but provided their overall totals of people assisted.
- The national homelessness data published by MHCLG (the H-CLIC tables and rough sleeping data)
- Other relevant data sets e.g. CHAIN data on rough sleeping in London, ONS data on population estimates and the Indices of Multiple Deprivation

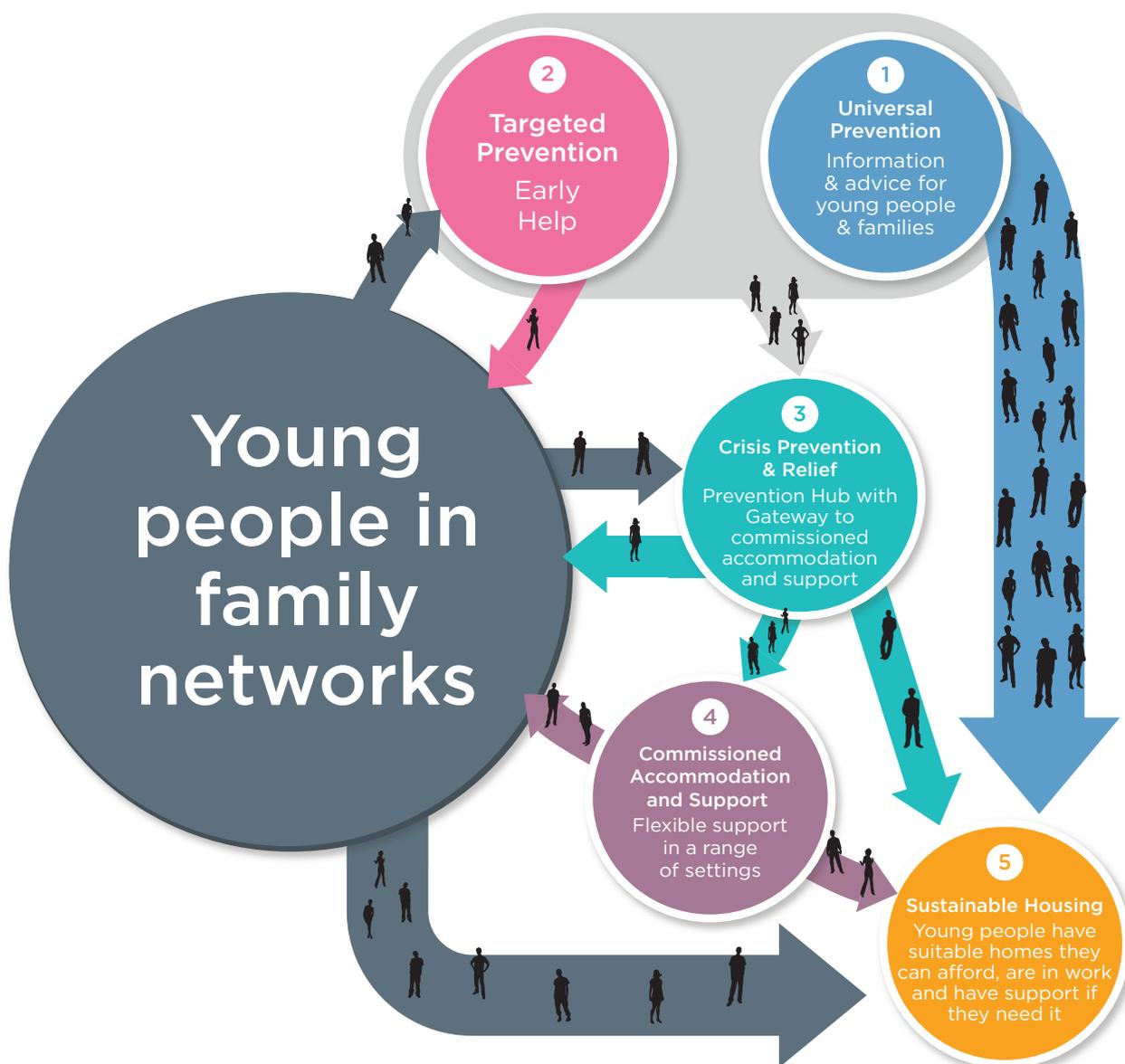
Thirdly, we looked at relevant policy and research documents for a number of different agencies, as well as key directives, guidance and communications which the Government have published.

1.4 The Positive Pathway as a tool for developing youth housing pathways and preventing youth homelessness

We used the 'Positive Pathway' model to 'map and gap' the services available and the approaches used by different local authority areas. This is a framework that was created by St Basils in order to help local authorities and their partners to develop a more collaborative and integrated approach to service development and delivery, resulting in better outcomes for young people.

As well as the generic 'Positive Pathway' model, which applies to all 16 – 25 year olds, we have also worked with Barnardo's to develop a 'Care Leaver Accommodation and Support Framework,' and drew on the expertise of several agencies to draw up the 'Youth Justice Accommodation Framework' for those involved in the criminal justice system³. MHCLG funded St Basils to update the 3 documents in 2019.

The concept of the Positive Pathway is easy to grasp. It is based on 5 stages, with some variations across the 3 documents. The overall intention of using these tools is to design homelessness out of our systems. The generic 'Positive Pathway' model is below:



³ The 3 documents are available to download here: <https://stbasils.org.uk/about-us/the-positive-pathway/>

Universal Prevention - protective activity that encourages young people and families to plan housing options and seek advice before any risk of homelessness emerges

Targeted Prevention – early intervention with young people at higher risk of homelessness

Crisis Prevention and Relief - what happens when a young person is homeless or is at very high risk of becoming homeless

Commissioned Accommodation and Support – the range of options locally for young people to live in accommodation with some support as needed

Sustainable Housing – the longer term move-on options which enable young people to enter and sustain employment, education or training

The model has also been adapted by MHCLG in the 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy to give shape to planning to end rough sleeping and by some local authorities in their statutory homelessness and rough sleeping strategies. As a tool it has, therefore, been viewed as useful, with some read across strategically between both rough sleeping and youth homelessness, albeit with a different context and focus.

Section 2. Homelessness and young people in the West Midlands

2.1 Variations in homelessness services for young people

The West Midlands is made up of:

- 11 unitary or metropolitan councils
- 19 district councils
- 3 county councils

Many, but not all, of the local authorities are part of the West Midlands Combined Authority.⁴ Like every region, there is considerable variation in the levels of homelessness across local authority areas within the West Midlands. These variations are set within and influenced by the different local authority contexts.

The West Midlands has a mix of urban and rural areas, as well as different local authority structures, (two tier or unitary/metropolitan). It contains the largest local authority in England as well as much smaller district councils. Combined with these factors is the differing age distribution within areas, the contrasting levels of deprivation and some very different housing markets in terms of both types of housing and affordability. All of these features will impact on the levels of homelessness. See Appendix One for a table showing a range of data by local authority on population, young people, homelessness, deprivation, market rents and Local Housing Allowance rates.

Alongside these variables there are also local policy decisions and ways of working which are critical because these impact directly on the ability to effectively prevent and relieve youth homelessness, for example:

- the effectiveness of joint working between Housing Authorities, Children's Services and Adult Social Care
- the breadth and depth of partnerships with voluntary sector, housing associations and other public services that local authorities develop to support other outcomes (for example health, emotional well-being, employability)
- the level of investment in upstream prevention such as family mediation and work in schools
- commissioning models and local funding decisions
- the range of supported housing services available and which groups of young people can access them

⁴ The West Midlands Combined Authority is made up of: 7 unitary authorities as constituent members (Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton) and 10 non-constituent local authorities (Cannock Chase, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Redditch, Rugby, Shropshire, Stratford-on-Avon, Tamworth, Telford and Wrekin, Warwickshire County Council).

Homelessness prevention and housing pathways for young people are predicated on the effectiveness of the 5 component parts of the 'Positive Pathway' model (See Section 1.4).

To work effectively, all the 5 elements of the pathway need to function and balance. For example, one local authority can have good prevention services, but if there is minimal move-on from a relatively small amount of supported housing due to a lack of affordable housing supply, this will cause 'silt up' in the supported housing. Conversely, if there is a relatively good supply of private rented or social housing for young people to move into, but prevention work is not thorough and there is no effective floating support on offer, the homelessness route may become the default way into accommodation for some young people where homelessness could have been prevented, and tenancy failure is high due to a lack of support – leading to repeat homelessness.

By using the Positive Pathway model as a framework, we asked local authorities about their usual youth homelessness services and their move-on options before the pandemic to see if these had any bearing on what happened during 'Everyone In'.

Housing Options Managers and Young People's Housing Officers were more likely to have heard of the Positive Pathway and were using it or had done. Rough Sleeping Co-ordinators were least likely to be familiar with the model and the suite of Pathway documents.

“...we have used it over several years. We've gone back over it with other Districts and the County. We used it to assist with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. And done gap analysis with it”. **(Head of Strategic Growth in a district council)**

“Yes we have [used it]. As part of the county this is more difficult, but we have used it.” **(Housing and Communities Manager in a district council)**

“Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is based on the Pathway model but its all age.” **(Team Leader in a district council)**

For almost every local area there were significant gaps in services and the supply of suitable housing for young people to move into. Not surprisingly no one said they had a youth housing pathway which 'flowed' perfectly. A recurring theme for almost every area was the gap in provision for young people with multiple or complex needs, who did not fit into the commissioned services. Even if there was reasonable and coherent set of services, the lack of housing supply which was suitable, affordable and accessible for young people on low incomes was a key pinch point in almost every authority, causing 'silt up' in supported accommodation. This was also a key finding in the evaluation of the Positive Pathway which MHCLG commissioned in 2016.⁵

5 The Positive Pathway Model: A Rapid Evaluation of its Impact. 2017, Stephen Green, Lindsey McCarthy, Ben Pattison, Sheffield Hallam University

In terms of prevention options at the point of crisis and supported housing options, of the 25 Councils we spoke to:

- 11 had reasonable or in some cases good prevention and supported housing options for young people. These were areas which had commissioned specifically for young people and there was some variety of options within the units/bed spaces available. Often they had specialist young people's housing options workers, or dedicated youth homelessness prevention services. No one believed their options or services were ideal, but some were more robust, in terms of being well-established, having a menu of options. However, only a small number in this group had the services to support young people with higher or complex needs who needed more specialist support.
- 9 local authorities had limited options for young people, meaning they could not easily meet the level of demand or the range of needs. Different issues were cited, including: no emergency provision; not enough bed spaces overall for young people; only young people with low or medium needs could be accommodated, with no provision at all for those with more complex needs; access was limited to only care leavers and 16/17 year olds, or to those aged under 21. In one local authority there was funding available, but the market of supported housing providers was diminishing, and services were closing as a result.
- 5 local authorities had very limited or no options. Some had no supported accommodation at all and for the rest, the provision was all age. One had only exempt supported accommodation which was all age.

Several local authorities had dedicated homelessness or housing options officers which worked just with young people. This was noted as beneficial in every case. Young people were known, their cases managed by specialist officers who knew them, the local services for young people and housing options specifically for young people.

In one unitary authority, with noticeably high numbers of young people aged 22 – 25 assisted through Everyone In, the service model meant that the 2 young people's housing options officers worked with young people up to the age of 21, not 25. This was highly effective for the under 22 year olds, but the Housing Options Team Leader we spoke to noted a gap for the 22 – 25 year old age group, with no specialist worker to guide and support young people, who often had complex needs. This, along with gaps in the supported housing pathway for higher needs young people, was part of the narrative in understanding their high numbers.

In another area, which had comparatively few young people assisted through Everyone In, there were 3 young people's housing officers, who worked with young people up to the age of 29. This is unusual but cited by the local authority officer as critical to their way of working effectively with young people.

Different authorities noted different gaps in their youth housing pathways:

“There is a gap between low need and those who are so severe they would be sectioned. Young people who in the past would have been accommodated with support.” **(Team Leader for Homelessness in a district council)**

“If you take out the higher needs young people, we don't have a bad set of options....we are forced to give tenancies to that group and all too often it fails.” **(Housing Options Team Manager in a unitary council)**

“There's no direct access provision in [local authority] except B&BS which are contracted by the Council. And there's no provision for 16/17s who are homeless – we had a case last week of a 16/17 year old who did not want to be looked after so came through to the Housing Solutions Service. They have no accommodation that is suitable, so we ended up buying a bed space from Children's Services. **(Operations Manager for Homelessness in a unitary council)**

“We have to use B&B, but this is difficult - it's not always possible - when they are very young people - 16/17 year olds - and it would be unsafe due to other people there. It's a similar issue with HMOs [Houses of Multiple Occupation].” **(Housing Options Manager in a district council)**

“Options are simply not there” **(Head of Housing in a district council)**

In several areas the commissioned services for young people were specifically commissioned for care leavers and 16/17 year olds or were only for under 21 year olds. Other young people could not access these services. The more services are tilted towards particular groups, the higher the risk of young people falling out of the system.

“The [provider] hostel does not take under 25s and there is no supported housing service for 21 – 25s.” **(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a unitary council)**

One council noted that young people needed to be picked up as rough sleeping because only then could they access the new accommodation via the MHCLG funded 'Rapid Re-housing Pathway.'

It may be that there is a risk that a deficit model is emerging in areas with little or no supported housing for under 25 year olds. A policy which focusses largely on rough sleeping may be perversely pushing young people into acute forms of homelessness and associated risk in order to get housing.

Several reflected on the paucity of services and the impact over time of local decisions to reduce supported housing budgets:

“There is no county based commissioning of supported housing for people anymore” **(Housing Options Manager in a district council)**

“The cuts have long since taken away the sort of accommodation young people would have stayed in. They have been kicked into statutory homelessness and they fall out of the system and end up in limbo.” **(Team Leader in a district council)**

“We didn’t have RSI [the MHCLG’s Rough Sleeping Initiative] 10 years ago because we didn’t need it.” **(Team Manager in a district council)**

Some local authorities had become wholly or partially reliant on the use of ‘exempt’ accommodation which was funded solely through a higher level of housing benefit, based on additional housing management costs. The quality of accommodation and the management of this was variable, with some accommodation much better than others. Disadvantages noted were that there was significantly less support than with commissioned provision, and there was no accountability or pressure to move young people into more affordable settled accommodation.

“We are now trying to get a handle on this and reduce it” **(Homelessness and Allocations Manager, district council)**

There were new contracts or partnership based services starting or in early development in some areas, some of which were all-age and some which were for young people only. Alongside these was the hope of success through the MHCLG ‘Next Steps’ funding⁶ programme, but announcements on successful bids had not been made when we spoke to local authorities, (with one exception) so there was some uncertainty around some developments.

One authority had invested in staff training to better support people with more complex needs:

“All staff have been trained by [name of provider] in PIE which went very well. I did my training around 2 and half years ago. We have been able to carry on doing the reflective practice ever since - they are invaluable for staff. I am a manager and I still do the sessions.” **(Housing and Welfare lead officer in a unitary council)**

Move-on accommodation, the final stage of the Positive Pathway, was a major gap for almost every council we spoke to.

In terms of the private rented sector, there were 3 main issues:

- The level of the Local Housing Allowance
- The supply of shared accommodation
- Landlord concerns about young people as tenants

⁶ MHCLG’s ‘Next Steps’ funding is £266 million of revenue and capital funding to find suitable accommodation and support options for people previously rough sleeping and assisted off the streets through the Everyone In programme.

When we spoke to housing authorities, we asked about the uplift in the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate, pegging it back up to the 30th percentile of market rents from April 2020. Whilst everyone thought this was helpful, it did not significantly alter the position for young people in terms of accessing private rented accommodation. The shared accommodation rate was cited by almost every council as one of the major factors - even with the uplift in the Local Housing Allowance.

Not only did the rents often not reflect the updated LHA rates, the assumption that there is shared accommodation available in every area was not borne out in reality. Several authorities had no legacy of student shared housing to utilise, and 1-bed private rented accommodation was not affordable on benefits for under 35 year olds, leaving social housing as the only other option.

“We don’t have shared accommodation for people on benefits. Even if they can get 1-bed accommodation, the LHA [Local Housing Allowance] would not cover it.” **(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a unitary council)**

For young people who have experienced homelessness, not only is a low income a barrier, but their age is another factor in access to both private and social rented housing. A district court ruling in July 2020 found that it was illegal for landlords to operate ‘no DSS’ policies on the basis of indirect discrimination, contrary to the Equality Act 2010 on gender and disability grounds. Some landlords, it seems, continue to discriminate directly against young people purely on the basis of their age, a protected characteristic.

The discrimination faced by young people in the housing market is pervasive and its significance came through strongly in our interviews with local authorities:

“Landlords want guarantors for young people and this makes the PRS [private rented sector] difficult” **(Head of Strategic Growth in a district council)**

“Landlords don’t want to take young people... they need a higher rate of rent deposit for landlords - they just don’t want to take young people – especially young people on low incomes who need benefit to top up the rent.” **(Team Leader in a voluntary youth agency working in a unitary authority)**

“The private sector is a gap – it’s hard. [The youth housing agency] struggle, landlords want higher bonds, they’re worried about younger people.” **(Housing Solutions Manager in a district council)**

In 3 or 4 areas there is affordable shared housing in the private rented sector - but this does not necessarily equate to suitable, sustainable move on. Two of the authorities with a bigger supply of affordable houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) had the highest rates of young people accommodated through Everyone In.

Some local authorities expressed a concern about houses of multiple occupation and their suitability for vulnerable young people who need to mix with other tenants which may pose a risk to them. Several authorities told us that young people were reluctant to share, due to the poor quality of the accommodation but also the lack of privacy.

Social housing as a move on option was equally as challenging in many areas. Housing officers described a combination of a lack of supply of one-bed social housing, local lettings policies which create age barriers, and increasingly stringent affordability assessments undertaken by some registered providers.

“All care leavers and young people in supported housing or homeless have Gold Band Plus but they are not able to move due to lack of one bed housing. The stock does not reflect the needs of the local community - over 25 years the number of single people on the register has increased steadily. Building is still mainly 2 and 3 bed. Young people are having to move outside the borough to be housed.” **(Housing and Communities Manager in a district council)**

Single young people receive a lower level of Universal Credit than over 25 year olds. Local authorities told us they are, in effect, bottom of the list of prospective social housing tenants in areas which no longer own their own stock, even if they have reasonable preference through the local authority allocations policy.

“... [The local registered provider] have introduced a new procedure whereby 2 under-writers look at each application for housing and they won't take people who don't fit the criteria - things like past debt and poor behaviour. RPs [registered providers] are getting public money to provide social housing but have a low level of trust to take people on benefit or who have been homeless in the past”. **(Team Leader for Homelessness in a district council)**

“It's not easy - the RP [registered provider] - is risk adverse and has a stringent under writing process to check on affordability - difficult for people on benefit who have had previous deductions made - it might be harder as well for young people who have no tenancy experience.” **(Housing and Communities Manager in a district council)**

“We give Gold Band to care leavers and move on from supported housing but there is concern about registered providers and affordability assessments for young people - registered providers are now saying young people can't afford to live in social housing.” **(Service Manager for Housing in a unitary council)**

One unitary council with a shortage of 1 bed accommodation, was offering tenancies to single care leavers in 2 bed social housing and topping up the rent.

The acute shortage of suitable, affordable move on – whether social or private rented – was a key driver of homelessness now and in the future for many of the authorities we spoke to:

“Some young people will have to spend year's sofa surfing and moving around - they are the ones that will end up rough sleeping”. **(Strategic Housing Officer in a district council)**

2.2 Rates of statutory youth homelessness in the West Midlands region

The statutory homelessness figures which are published by MHCLG⁷ on a quarterly basis provide some analysis by age. It is possible to identify by age the numbers of prevention and relief duties accepted by local authority area and region. These are shown in Table 1 below. Represented within the age groups are single households as well as households with children, so this does not give an accurate picture of single youth homelessness, which is the focus of this report.

When one authority in the West Midlands is compared to others, there will be differences in proportions and rates of homelessness, due to local contexts noted in Section 2.1 (also see Appendix One) but some of the more significant differences may be indicative of inconsistent recording.

In terms of the region as a whole and based on what is available, there is no significant difference in the proportion of under 25 year olds who are owed a prevention or relief duty when compared to the England-wide position:

Table 1: Ages of the main applicant owed a prevention or relief duty, taken from the MHCLG Homelessness Statistics 2019/2020:

Age group	16 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Not known
West Midlands	1.3% (370)	20.9% (5,720)	29.8% (8,160)	21.3% (5,830)	12.4% (3,390)	5.7% (1,560)	2.1% (570)	0.8% (220)	5.8% (1,590)
England	1.1% (3,110)	20% (57,740)	30.5% (87,990)	22.9% (65,960)	14.4% (41,430)	7.1% (20,480)	2.4% (7,010)	1.1% (3,050)	0.6% (1,710)

Some data is available at a national level which shows cause of homelessness by age, but this contains both single households and those with children.

Support needs are recorded as part of the homelessness assessment. Up to 3 support needs can be 'ticked' per applicant. There is likely to be some under-reporting generally of support needs, as this relies on whoever is undertaking the homelessness assessment to apply similar approaches and thresholds as well as recording accurately on the casework management system.

Some support needs categories apply to young people only and can be used to understand more about some of the characteristics of young people who are owed a prevention or relief duty. There is no significant difference in the proportions of young people nationally and in the West Midlands with support needs.

⁷ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics#statutory-homelessness>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reason-for-loss-of-last-settled-home-of-16-24-year-olds-initially-owed-a-prevention-or-relief-homelessness-duty-in-2019-20>

Table 2: Support needs which relate to young people, taken from the MHCLG Homelessness Statistics 2019/2020:

Support need	16/17 year olds	Young person aged 18 – 25 requiring support to manage independently	Care leaver aged 18-20	Care leaver aged 21+	Young parent requiring support to manage independently
West Midlands	1.4% (380)	5.1% (1,390)	1.4% (9380)	0.8% (210)	1.2% (320)
England	1.1% (3,130)	4% (11,480)	1.2% (3,370)	1.2% (3,590)	1.1% (2,780)

The support needs assessment also captures other relevant needs, covering previous and current experiences, health and disability although these are not broken down by age. There is no reason to suppose that the support needs amongst the West Midlands homeless population should be significantly different to the England picture overall, but there are some differences in the proportions of support needs recorded. This may be due to inconsistent recording in, for example, one or two large local authorities.

Table 3: Support needs which relate health and disability, taken from the MHCLG Homelessness Statistics 2019/2020:

Support need	History of mental health problems	Physical ill health and disability	Drug dependency needs	Alcohol dependency needs	Learning disability
West Midlands	15.6% (4,280)	9% (2,480)	3.2% (890)	2.5% (680)	2.6% (700)
England	22.8% (65,650)	14.5% (41,950)	5.8% (16,710)	4.3% (12,470)	4.3% (12,490)

Table 4: Other support needs relating to violence and abuse

Support need	At risk of/has experienced domestic abuse	At risk of/has experienced abuse (non-domestic)	At risk of/has experienced sexual abuse/exploitation
West Midlands	7.7% (2,120)	1.3% (350)	0.9% (260)
England	9.3% (26,790)	2.5% (7,180)	2.1% (6,020)

Table 5: Other support needs

Support need	Offending history	History of repeat homelessness	History of rough sleeping	Access to education, employment or training
West Midlands	3.4% (940)	2.5% (680)	2.1% (570)	4% (1,090)
England	7.7% (22,080)	6.3% (18,260)	5.1% (14,760)	2.7% (7,730)

Local authorities aim to assist people to either stay where they are living, if it's suitable, or move to alternative accommodation. There is minimal difference between the West Midlands region and the rest of England in terms of positive prevention and relief outcomes. This data is not available by age.

Table 6: Levels of successful prevention and relief work

Levels of positive outcomes for preventing and relieving homelessness	Prevention of homelessness: secured accommodation for 6+ months	Relief of homelessness: secured accommodation for 6+ months
West Midlands	58.6% (5,620)	41% 6,810
England	58.5% (81,500)	40% (61,930)

2.3 Young people and rough sleeping

Our collective understanding of young people and their journeys in and out of rough sleeping is limited. Research into severe and multiple exclusion has focussed in part on childhood and experiences as young adults. Multiple exclusion in one report was defined as a combination of some or all of the following: rough sleeping, other forms of homelessness, and street culture activities such as begging and street based sex work, mental health issues, substance misuse and experience of prison and/or the care system. It looked at the ages of key events for people who have experienced multiple exclusion in 7 cities within the UK.⁸ The researchers noted that of the people they spoke to:

- 37% were first evicted from the parental/carer home aged 17
- 77% of people interviewed had experienced staying with friends or relatives due to homelessness by the age of 20
- A further 77% had slept rough by the age of 26

There has been some recent in-depth work on young people and rough sleeping in London. The capital city context and the issues surrounding rough sleeping are in many aspects different to the West Midlands, but nonetheless it has served to provide useful insights within one region with some read-across to other areas. A collaborative effort involved youth homelessness voluntary sector representatives, with some London Boroughs, MHCLG Youth Homelessness Advisers and the Mayor's Office, who worked together in 2019 with an objective to:

- Understand and improve data on rough sleeping amongst young people aged 18 – 25
- Investigate the patterns of and reasons for rough sleeping among this group
- Determine how best young rough sleepers can be supported

The findings were published in August 2020⁹ and the findings broadly were:

- A need to ensure that data recording helps to identify the total number of young people sleeping rough and why they are doing so
- Young people often sleep rough in ways that mean they are less likely to be visible and therefore secure help
- There needs to be an improvement in prevention and awareness of homelessness and services
- Young people with different characteristics may have different experiences of sleeping rough
- A need to invest in the availability of specialist supported accommodation for young people

8 Fitzpatrick et al., Heriot-Watt University, Multiple exclusion homelessness across the UK: A quantitative survey, 2011 in Tackling homelessness and exclusion: Understanding complex lives : 2011, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Theresa McDonagh.

9 Report from the Young People Sleeping Rough Sub Group, August 2020, Life Off the Streets Taskforce, August 2020: <https://nhyouthcentre.org.uk/news/2020/08/19/young-people-sleeping-rough-sub-group-report>

The mix of urban and rural areas within all the regions outside London mean there are different challenges:

“*Rough sleeping in [a large rural unitary authority] is not like an urban area - people are in hedges, not on the streets and they are not easy to find*” **(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a large rural authority)**

But nonetheless, based on the Greater London Authority report and our knowledge of youth homelessness in the West Midlands, there are likely to be more similarities than differences in the journeys of young people and the deficits in services.

In terms of actual numbers, the Government’s Annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot is the most often cited. This is based on estimates and counts from all local authorities over a single night. This is not directly comparable to the numbers assisted through Everyone In, which was run over months, not a single night and assisted people deemed to be at high risk of rough sleeping as well as those already on the streets.

Using the annual snapshot methodology, the proportion of people found to be rough sleeping who are under 26 year olds has been relatively low, with the number and the proportion both falling in 2019.

Table 7: Taken from the Government’s Annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot

Rough Sleeping Numbers

Year	England				West Midlands			
	Total	Under 18	18-25s	'Not Knowns'	Total	Under 18	18-25s	'Not Knowns'
2017	4,751	3 (0.06%)	366 (7.70%)	536 (11.28%)	295	0 (0.00%)	18 (6.10%)	52 (17.63%)
2018	4,677	1 (0.02%)	296 (6.33%)	637 (13.62%)	420	0 (0.00%)	27 (6.43%)	77 (18.33%)
2019	4,266	6 (0.14%)	201 (4.71%)	517 (12.12%)	319	0 (0.00%)	14 (4.39%)	21 (6.58%)

Only the London region routinely collects and publishes detailed data about people who are rough sleeping. The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) system, managed by St Mungo’s and the Greater London Authority, uses intelligence from outreach services across London to build a picture of the ‘flow’ of new people onto the streets, intermittent rough sleepers and those who live on the streets. The numbers of people rough sleeping are disaggregated on a quarterly basis by borough, support needs and characteristics including gender, nationality and age and care status. No other region has this level of detail. The number of young people reported to be rough sleeping has been rising over the last 3 years in London, as has the overall total, but until the last quarter (April – June 2020) the proportion of young people has been steady at around 8%.

The most recent quarter of CHAIN data has been published, which covers the period of lock down and Everyone In. This shows an upward trend in rough sleeping generally. Most significantly it shows an 81% increase amongst under 26 year old group compared to the same quarter in 2019 and a rise in the proportion of rough sleepers who were under 26.

Table 8: CHAIN data on rough sleeping by age

CHAIN annual reporting by year and latest quarter	Total rough sleeping	Under 18s	18-25s
2017/18	7,484	11 (0%)	604 (8%)
2018/19	8,855	5 (0%)	687 (8%)
2019/20	10,726	1 (0%)	835 (8%)
April - June 2020	4,197	2 (0%)	447 (11%)

Whilst the detail within national and most regional pictures is limited, local authorities and their partners have an increasingly detailed insight into rough sleeping in their areas. More regular rough sleeping counts have been taking place in many areas across England. Local intelligence from outreach services is shared with MHCLG and used by local authorities to monitor and plan their local work on reducing rough sleeping.

This work has been supported and in no small part driven by MHCLG’s Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) funding programme, which began in 2018, with funding to set up or bolster rough sleeping outreach services and provide more specialist support to rough sleepers in the majority of local authorities in England, including 25 of the 30 housing authorities in the West Midlands.¹⁰ In addition, since 2018/19, further funding has been awarded to assist people previously rough sleeping into more settled accommodation through the ‘Rapid Rehousing Pathway’, including 16 of the 30 housing authorities in the West Midlands.

There are some groups who are at higher risk of rough sleeping than others. Amongst young people, care leavers are significantly over-represented in rough sleeping numbers, when compared to other young people. In 2018 the Department for Education made a commitment in the Government’s Rough Sleeping Strategy to provide additional funding to 47 of the 152 children’s services authorities where care leavers were deemed to be most at risk of rough sleeping. The grant determinations were based on Children’s Services’ statistical returns to the Department for Education in terms of the numbers of care leavers who:

- were homeless/no fixed abode;
- were in either emergency or Bed & Breakfast accommodation; or
- were in ‘other accommodation’, which had been deemed by the local authority to be unsuitable

¹⁰ The housing authorities not awarded funding were: Dudley, Sandwell, Tamworth, North Warwickshire and South Staffordshire.

Table 9: Children’s Services Authorities in the West Midlands receiving DfE funding to reduce rough sleeping amongst care leavers

Children’s Services Authority area	2018/19 (6 months funding only)	2019/20	2020/21
Worcestershire	£47,500	£95,000	£22,500
Staffordshire	£47,500	£95,000	-
Birmingham	£47,500	£95,000	£5,860
Warwickshire	£47,500	£95,000	-
Sandwell	£23,750	£47,500	-
Coventry	£23,750	£47,500	£36,000
Walsall	£23,750	£47,500	£18,205

Section 3: Lockdown, Everyone In and young people

3.1 Pre lockdown actions by Councils/agencies to prepare

With a national lockdown becoming increasingly likely during early to mid-March, many local authorities and commissioned providers took pre-emptive action to create more capacity in both temporary accommodation and supported housing. This was in part for customers already living in accommodation with sharing facilities who might need to self-isolate and also to empty out some higher risk shared environments, such as night shelters, into accommodation which was more suitable.

Alongside this was an intense period of activity, mirrored across all sectors in the UK, with planning for changes to the way services would continue to be delivered, with more working from home where this was possible.

“We were planning for lockdown in advance – we emptied the winter night shelter and got people tenancies in the week before.” (Lead for Housing and Welfare, in a unitary council)

On the 16th March 2020, 7 days before the national lockdown was announced by the Prime Minister, guidance was issued jointly by MHCLG and Public Health England aimed at commissioners and providers of supported accommodation with shared facilities, excluding night shelters.

Some agencies and services were already focused on people rough sleeping, including young people:

“We planned ahead knowing lockdown was coming. So we made sure young people had accommodation if they were on the street - we offered it to them and everyone took up the offer. We also gave young people mobiles, credit for the phone, food each day, did risk assessments...then we planned out with each young person what would happen if they needed to self-isolate, their family networks, if they had any, how they could get what they needed without going outside.”

(A rough sleeping outreach team leader in a youth homelessness agency in a unitary council)

One West Midlands' authority, Shropshire, had experienced the worst floods in its history just a few weeks before lockdown. This meant their temporary accommodation and many B&Bs were already full of families and single people who were unable to get back into their properties. Planning in advance was extremely challenging under these circumstances.

The way in which social housing would be let in the event of a lockdown was also a consideration at this point for councils. Some made early decisions on the suspension of choice based lettings schemes and planning for the management of repairs and the practicalities of sign-ups were all underway prior to lockdown in many areas.

Where local authorities owned their social housing stock and managed it directly or through an arms-length management organisation (ALMO), there appears to have been little problem agreeing the local arrangements – albeit that there was not a uniform response.

One stock-holding authority described how it *'held off'* choice based lettings for a couple of weeks early on in lockdown, in order to free up some voids, which were then offered as direct lets to households in temporary accommodation. As a result, their temporary accommodation almost halved.

But this was not always the case where the local authority no longer owned its stock and there was a reliance on registered providers to let social housing.

3.2 The Everyone In directive and guidance/its interpretation

On the 26th March the then Minister for Local Government and Homelessness, Luke Hall, sent a letter to all local authorities.¹¹ It set out the importance in every area to safeguard the health of homelessness people and outlined four principles:

“Focus on people who are, or are at risk of, sleeping rough, and those who are in accommodation where it is difficult to self-isolate, such as shelters and assessment centres

Make sure that these people have access to the facilities that enable them to adhere to public health guidance on hygiene or isolation, ideally single room facilities

Utilise alternative powers and funding to assist those with no recourse to public funds who require shelter and other forms of support due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Mitigate their own risk of infection, and transmission to others, by ensuring they are able to self-isolate as appropriate in line with public health guidance. ”

(The 4 basic principles for Everyone In, taken from the Minister’s letter of the 16th March 2020)

For most local authorities in the West Midlands, there was not enough suitable temporary accommodation or supported housing available, so this meant sourcing of hotels or bed and breakfast (B&B) type accommodation for the period of lockdown. Funding was made available to local authorities to support this work alongside a range of other measures to reduce the risk of people losing their accommodation or facing other hardships.¹²

Councils needed to respond quickly and whilst they may not have anticipated such a clear directive for supporting people rough sleeping, most were underway with some planning.

“I was completely blind-sided. I had identified move on for the 4 people from the winter night shelter. And a high quality hotel contacted us offering rooms, 10 days before lockdown. At the beginning we were looking to place symptomatic people into the hotel. But when the directive came from the Minister all of that changed.” (Lead officer for homelessness and allocations in a district council)

In terms of managing the task of assisting people who were homeless during the first period of lockdown, Councils made their decisions based on what they judged to be right for their local contexts. There was some lack of clarity regarding which groups of people would be assisted if they were ‘at risk of’ rough sleeping. The absence of clear direction gave flexibility to act in accordance with local contexts. Avoiding the imposition of a more rigid set of requirements about who was ‘in’ or ‘out’ of the Everyone In safety net was arguably the right approach, but some councils were uncertain about the ‘right’ approach to take and where to draw the line, if at all.

11 The full transcript of the letter is available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876466/Letter_from_Minister_Hall_to_Local_Authorities.pdf

12 The Everyone In programme was supported through £3.2 million for local authorities, this is in addition to the over £7.2 billion that has been allocated to councils in order to help with the COVID-19 pandemic response.

“The message from Government to councils has been very woolly –it’s been unclear and not helpful regarding who we needed to be assisting through Everyone In and how that was different to our usual work.” **(Housing strategy officer in a district council)**

“Everyone In was based on a letter - there was no guidance and there was a lot of freedom to interpret it as you chose.” **(Lead officer for homelessness and allocations in a district council)**

Whilst there was absolute clarity from all the councils we spoke to regarding assisting people already rough sleeping, and homeless people with no recourse to public funds, there were different interpretations regarding which other groups of homeless people were to be included beyond these groups, as outlined in the next part of this section. Regardless of how they defined the other homeless people to be assisted, all the local authorities acted swiftly on receipt of the Ministerial letter.

3.3 The different models deployed to manage Everyone In and their rationale

The numbers of people being assisted by different councils under the Everyone In programme is not easily comparable for many reasons. One reason is the way councils have defined and managed at a local level the potential 'flow' of homeless single people on to the streets.

Some local authorities kept their 'business as usual' (BAU) services working and only those people who fell outside these services were included within the Everyone In programme. Others included all single homeless people and childless couples that approached for help within their Everyone In response. This meant numbers are very different for different areas, with some smaller councils with high numbers and vice versa.

Broadly the different approaches councils took fitted into 4 models, but there were variations within some of these. The different models outlined in the table below are not just about young people but all single people and childless couples who were homeless:

Table 10: A summary of different models deployed by local authorities in the West Midlands to manage the Everyone In programme

Model	Rationale and descriptors	Number of local authorities in the West Midlands deploying the model
<p>Business as usual (BAU) continued through the Housing Options Service for anyone, including young people, owed an accommodation duty (temporary accommodation) under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. They did not get included in the Everyone In figures.</p>	<p>Where people were homeless but were not going to be offered temporary accommodation under a Part 7 duty, they were part of Everyone In.</p> <p>This included people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> had no recourse to public funds and those where there was no 'reason to believe' they may have a priority need for accommodation. <p><i>'Everyone In was for those who would not usually have been accommodated whether due to immigration status, those who have already been through homelessness numerous times and those who are non-priority. There were many in addition to this who were accommodated via the usual channel.'</i> (Team Leader in a district council)</p>	<p>7 Councils : 1 unitary and 6 districts</p>
<p>Most young people were assisted through the BAU service, including statutory 'relief' activity for homeless young people not owed an accommodation duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act. They did not get included in the 'Everyone In' figures.</p>	<p>Accommodation was found with family /friends or the young person went into available vacancies in supported housing.</p> <p>Only those not approaching the usual housing options service (e.g. going via the Out of Hours Service or already rough sleeping) were counted within Everyone In.</p> <p><i>'...for those young people that were owed a relief duty, all were supported to access suitable accommodation. The majority were accommodated in commissioned supported accommodation for young people through the Housing Pathway.</i></p> <p><i>During the lockdown there was increased flexibility, vacancies which were normally for step down or move on were utilised as emergency access beds which meant that we were better able to meet with the demand. In addition, we were supported by close partnership working between commissioned partners, who were also flexible and accommodated wherever possible.</i></p> <p><i>There are a few young people who were assessed as ineligible and placed in TA [temporary accommodation], B&B under the Everyone In scheme, and some UASCs [unaccompanied asylum seeking children] young people were funded to stay in commissioned accommodation with support."</i> (The Manager of a youth housing options service run by a voluntary sector provider in a unitary council)</p>	<p>2 councils, both unitary</p>

<p>Everyone who was homeless and single or part of a childless couple, regardless of whether an accommodation duty was owing or not, were counted as 'Everyone In'.</p>	<p>People who were homeless may have been assisted through the housing options service or through the dedicated rough sleeping team.</p> <p>Many used a mix of hotel and B&B accommodation, as their supported housing and TA options were full</p> <p>One council in this group did not need to access any hotels or B&B and placed all young people into the existing pathway. They then moved them into social housing or the private rented sector relatively quickly.</p> <p><i>'We concluded that because the options were so limited during lockdown and there were no or very few lettings going on, if someone was homeless they would be at very high risk of rough sleeping. On that basis we accommodated them.'</i> (Housing options manager, district council)</p> <p><i>"I understand that every Council has done things differently. We did investigations and only accommodated people who really were genuinely homeless. If you have someone who is already rough sleeping or genuinely at risk of rough sleeping - people don't choose to do that – there has to be a reason behind it".</i> (Service Manager responsible for Housing in a unitary council)</p> <p><i>"Everyone In has given us the luxury of being able to offer out accommodation to people who would not otherwise have had this".</i> (Operations Manager in a unitary council)</p>	<p>14 councils: 7 unitary and 7 districts</p>
<p>A mixed model, with different ways into accommodation, including through the statutory route via the Council as well as directly through the rough sleeping outreach team and providers of housing and support. Most single homeless people were counted as 'Everyone In' to begin with, with BAU services resuming later.</p>	<p>Several ways in to accommodation services</p> <p>Homelessness investigated where someone approached the local authority for assistance</p> <p>Some 'business as usual' services running after the first few weeks , but continuing with direct access into accommodation services</p>	<p>1 council - a unitary</p>

3.4 Preventing and relieving homelessness amongst young people

Local housing authorities have a duty to investigate homelessness where a homelessness application has been taken or triggered. As noted in point 3.3 above, different councils had different operating models over lockdown, with some continuing with the 'business as usual' service and others defining all activity with single homeless people as assistance through Everyone In.

Some councils had more ability to flex their service, including continuing with a 'business as usual' service whilst other officers were deployed to work with people sleeping rough or intermittently rough sleeping.

To begin with many of the local authorities we spoke to were understandably more focussed on finding accommodation for everyone on the same day, regardless of age, rather than trying to resolve homelessness.

Some areas had unprecedented demand from people of all ages and were overwhelmed, giving them little time to investigate claims of homelessness or find other options. It may be that some of the latent demand, in the form of unmet need, appeared over the lockdown period in some areas, in a way it did not in other areas. The reasons for this are likely to be complex, and beyond the remit of this report, but may relate to the youth housing pathway in place - the sorts of services usually offered in an area, how they are offered, early prevention and relief work with single people, including young people and the local housing market.

“The Housing Advice Service were getting around 80 call a day – it’s a team of 3 staff – we were overwhelmed with demand. Staff looked at prevention and other options but when there was no chance of another option they would come in to B&B.” (Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a district council)

But after the first few weeks, several reported that they then took time to make sure people were genuinely in need of accommodation and/or sought other resolutions with family or friends.

“The first 4 weeks we didn’t investigate homelessness like we would have done normally. Some people jumped onto the bandwagon.” (Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a unitary council)

“Only after the first 2 weeks did we ‘push back’ more – no one was sure quite where to draw the line – the Government message got more blurry”. (Lead Officer for housing options in a district council)

“For 2 weeks we were too loose on the interpretation and housed people too readily. We rowed back from that and now it’s tighter – we check everything first. A few young people were prevented or relieved –we did deals with families to keep young people at home with food vouchers and then planning moves with these”. (Operations Manager for homelessness in a unitary council)

“Word got around that we were housing people and we had a lot of threats of parental evictions. After a few weeks we began to advise some parents that they couldn’t just evict their children and started to make goodwill payments each week to them to keep them where they were.” **(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a unitary council)**

“Some young people turned up claiming they had been rough sleeping and wanting to be housed but when we tried to verify, it was clear this was not the case and they usually had other options.” **(A rough sleeping outreach team leader in a youth homelessness agency in a unitary council)**

3.5 A word on the data

Since the commencement of the pandemic the pressures that local authorities and many of their partners have been under are unprecedented. We understood that asking them for data was going to add to this pressure. But nonetheless, we wanted to understand more about numbers and any trends in terms of the young people who had been assisted, how they had been helped, as well as if they had move-on plans.

As outlined in Section 2, all councils have to collect specific information for a quarterly return to MHCLG about any household which approaches for assistance if they are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days. The system for collecting the data is called 'H-CLIC' and through this quarterly report are published with national, regional and local authority level data.¹³ We based almost all of the questions we asked on the data form on this system because most of what we wanted to know should be already captured through the H-CLIC system. We hoped that designing a form this way would make the exercise less time consuming for local authorities. See Appendix Two for a copy of the data form.

Cognisant of some of the drivers of rough sleeping amongst young people, we asked separate questions regarding: care leaver status; offending history; disability, (which can include learning disability, physical disability and substantial, and long-term mental health problems) and previous experience of homelessness. Whilst these areas should be covered and picked up on the 'Support Needs' section if a homelessness application had been taken, we wanted to make sure we did get this information. In compiling the data, we have ensured that there is no double counting across these fields.

There were 24 councils in the West Midlands which had assisted under 26 year olds through Everyone In. For some of these local authorities, filling in the data returns proved to be a relatively straightforward exercise. Where homelessness applications had been taken for each young person and officers knew how to interrogate the casework management system, they could draw off reports and fill in the return more easily. Other councils were not in this position, and despite many hours spent trying to fill in the data returns, there were some gaps in some of the data returns for one or more of a number of reasons. We are including the reasons why some data returns were only partially filled as this may assist MHCLG and local authorities in thinking through data collection and its management in the future:

- homelessness applications had not been taken routinely at the time people were being assisted into accommodation, often due to the pressure of the lockdown situation, but sometimes because people were already well known to the local authority and there was a view that there was no need to take an application as there had not been a relevant change in fact¹⁴

13 See here for the live H-CLIC tables: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>

14 The issue of Covid-19 being grounds alone for a 'change of facts' has not been established. However, MHCLG did change the Homelessness Code of Guidance on 20th June 2020 in relation to Priority Need to better reflect the position regarding decision making around vulnerable homeless people during the pandemic. See Points 8.44 and 8.45 here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-8-priority-need>

- applications had not been taken from some people that were believed to be 'not eligible'. The decision on eligibility should take place after a homelessness application is taken, it should not be a reason not to take an application, as this would be unlawful. Unless a council had previously taken an application from someone and made a 'not eligible' decision, and there had been no 'change of facts' then applications should have been taken but this may not always have been the case.¹⁵
- homelessness applications had been taken, but retrospectively and the basic information and assessments were not completed in detail
- officers from the local authority (most usually from the rough sleeping outreach team) were not always familiar with the homelessness legislation, how to use the H-CLIC system and were not filling it in, or only partially
- some people were being accommodated through the Out of Hours Service and not being recorded in the same way
- other agencies working with the local authority were accommodating people directly and using their own systems, different to the statutory homelessness system of the local authority and there was no 'read across' between the two sets of information
- officers had had little training from the provider of the system and did not know how to draw off specific reports or there was no time/ capacity to interrogate the casework management system
- the sheer pressure on front line officers and their managers to continue running services and respond to internal and external requests for data and reports meant filling in our data return to the level of detail requested was not, understandably, a priority

Having said all of this, the response overall from local authorities has been overwhelmingly good. One council was not being able to fill in the data return to a level of detail where it could be used, but they council did give us enough information, so we have been able to use their headline figures on numbers assisted through Everyone In.

The other caveat on the data is that we received completed returns at different points in time. The data that local authorities gave us may not tally with the data which they have provided to MHCLG. What we had was a 'rolling picture' of data and then interviews over several weeks between mid- July and early September 2020, and the data will not necessarily therefore correspond with the figures coming into MHCLG because it was based at the time on Everyone In statistics the councils were keeping.

15 As set out in Section 184(1) of the Housing Act 1996

3.6 The numbers and characteristics of the young people assisted through Everyone In

This part of the report looks at some basic information regarding the numbers of young people assisted and who they were, in terms of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and nationality. Young people with a disability will be picked up in Section 4 of the report when we look at support needs.

Councils thought that most young people knew where to go for help. This might be because some had previously been homeless, or they were a care leaver, or had a friend who had had help. Some young people were referred by other agencies and young people themselves told us they had been referred by hospitals, Children’s Services, the British Red Cross and the Probation Service. Some young people had approached directly a local supported housing provider and were referred on to local authorities.

Table 11: Young people assisted through Everyone In compared to the overall numbers assisted

Council	Total number of people accommodated through 'Everyone In'	Number of people aged under 26 accommodated	% of people accommodated aged under 26
STAFFORDSHIRE			
Cannock Chase	18	0	0.00%
East Staffordshire	37	6	16.22%
Lichfield	16	5	31.25%
Newcastle under Lyme	33	19	57.58%
South Staffordshire	0	0	0.00%
Stafford	75	7	9.33%
Staffordshire Moorlands	21	5	23.81%
Tamworth	16	0	0.00%
WORCESTERSHIRE			
Bromsgrove	15	5	33.33%
Malvern Hills	32	0	0.00%
Redditch	32	6	18.75%
Worcester	79	15	18.99%
Wychavon	16	0	0.00%
Wyre Forest	42	2	4.76%

WARWICKSHIRE			
North Warwickshire	0	0	0.00%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	146	18	12.33%
Rugby	41	5	12.20%
Stratford upon Avon	36	7	19.44%
Warwick	54	1	1.85%
UNITARIES			
Birmingham	142	17	11.97%
Coventry	176	8	4.55%
Dudley	291	79	27.15%
Herefordshire	125	21	16.80%
Sandwell	40	5	12.50%
Shropshire	201	25	12.44%
Solihull	128	12	9.38%
Stoke on Trent	290	42	14.48%
Telford and Wrekin	200	49	24.50%
Walsall	20	2	10.00%
Wolverhampton	161	14	8.70%
Total	2483	375	15.10%

The figures above need to be seen in the context of whether a council was running a 'business as usual' service alongside the 'Everyone In' programme. If it was, then the numbers reflected above, for all ages and the under 26 group, were likely to be lower.

To give an example of a 'business as usual' model and its impact on numbers, we can use Birmingham. As shown in Appendix One, this authority is the most deprived in the West Midlands, as well as being the largest and has the second highest proportion of the general population in the 16 – 25 year old age group. During lockdown and Everyone In, the 'Youth Hub', which is the single point for statutory homelessness for all single 16 - 25 year olds in the city, kept running.

Birmingham only assisted 17 young people through 'Everyone In', which given the size of the authority and its levels of deprivation, is low. It may be that the longstanding focus on prevention activity and the existence of a youth housing pathway with a number of options, with well-developed partnerships and specialist support for young people with higher or more complex needs are all a significant part of the explanation for this. Interestingly, the numbers of young people being assisted through 'business as usual' over lockdown under a relief duty at the Youth Hub are also lower than usual, although numbers are now rising again.

Table 12: Birmingham figures for relief duties owed to single people aged 16 – 25 over 5 quarters: including the first quarter during lockdown.

St Basils Youth Hub Birmingham, 'business as usual'	2019-20 Q1	2019-20 Q2	2019-20 Q3	2019-20 Q4	2020-21 Q1
Total relief duties accepted	286	313	277	266	154

Dudley, on the other hand, had the highest number of young people assisted through Everyone In. Like 13 other councils, their model was to include all single people who were homeless within Everyone In. Of the 79 young people they assisted, none were rough sleeping and they all went into the supported housing pathway for young people, with none needing to go into hotels or B&Bs. Unfortunately Dudley were not able to fill in key parts of the data return, due to problems with pulling information from their casework management system. We have provided Dudley's headline data within the report in terms of overall numbers but not been able to include their figures in the analysis beyond this. This means the total of under 26 years assisted that we use in the almost all of the rest of the report is 296, not 375.

Local authority contexts are likely to have some bearing on the numbers and proportions of young people being assisted. However, because of the different operating models outlined in Section 3.3, this makes evidence based judgments about the data difficult. But regardless of this, one dimension to note is the extent of youth homelessness in the more rural county areas, which generally have slightly older populations and lower levels of deprivation. See Appendix One for youth populations in each of the individual housing authorities and for the local authority ranking in the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Table 13: Number and proportion of people assisted by age within two-tier councils and unitary councils

Councils structure area	Total number of people accommodated	Number of people aged under 26	Proportion of people assisted aged under 26	Proportion of population aged 16-25
Staffordshire	216	42	19.44%	10.76%
Worcestershire	216	28	12.96%	10.19%
Warwickshire	277	31	11.19%	11.18%
TWO TIER COUNCILS TOTALS	709	101	14.25%	10.71%
Birmingham	142	17	11.97%	16.64%
Coventry	176	8	4.55%	18.50%
Dudley	291	79	27.15%	10.88%
Herefordshire	125	21	16.80%	9.34%
Sandwell	40	5	12.50%	11.79%
Shropshire	201	25	12.44%	9.63%
Solihull	128	12	9.38%	10.50%
Stoke on Trent	290	42	14.48%	12.70%
Telford and Wrekin	200	49	24.50%	11.96%
Walsall	20	2	10.00%	11.72%
Wolverhampton	161	14	8.70%	11.64%
UNITARY COUNCILS TOTALS	1774	274	15.45%	13.46%

Some local authorities which had relatively high numbers of young people were surprised and concerned about the steady flow of young people:

“It was scary – we kept thinking where are they are coming from and I thought the numbers would come down - but they didn’t - not for a long time.” **(A Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a unitary council)**

“Everyone was very surprised about how many young people had come for assistance – we just didn’t know where they had come from.” **(A Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a district council)**

“We have worked hard to reduce rough sleepingin the last count in November 2019 and have really good local intel now - and working relationships - all thanks to the RSI funding from MHCLG. But this [the numbers] has been a huge shock.” **(a Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a unitary council)**

Some authorities with lower numbers thought that some young people living with parents or close family were trying to ‘hang on’. They also reflected that some of the measures introduced by the Government at the beginning of lockdown were slowing the numbers needing assistance, albeit on a temporary basis.

In terms of these changes, most notably, from 26th March 2020 there was a suspension of evictions from both the private rented sector and social housing, initially set for a 3 month period, and later extended until 20th September 2020.

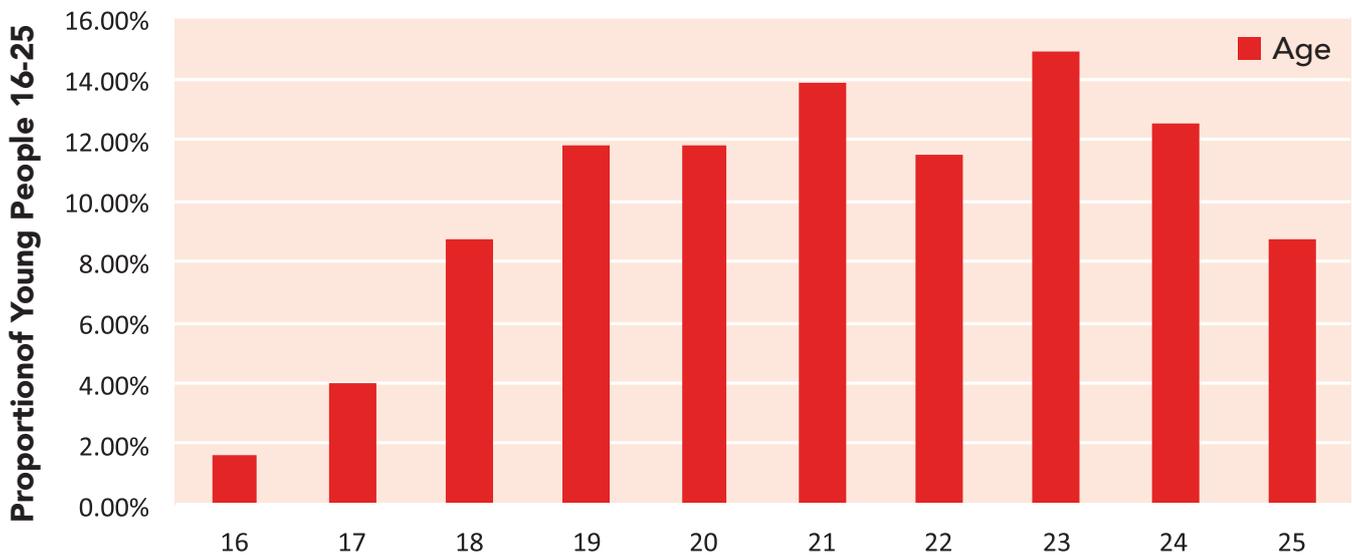
Alongside this, the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were lifted back up the thirtieth percentile, a measure which many in the homelessness sector - local authorities and providers - had been calling for over several years. This was intended to reduce or eliminate the gap between the lower end of the market rents and the benefit awarded for housing costs, enabling more access to private rented options which are genuinely affordable.

Universal Credit was increased by around £20 a week for claimants for a 12 month period. For single Universal Credit claimants aged under 25 payments went up from £251.77 per month to £342.74, a rise of £90.97. Those aged over 25 receive more benefit based on their age alone, for under 25 year olds, and their increase was from £317.82 per month to £409.89, a rise of £92.07.

The differential of benefit entitlement based on age does reduce the willingness of landlords, social and private, to take young people.

We now turn to the profile of young people.

Table 14: The ages of the young people assisted through Everyone In



We asked councils who had assisted 16/17 year olds through ‘Everyone In’ a little more about this, as the primary responsibility for homeless children aged 16/17 lies with Children’s Services.

Joint working around 16/17 year olds at the best of times can be challenging if there are not integrated approaches to homelessness prevention and housing options for this age group, underpinned by a clear joint protocol between housing authority and children’s services.

Since the 2009 House of Lords ruling regarding 16/17 year olds who are homeless and the responsibilities of children’s services and housing authorities, district councils within two-tier authorities have reported particular challenges. These are not inevitable and can be overcome if there is a shared commitment to make arrangements work on the ground. Problems were noted in 2 of the 3 two-tier county council areas. The observations and issues raised by different district councils included:

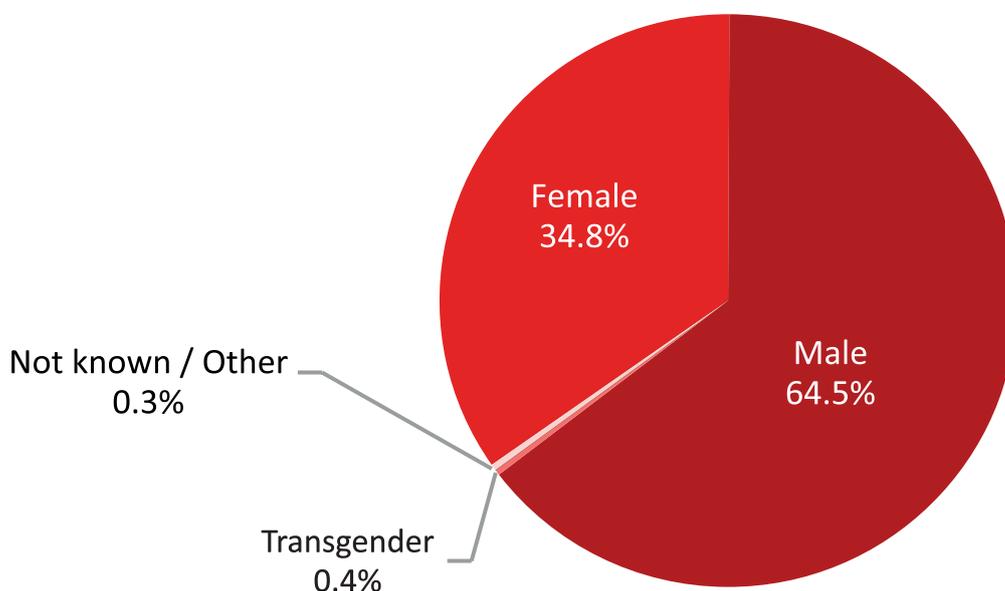
- the districts across the county were of the view that the joint protocol was not working well during lockdown
- a lack of clarity about whether children’s services had undertaken a child in need assessment or simply sent the 16/17 year olds straight to the housing authority
- children’s services ‘sending’ young people home only for these arrangements to break down again
- not agreeing to look after a 16/17 year old because she was with a 20 year old partner

But these issues are not just within two -tier authorities. Of the 17 young people aged 16/17 who were assisted under Everyone In, over half of them were from one unitary authority. It may be that this council has an embedded 'custom and practice' of young people being accepted as homeless by the housing authority, as their H-CLIC statistics indicate the proportion of main applicants aged 16/17 who were assisted was 4 times higher in 2019/20 compared to the rest of the West Midlands overall percentage.

Another unitary council noted during their interview that there was no provision for 16/17s who were homeless:

“ ...there was had a case last week of a 16/17 year old who did not want to be looked after so came through to the Housing Solutions Service. We have no accommodation that is suitable, so we ended up buying a bed space from Children’s.” **(Operations Manager in a unitary council)**

Table 15: The gender of the young people assisted through Everyone In

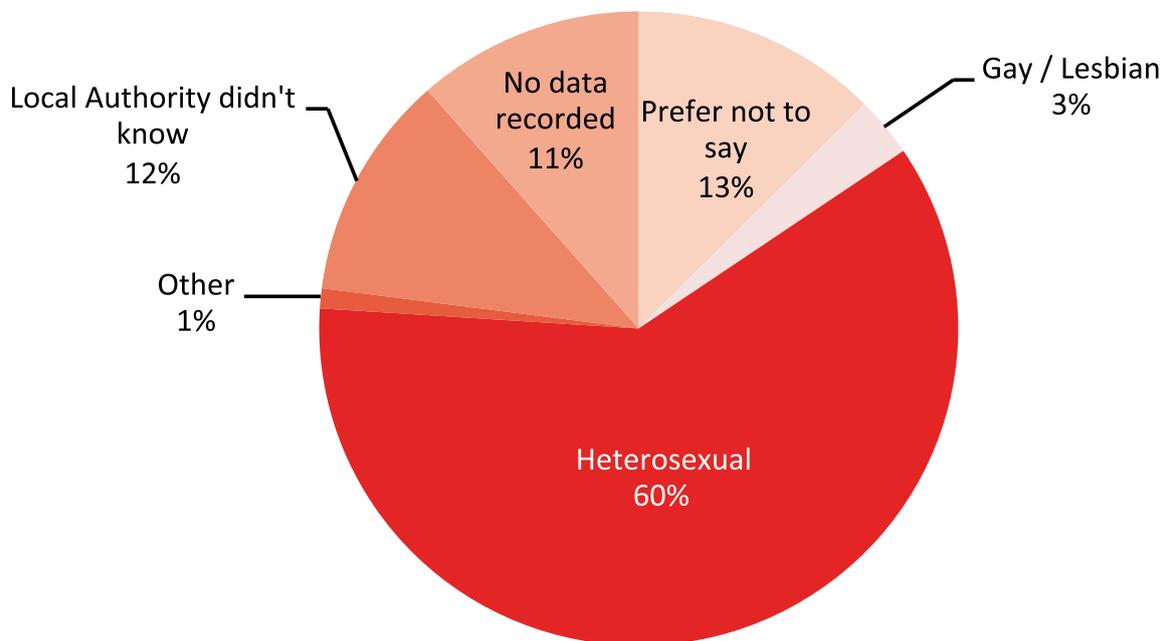


It is a general trend noted in local authorities which keep detailed data on young people and homelessness that single young people in their early to mid-twenties are more likely to be male. Whilst there is no research-based evidence for this, one view that has been expressed as an anecdote several times is that some young women are more likely than their male counterparts to be able to negotiate with friends or family if they are homeless. However young women may also be more at risk of being in coercive situations which are linked to accommodation, including sexual exploitation, abuse or control.

In every area of England, men are at much higher risk of rough sleeping than women. The MHCLG Rough Sleeping Snapshot from 2019 shows that there were approximately 6 men to every 1 woman rough sleeping in the autumn of 2019.

Based on these trends, addressing homelessness amongst young men in the older cohort of young people is an area to focus on in the future.

Table 16: The sexual orientation of the young people assisted through Everyone In



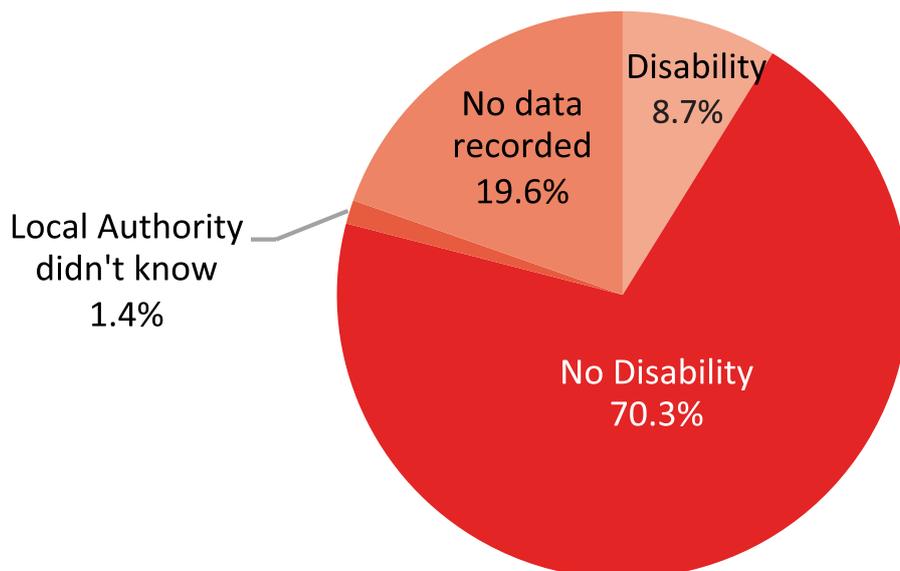
Several authorities had not asked young people about their sexual orientation or had not consistently done so. There is general recognition that there is under-reporting of LGBT people who are homeless, in part due to some lack of awareness and insight from some staff.

Based on the 2015 research by the Albert Kennedy Trust,¹⁶ LGBT young people are at higher risk of homelessness in terms of familial rejection, abuse and violence.

The issue of LGBT people and homelessness - and more specifically rough sleeping - was picked up in the Government's 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy, with a commitment to deliver awareness training to those working with rough sleepers. Whilst a recognised driver of homelessness, including rough sleeping, this is an area which still needs more research in relation to young people.

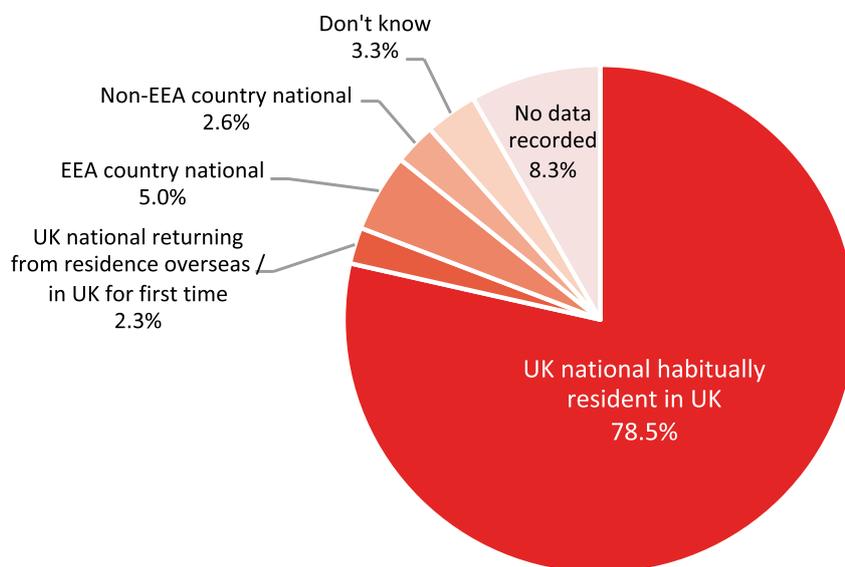
16 LGBT Youth Homelessness: A UK National Scoping of Case, Prevalence, Response and Outcome, 2015

Table 17: How many young people assisted through Everyone In had a disability?



The definition of disability includes physical and learning disabilities. Mental health issues of a severe and enduring nature are also considered to be a disability. Whether or not councils used this wider definition is not possible to determine. It is likely that the numbers of young people who had mental health issues is better reflected in the 'support needs' reporting which we cover in Section 4 of the report.

Table 18: The nationality of the young people assisted through Everyone In



Several authorities had not recorded the nationality of young people or had not consistently done so. However, based on the completed returns for young people, the majority were UK nationals.

For those people who are not eligible under the homelessness provisions within the Housing Act 1996, there is no safety net of welfare or long term housing support and consequently a high risk of destitution, including rough sleeping.

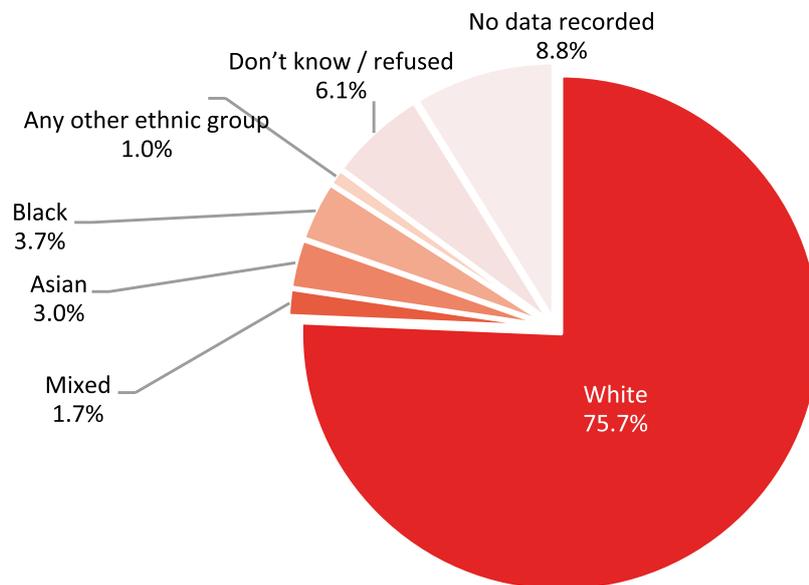
“...[there was a] breakdown in relationship and then lost my job because of Covid... [which] meant I had nothing...” **Young man aged 23 with no recourse to public funds**

For EEA nationals not in employment in the UK, a 3 month short term power was introduced by the Government in late June 2020 to enable local authorities to use public funds to assist people with housing and support.¹⁷ This group would not be ‘eligible’ under the homeless legislation. Alongside this, there was also a suspension of evictions from asylum accommodation.

“We have been able to help young people with no recourse to public funds. One young person has returned to Romania and others - we are still waiting for them to be contacted by the Birmingham Consortium for NRPF to get legal advice”.

Whilst authorities and their partners supporting people with no recourse to public funds welcomed this measure, they were also mindful of its short term duration and critically what the next steps for this group would be - including young people - and who would be funding this. In Section 4 of the report young people’s experience of this uncertainty and local authorities and other agencies support to address this will be covered.

Table 19: The ethnicity of young people assisted through Everyone In

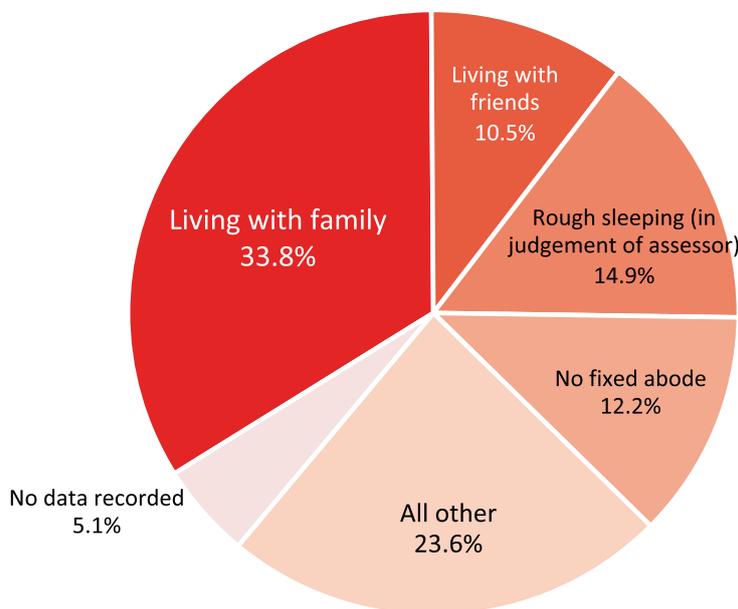


We asked local authorities to fill in the ethnicity of young people based on the H-CLIC definitions and groupings. However, some had not filled this part in at all and several authorities simply referred to young people as ‘white’ ‘black’ ‘Asian’ or ‘mixed’ which makes any more detailed analysis problematic for the purposes of this report. Generally, there is a deficit of evidence and awareness about risks of homelessness relating to ethnicity and only a handful of agencies analyse data on ethnicity and youth homelessness in terms of trying to understand causes and drivers of homelessness.

¹⁷ See the letter from the Housing Minister to local authorities : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-letter-from-minister-hall-to-local-authorities-on-funding-support-for-those-in-emergency-accommodation-and-eea-rough-sleepers>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896650/24-6-20_-_Letter_to_All_LAs_with_annexes.pdf

3.7 Where were young people staying before they were assisted by local authorities and what were the causes of their homelessness?

Table 20: Where were young people living immediately before Everyone In?

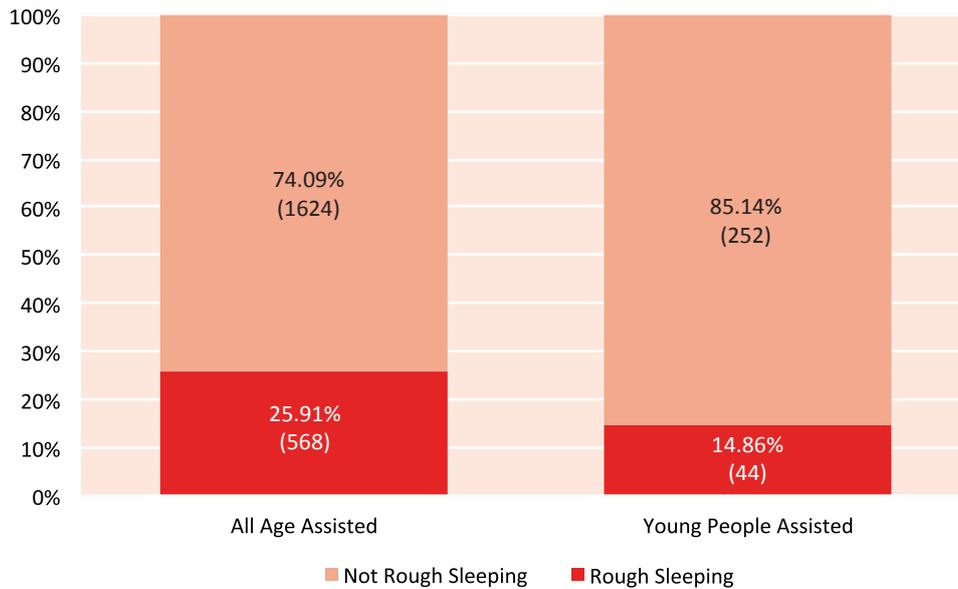


Please see Appendix Three for a breakdown of 'All Other'

Authorities' data showed that the majority of young people were living with their families immediately before seeking assistance from the local authority. Rough sleeping and having no fixed abode were the second and third highest, with 'staying with friends' being the fourth highest.

In terms of the numbers and proportion of young people rough sleeping immediately before being assisted through Everyone In, it should be noted that the rough sleeping figures cited above covered several months and cannot be compared to the November 2019 'snapshot' of a single night. The Everyone In numbers provide more insight about the 'flow' of single people into homelessness and rough sleeping, during extraordinary circumstances. The proportion of young people rough sleeping before being assisted through Everyone In is significantly lower than the overall proportion in the West Midlands, as outlined in the table below.

Table 21: Numbers of People Rough Sleeping

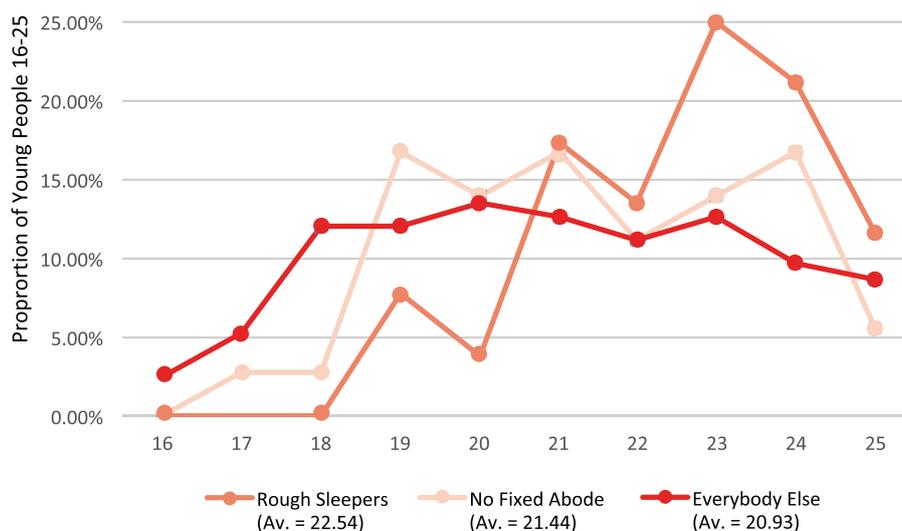


Both the London based CHAIN reporting system on rough sleeping and the annual MHCLG Rough Sleeping Snapshot indicate that rough sleeping is more likely as young people get older. The most recent Greater London Authority report¹⁸ on young people and rough sleeping provides more detail on young people’s backgrounds as well as the prevalence and patterns of rough sleeping.

The table below highlights the correlation between age and homelessness, making the distinction between rough sleeping, having no fixed abode and all other accommodation types prior to Everyone In. It is perhaps not a surprise that those who were rough sleeping tended to be older, as options decrease, and housing and support solutions can become harder to find.

18 See: Report from the Young People Sleeping Rough Sub Group, August 2020, Life Off the Streets Taskforce, August 2020: <https://nhyouthcentre.org.uk/news/2020/08/19/young-people-sleeping-rough-sub-group-report>

Table 22: Rough sleeping, NFA and all other accommodation types immediately before being assisted through Everyone In by age



Whilst not conclusive, and with all the caveats on the data and this being a report not academic research, this trend on age follows the same trajectory as the CHAIN and MHCLG reporting. What does this tell us about young people's journeys into rough sleeping? Through the data form, we also asked local authorities if young people had had previous episodes of homelessness. They reported that 89 of the 296 young people had previously been homeless. This equates to 30% of young people which is highly significant. Repeat homelessness reduces options – and therefore increases the likelihood of having no fixed abode and of rough sleeping, which the table shows. It mirrors on a small scale, the patterns picked up in the work on multiple exclusion¹⁹ and ages of homelessness occurring, cited in Section 2.3 of the report

When homelessness is not resolved successfully for 30% of young people and repeat homelessness results, this begs a question about how truly effective our prevention and relief options are in keeping young people away from homelessness for good. Without a focus on improving the outcomes of earlier assistance, rough sleeping amongst young people will persist and for some it will persist into later life.

In terms of 'No Fixed Abode' and hidden homelessness, research by DePaul UK²⁰ in 2016 outlined the sorts of non-familial solutions young people may use as an alternative to rough sleeping. Loosely called 'sofa surfing', homelessness of this form is complex, and the catch-all terminology is common parlance - it trips too easily off all of our tongues - but belies the realities of the levels of risk and coercion involved in some types of arrangement.

Several authorities noted how fragile the situation was for young people who were 'hidden homeless' and were sofa surfing. Of the 296 young people assisted, 28% had been rough sleeping or had no fixed abode. Given the interplay between rough sleeping and being having no fixed abode, which is highlighted in the research cited in section 2.3 (page 25) on severe and multiple exclusion, hidden homelessness, the high incidence of offending and of repeat homelessness, this is a significant proportion in terms of ending rough sleeping.

¹⁹ Fitzpatrick et al., Heriot-Watt University, Multiple exclusion homelessness across the UK: A quantitative survey, 2011 in Tackling homelessness and exclusion: Understanding complex lives : 2011, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Theresa McDonagh.

²⁰ Danger Zones and Stepping Stones: Young people's experiences of hidden homelessness. DePaul UK, 2016

“*[Young people had] tenuous living arrangements. People took fright about how virulent the virus was and began kicking people out who had been staying in very loose arrangements including sofa surfing*”. **(Team Leader for Homelessness in a district council)**

“*A lot of people – most people - weren't new to us - they were sofa surfing continually and when Covid hit people asked them to leave.*” **(Service Manager for Housing in a unitary authority)**

As noted earlier in this section, some young people were forced into rough sleeping as they had no options left. Most had exhausted all their options with friends and acquaintances. Young people's own accounts of their circumstances highlight how precarious their situations are:

“*I left prison in July 2019 – when I left I stayed with a friend but had no fixed accommodation – I have sofa surfed but in main I was sleeping rough. Slept where ever I could – I had to do what I had to get by.*” **Young man aged 24**

“*I managed to maintain working during the time and stopped on various friends' sofas... I didn't earn enough to afford my own place, so I used my salary to pay friends to stay. It was such a tough time as you kind of know when you are out-staying your welcome.*” **Young woman aged 23**

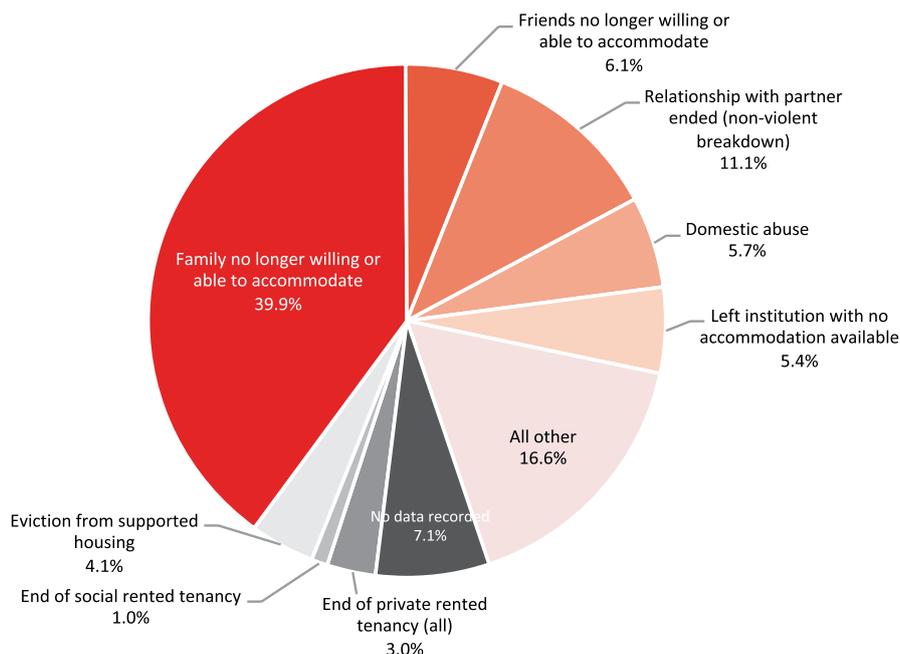
“*Life over the past four years has been really tough, I have been in and out of hostels, B&B, sofa surfing and slept anywhere I could for four years. Nothing really worked for me. I came from the care system - have always had a hard time, but the last few years have been difficult. I don't have any family connections.*” **Young man aged 20, a care leaver who was sleeping rough**

Local authorities and their partners are also well aware of the vulnerability of young people. A Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator noted that young people get pulled into substance misuse if they end up rough sleeping and cited a care leaver who was mixing with people rough sleeping in a high risk environment in the city centre.

“*I'm really worried about the young person – they may be adults but at that age are highly impressionable*’ **(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a unitary council)**

Some local authorities could not identify the original cause of homelessness as the young person had been homeless for some time. But overall young people were recorded as becoming homeless for a number of reasons:

Table 23: What was the cause of homelessness?



Please see Appendix Three for a breakdown of the 'All Other' group

Unsurprisingly, 'family no longer willing or able to accommodate' was recorded as the main cause of homelessness. However, this was not always directly as a consequence of lockdown, as some young people had been homeless for some time before this. Some young people may not be approaching services for help early in their homelessness journey or it could be that services did not or were not able to assist them. Whatever the reason, the unstable nature of their lives due to longstanding homelessness increases the risk of tipping into rough sleeping over time:

“I first became homeless when I was 19. My mum got kicked out of her accommodation which meant I too had nowhere to live. I got more into drugs and alcohol, I ended up in prison until I was 22.” **Young man aged 24 who was rough sleeping**

“My mother had passed away and the whole family broke down - we could not all stay in the same home. So I was sofa surfing.” **Young man aged 16**

“My mom and sister moved on in separate ways from [the local area] as the family had broken down completely. I did not want to leave [the local area] so mom just left me knowing I would be on the streets.” **Young man aged 24**

For a small number of young people, their 'eligibility' and right to access public funds on the basis of their immigration status was a key factor:

“I lost all my independence as no work - nowhere to stay and no access to any money... I came here [7 years ago] on visa to work which I was doing – my immigration status is in question, so I have nothing.” **Young man aged 24 with no recourse to public funds, who was formerly rough sleeping**

For other young people, the pressure of lockdown was the key driver. Some local authorities noted that in a few cases young people had refused to abide by the lockdown rules set by the Government and this had caused tensions. In one instance a young person was asked to leave the family home after attending a Black Lives Matter event. They self-isolated for 2 weeks in local authority funded accommodation before then returning home.

However not abiding by lockdown rules were not reported to be a major driver. Much more significant were pre-existing problems in the family which became more amplified during lockdown:

*“The strain of being in lockdown together was the final straw in the breakdown of our relationship and my mom decided I was no longer welcome in the family home and made me homeless”. **Young woman aged 18***

*“I suffer with my mental health and there was an incident at home and my family decided that I could not go back as they could not cope with my illness”. **Young woman aged 19***

There were comparatively very low numbers reported as homeless through eviction from either social or private rented tenancies, which is likely to be explained by the Government action to suspend all eviction notices, although homelessness as a result of a Section 21 or Section 8 notice may have taken place before lockdown. Some young people we spoke to did become homeless due their shared accommodation in the private rented sector breaking down, with both examples involving substance misuse and violence:

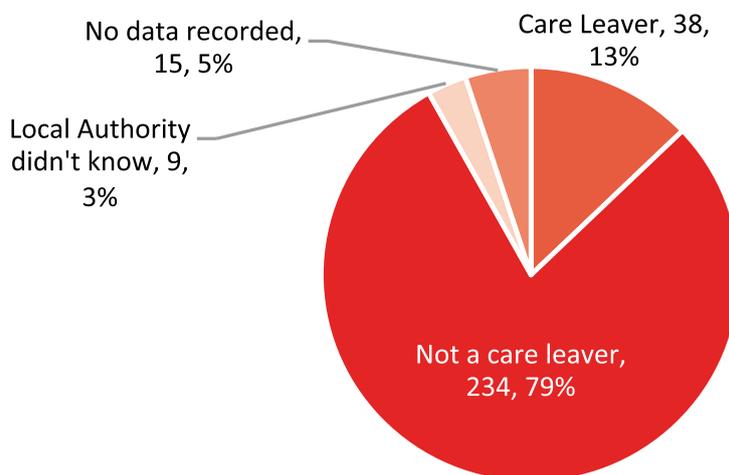
*“...things were looking good I had a job nice house, a dog and a kitten ... My friend started dating a guy and they started taking cocaine. I wasn't into that at all. My friend really changed, and things got difficult in the house. One evening they were high, and everything kicked off and he beat me up and trashed the house. I went to the police - I had to leave”. **Young woman aged 23***

*“I was in shared accommodation where the other residents were drug addicts, they assaulted me, and I ended up hospitalised. The police were involved, and I was told there was no way I could return to my home”. **Young man aged 21***

3.8 Care leavers and homelessness during Everyone In

The data returns and interviews indicated care leavers were over-represented in the West Midlands Everyone In figures. We doubled checked care leaver numbers on the data forms sent to councils, through asking about care leavers in both the 'Support Needs' section as well as a standalone question, and then removed any duplications.

Table 24: the number and proportion of young people who were care leavers

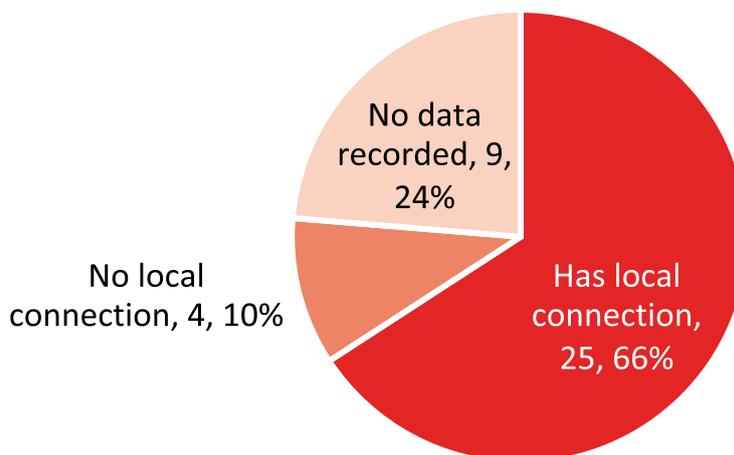


We spoke to young people who were care leavers. Some had been homeless for a long time, whilst for others it was more recent.

“I am a foster care leaver originally. I thought I was going to stay with my foster family, but this was not to be, so a week before my 18th I was moved into [young people’s supported accommodation].” **Young man aged 18**

“I am a care leaver and went back to live with my family as I was waiting for my own accommodation. The family home was overcrowded - my mum and my 6 siblings... I tried to contact my social worker, but it took some time to make contact. I left my mum’s home in early April and was sofa surfing but due to restrictions I ran out of options.” **Young woman aged 19**

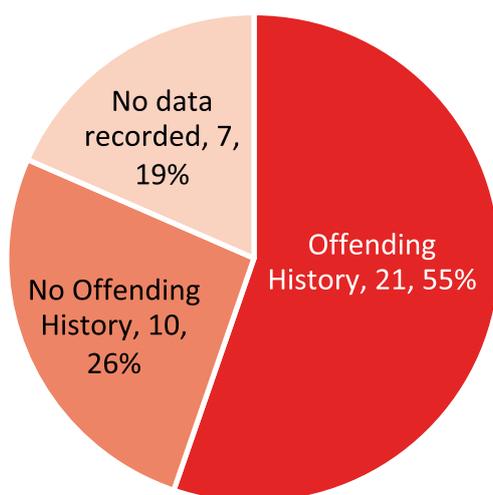
Table 25: the number and proportion of care leavers who had a local connection to the area assisting them



Not all of the care leavers were reported to have a local connection to the area that was assisting them. This is not surprising as young people in and leaving care can be placed outside their 'parent' authority, often at a long distance. Not all care leavers then wish to return to the area which originally looked after them. Other care leavers can migrate to other parts of the country for other reasons once they have ceased to be looked after. However, wherever a care leaver lives, the children's services authority which looked after them still have responsibility for them.

Many children's services authorities report difficulties finding suitable accommodation for young people who have left care and wish to stay in a different authority area. Whilst they may have a local connection under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, which relates to homelessness, under Part 6, which relates to the allocation of social housing, care leavers from other local authority areas are usually told they will not be awarded any sort of 'reasonable preference' because they are from a different authority, nor can they usually easily access supported housing. They may have to resort to making a homelessness application in order to get housed. These barriers impact on some of the most vulnerable young people across all of the country and Government guidance on allocations to address this is required.

Table 26: the number and proportion of care leavers who also had an offending history



Of the 83 young people which local authorities reported had an offending history (covered in Section 4 below), 21 of them were care leavers. This equates to over half of the homeless care leavers in the West Midlands and raises questions about care leaver's experience in and leaving custody and joint work between children's services, the Probation Service and housing authorities. The link between care and offending is already a focus of relatively new work led by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). Based on research signalling that around 24% - 27% of people in custody are care leavers²¹, care leaver champions are in place in every secure estate for young people in England. This drive to identify and support care leavers aims to improve the outcomes for this group whilst in custody. Based on the data through our work, there is a suggestion that services and support which matches their needs once 'through the gates' requires significant attention as well.

21 See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/care-leavers-in-prison-and-probation>

In terms of the children’s services authorities which had had Department for Education funding to help them to reduce the numbers of care leavers at risk of rough sleeping, the breakdown was not evenly spread. One of the 7 children’s services authorities, Staffordshire, showed higher numbers of care leavers. Staffordshire has some districts which reported no under 26 year olds at all being assisted. One district in Staffordshire had 7 of the 8 care leavers for that county council area.

Table 27: numbers of care leavers assisted in areas which have received Department for Education funding to reduce care leavers at risk of rough sleeping

Children’s Services Authority area	Numbers of care leavers assisted through Everyone In
Worcestershire	4
Staffordshire	8
Birmingham	1
Warwickshire	2
Sandwell	0
Coventry	2
Walsall	1

One unitary council had a higher number than Staffordshire, with 9 care leavers being reported as homeless through Everyone In, but they had not been identified as a children’s services authority for additional funding through the metrics used by the Department for Education.

Section 4: Accommodating and supporting young people during Everyone In

4.1 The types of accommodation which were available to young people as first stage emergency accommodation

Local authorities used a variety of accommodation types to accommodate people of all ages. In many areas young people were placed in the same provision as everyone else. Most areas did have supported housing options specifically for young people, but in many instances, these were not suitable for emergency placements, or were already full. Some areas had only all age provision available, with no youth specific supported housing services.

Many authorities quickly developed a process whereby the intake or direct access accommodation was only for a few nights, and people of all ages, including young people, then moved through into accommodation which was more suited to their needs.

As noted earlier, some councils were already well underway with sourcing accommodation for people of all ages who needed to move from night shelters, temporary accommodation or support housing. But options increased quickly for a couple of reasons:

- local authorities approached hotels and B&B's asking if they could use their now vacant accommodation
- individuals, organisations, hotels and B&B's approached councils to offer them the use of their empty rooms

Every council officer we spoke to was grateful for the previously latent good will that appeared from businesses and members of the community towards homeless people generally, even if not all offers could be taken up for practical reasons. Some Councils reported to us being overwhelmed with offers that they did not have time to process:

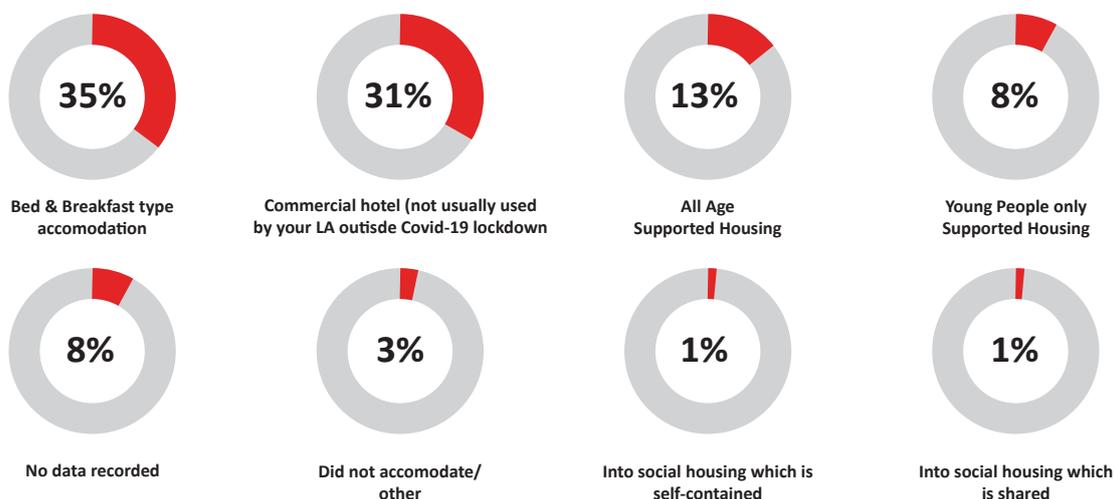
“There were some offers from individuals of rooms in their homes or in empty properties but there was not the time available to assess this, check for suitability and so on, so we didn't take them up” **(Housing Options Manager in a district council)**

“We were offered so much TA during lockdown - hotels and private landlords wanting to help, offering us accommodation” **(Operations Manager for Homelessness in a unitary council)**

Like all the other parts of England, there were many accounts of actions which changed the challenging landscape local authorities and in particular rough sleepers were facing, for example:

- One rural unitary authority, Herefordshire, was approached by an abbot and offered the use of bedrooms in a retreat/conference centre, and a team of monks to work with rough sleepers, alongside the local authority support staff. This offer was taken up and at the time we spoke to them, 30 rough sleepers had been assisted in this accommodation, which was due to continue as an option until March 2021.
- Another rural unitary council, Shropshire was offered an independent hotel which was used just for people who had been rough sleeping. Hotel and local authority staff worked together. The owner is now an ambassador for rough sleepers and on the board of a local charity. One person who was formerly a rough sleeper has a job in the hotel.

Table 28: The immediate accommodation option for young people assisted through Everyone In



But despite the increase in supply of accommodation, almost every local authority area we spoke to reflected they did not have the right match of accommodation type or levels of support needed for the young people they were trying to assist.

One young person we spoke to was homeless but had to wait for a vacancy for several weeks.

“While I was sofa surfing for eight weeks though there was communication, as I was really anxious, I felt it was not enough. At some stages I had nothing for a couple of weeks at a time. With the stress of Covid and anxiety at being homeless and dependant on friends letting me sofa surf I feel I would have been less anxious if I had been kept more informed on the progress as at times I thought it was not going to happen and I would not be homed”. **Young woman aged 19**

4.2 Managing risks within accommodation during lockdown

Councils were mindful of the vulnerability of people they were assisting, and some took decisions to minimise the risks that young people might be exposed to in all age accommodation. Officers in the councils expressed concerns about young people being caught up in county lines and other forms of criminality.

“As far as we could, we tried to keep young people in the hostels, not in B&B or hotels. We would move them back to hostels when vacancies came up. If we had high needs young people, we would place them into self-contained.” **(Housing Solutions Manager in a district council)**

“We are very wary where we will place young people. We have some B&Bs that are more than B&Bs - we know it's not OK, but they take more interest than say a [large hotel chain] ...officers were going out to support the B&Bs and identify issues and concerns and support move on.” **(Service Manager, Housing in a unitary council)**

One district council which ran a 'business as usual' service for those who had a priority need for accommodation but did not have the usual temporary accommodation options available, block booked a hotel and divided up corridors for different groups of customers to reduce risks and make management easier.

Use of hotels in some instances was hard to manage and particularly if these were not block booked by a single council. One district council described how other authorities and the Police were dropping people off at the hotel they were using in their area:

“It was uncontrolled - drugs and sex working... The people left in the hotel now are from other areas. We have not had Section 208 notifications about them” **(Lead officer for homelessness and allocations in a district council)**

This type of environment, whether block -booked or not, was very difficult for some of the young people we spoke to, combined with a lack of regular communication, a theme which will emerge later in the report.

The 2 quotes below are, co-incidentally, from 2 different young men, both aged 24 and both formerly rough sleeping. One was assisted by a unitary council, the other by a district council, and neither were in the hotel described above.

“The accommodation was awful. I was placed in a hotel with prostitutes, drug dealers and smack heads. There was constant fighting throughout the night, the bed sheets were all stained with blood and other things. So more appropriate accommodation for vulnerable young people and more information from the council on what is happening rather than a phone call every couple of weeks”. **Young man aged 24, formerly rough sleeping, from a unitary council**

“I know the other people can't change but when you are trying to get yourself together and then it's all around you... drugs – alcohol - it's hard. Help [is needed with] with depression and anxiety getting your head right.” **Young man aged 24, formerly rough sleeping from a district council.**

Whilst some people abandoned their accommodation, councils also evicted people, including some young people, from accommodation. The reasons given related to criminal activity, most commonly drug dealing, exploiting others, violence, significant damage to accommodation or theft. One council told us they evicted a young person after 2 nights in temporary accommodation following an estimated £3,000 of damage to the accommodation.

“What's been difficult [is] very high risk young people - the worst thing is what to do with that group? For some it seems the more support we put in the more young people need.” **(Housing Services Manager in a unitary council)**

Several local authorities told us they did not want to evict people unless there was little option. They tried to move some people elsewhere rather than evict them on to the street.

“We are giving everyone second, third or fourth chances - if things don't work out we will continue to try to assist them.” **(Housing Strategy Officer in a district council)**

4.3 Meeting the immediate needs of homeless young people

The Ministerial letter to all authorities which signalled the beginning of the Everyone In programme made clear what else would be needed locally, alongside the accommodation, including provision of food and access to health and social care services. For some young people, the difference that the combination of shelter, food and help to access welfare benefits, was significant:

“I can't believe for four years I have been in such a bad place and then - I am not going to lie - COVID is the best thing that has happened to me – I was picked up, got a worker and was moved into [the hotel] in [the local authority]. All the support I needed I got. I have got benefits, regular meals at hotel. Food packages...my own safe space in the hotel once I closed the door... to be fair it was an eye opener.” **Young man aged 20, a care leaver who was sleeping rough**

Providing food was essential and most councils made sure there were 2 or 3 meals a day available to people in hotels and B&BS. Sometimes this was through faith groups or other volunteers who would usually help with soup runs/kitchens. Hotels were paid to provide hot meals. One business donated microwaves for one council to give to people. Another organised fish and chips every Friday night.

Not every form of accommodation offered food which was fresh or hot.

“Fresh food is so important - I am grateful for food - but some fresh produce would be good.”
Young man age 23, with no recourse to public funds

“I am grateful for a roof above my head in these times, but I have got to be honest. I am in a B&B which is fine, but it is driving me nuts as far as cooking for myself there are only so many microwave meals one man can stomach, and I am beginning to feel claustrophobic in one room.” **Young man aged 24**

“The food parcels are just tins and my diet is really bad now. I can't even get Halal meat as I am Muslim.” **Young man aged 24 with no recourse to public funds**

“...there was very little food – you had to ask, and it was embarrassing to ask, so a lot of us went without ...I don't know how I managed to be fair.” **Young person aged 18 who had recently left care**

Access to welfare benefits was critical. This is not a straightforward process and several young people needed more assistance with navigating the complexity of the Universal Credit and housing benefit systems:

“I have had other support too, including budgeting, which had been an issue throughout this time with Covid. I have had to spend my savings and go into my overdraft so am in debt now”.
Young man aged 21

“I need help with applying for benefits and budgeting - at the moment they are taking 60 quid a month off me and I am really struggling.” **Young man aged 21**

“The whole process has been terrible, no communication, no support, I initially had many contact numbers but did not know who was who, so did not know who to phone for the appropriate support I needed. I have got into a mess with rent payments as I thought Housing Benefit was paying it and have no idea how to sort it out on my own. Feel like I am rowing backward.” **Young man aged 21**

4.4 Identifying the support needs of young people

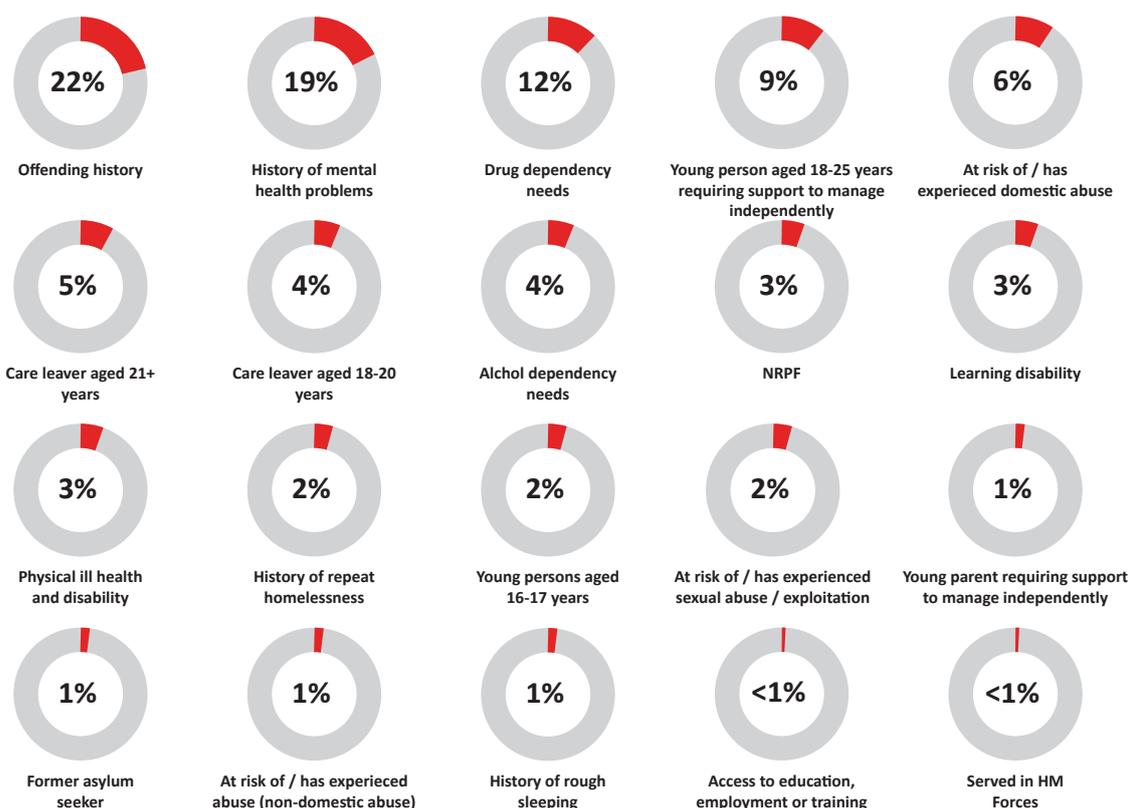
We asked local authorities about the primary support needs of young people, which are based on the needs set out through the statutory homelessness reporting system, H-CLIC. We also added in an additional need of 'no recourse to public funds'. Local authorities could put down more than 1 support need. Of the 187 young people with recorded support needs, 382 support needs were noted.

There are some caveats with the data in the chart below. Based on the data returns, 83 of the 296 young people were reported as having no support needs. In our view this is likely to be incorrect and is more likely to be an under-reporting of support needs, given the age and situation of this group. For example, one council had 28 young people noted as 'no support needs'.

Some councils did not record support needs at all, meaning there are 26 young people about whom we know little in terms of their needs.

Another interesting area to note is that only 1.8% were reported here as having the experience of being previously homeless as a support need, probably because it was not identified as a 'primary' support need. However, as noted in Section 3.7, based on a separate line on our data form, where we asked if the young people had had previous episodes of homelessness, authorities reported that 89 of the 296 - 30% of the young people had previously been homeless.

Table 29: The support needs of young people



Mental health and offending were the top 2 support needs identified for young people. In the MHCLG homelessness statistics for 2019/20, which covers all ages and includes people at risk of homelessness and those with dependent children, mental health is the most frequently identified support need, followed by physical ill health and disability. The high incidence of offending is a standout and concerning statistic for young people in this report and would require some further work to fully understand.

We looked at the individual support needs reported for each young people who was rough sleeping, and then compared them against all the support needs for all the young people who were assisted.²² There are some significant correlations between rough sleeping, leaving care, offending, substance misuse and having a disability:

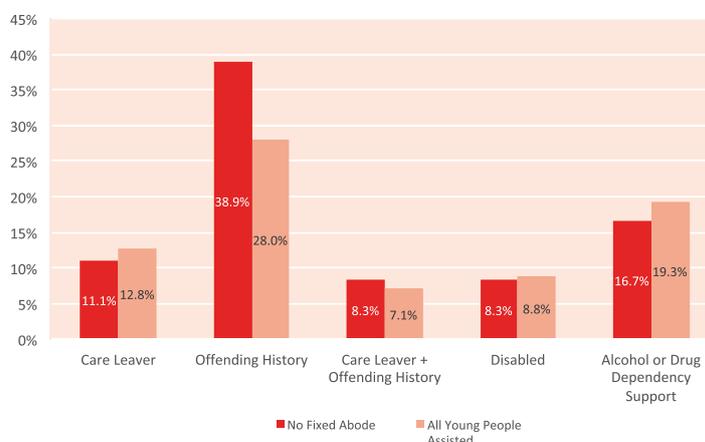
Table 30: Comparing Rough Sleepers to All Young People Assisted through Everyone In



Whilst this was just a small sample and not done with the rigour of academic research, there are strong similarities with this and previous work on severe and multiple disadvantage.²³

For those who were recorded as having no fixed abode we compared the same individual support needs with the overall group.

Table 31: Comparing Young People with No Fixed Abode to All Young People Assisted through Everyone In



²² We asked the questions on offending, care leaver status and disability (as a protected characteristic) separately as these are significant and we were mindful that these may not have been picked up in the more general 'support needs' section of the data form consistently. We then removed any duplication across these fields in our analysis.

²³ 'Hard Edges: Mapping Severe and Multiple Disadvantage in England,' 2015, G Bramley and S Fitzpatrick et al , published by Lankelly Chase Foundation

The differences are not so significant and being a care leaver and substance misuse are actually lower for the no fixed abode group, but this is not the case for those young people with an offending history. As noted earlier in the section, the correlation between offending and homelessness is a key issue amongst young people and one which requires much more focus at a national and a local level, as we have set out in the St Basils 'Youth Justice Accommodation Framework.'

4.5 Partnership working to meet the support needs of young people

Youth housing pathways are predicated on partnership working. It's not possible to deliver the services and meet the needs of young people, or any homeless household, without strong partnerships in place. The Positive Pathway model advocates the benefits of making service provision for young people as integrated as possible, minimising the gaps and 'cliff edges' that appear when services are more fragmented and partnership working is weak.

We wanted to know more about how partnerships had worked over the period of Everyone In. Given the extraordinary circumstances and the challenges presented, many sets of existing arrangements needed to change at pace.

In this part of the report we look at partnership working more generally and in the next part we turn to how well young people were able to access to health services – mental health and substance misuse services in particular.

The Ministerial letter to all authorities had made clear that working with health and social care partners was going to be needed during Everyone In, as well as with providers of supported housing. Beyond this, there was no clear guidance.

Most young people were aged 18 and over and were accessing services designed for adult's not young people, unless there were youth specific services in an area. But in most cases, other than youth homelessness services, most services were for adults, rather than for the under 26 year old group.

In the first few days and weeks, as lockdown commenced and Everyone In began, several councils noted that it was much harder to access more specialist support services.

“It was touch and go at the beginning - a lot of agencies were saying they would not do face to face”.
(Service Manager for Housing in a unitary council)

“[The Third Sector agencies] packed up their bags and left and the statutory sector had to pick up their work. But it got better quite quickly.”
(Team Leader for homelessness in a district council)

But after an initial period of adjustment in most areas, partnership working resumed, albeit in a very different context.

“We all stepped out of our rigid silo working and have been more flexible” (Housing Options lead officer in a unitary council)

Many authorities had multi-agency case management meetings taking place regarding Everyone In, with several mentioning the Police and/or Public Health playing pivotal roles. One noted how helpful it was to have a GP attending each weekly meeting. Other agencies also attended – substance misuse and mental health agencies, adult social care and voluntary sector agencies. But this was not consistently the case, with most areas citing some key gaps in terms of health and social care representation.

In some areas local authorities thought Everyone In and the Covid pandemic would be a catalyst to bolster partnership working:

“The joined up work which we had struggled to get going for years just happened. We now have strong allegiances and different sectors recognise why they have to be involved...we used to work in silos - we would say we didn't, but we did - and we let people slip through the net. That has been about budgets – arguing about who should do what but there is greater understanding now”. (Head of Strategic Housing in a district council)

Another council, also a district, but in a different county to the one above, noted that the improved partnership working had led to agreement to undertake a joint support needs assessment process in the future. This was not mentioned by the other districts in that county, so may be specific to just that local housing authority area.

Partnership working was not consistently positive:

“A lot of the partnership working was pretty poor to be honest” (Lead officer for Homelessness and Allocations in a district council)

In some areas the weakness of partnership working over Everyone In has perhaps served as a wake-up call:

“It's highlighted a lack of cross-sector leadership and response in [the local authority area] but also county wide. There has been no proper structure or route for bringing agencies together around homelessness. Now there is a push for a group to feed into the Health and Well-Being Board. Our Chief Executive is now aware of the issues which helps”. (Lead officer for Housing Options in a district council)

Children's Services were not usually mentioned as partners round the virtual table at these multi-agency meetings. Several authorities – both unitary and district councils - did note on going difficulties with children's services, and some arguing over legal duties in relation to care leavers and 16/17 year olds.

“There are on-going issues with Children’s Services in terms of joint working”. **(Team Leader for homelessness in a district council)**

Given the Everyone In group was almost all over 18, perhaps a more concerning gap noted by several housing authorities was Adult Social Care.

“Adult social care are not really recognising the needs of the homeless client group – there are ongoing tensions around Care Act assessments.” **(Housing and Communities Manager in a district council.)**

“Generally [before and during lockdown] there is no work with Social Services – it doesn’t get anywhere.” **(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a unitary council)**

One unitary council, supporting a young person with autism, had significant concerns about their safety and well-being. Two multi-agency meetings were held, but over lockdown they couldn’t get any Adult Social Care social work input. Once lockdown was over, a social worker specialising in learning disability and autism was allocated.

In terms of those young people who had no recourse to public funds (NRPF), local partnership working and contact with the Home Office was critical. This was not an issue in many areas but for some councils it was a significant focus of their work during Everyone In. One council cited this work as their most successful partnership working, with the rough sleeping co-ordinator and outreach manager working closely with the local law centre and the local migrant and refugee centre. Through this joint working several people were granted settled status and were then housed through the local Rapid Re-housing Pathway for rough sleepers.

Another council said it was trying hard to assist those not exercising their treaty rights into employment, but during lockdown this was difficult. A youth homelessness agency echoed this point, citing difficulties for young people who needed a National Insurance Number, as these had stopped being issued by the Department for Work and Pensions over lockdown.

From our interviews with young people, it is not possible in many instances to separate out the different sorts of support they had had. Several young people we spoke to were clear they felt supported and importantly, felt cared about.

“The staff at [the young people’s supported housing provider] helped me enormously and helped me every step of the way with what to do...I had all the help I needed from my progression coach who helped me sort everything, college included...I don’t know if I was lucky, but I found the whole process during Covid was brilliant and there were no negatives for me.” **Young man aged 16**

“I was able to talk to other people and staff I didn’t get lonely – I was scared at first as not my country, the support has been excellent I am very lucky.” **Young man aged 23 who had no recourse to public funds and was rough sleeping.**

“At the beginning I did need and now really appreciate the support of the staff here. I have listened to their advice and am moving in a positive direction” **Young woman aged 19**

“Contact with workers was really good”. **Young woman aged 23**

“Stratford Council was amazing, and I could not fault them at all with finding me accommodation”. **Young woman aged 19**

“Being able to take my dog as he is my support - its been challenging at times” **Young woman aged 23**

One young person mentioned her employer in terms of the support offered:

“My employers were also amazing. I told them of my whole situation and they continued to pay my wages during lockdown and now I work from the hotel – I am so grateful. I was taking a lot of calls from people in financial difficulties not being able to pay rent or mortgages and I was supported here in a hotel, managing to keep work and maintain some form of independence”. **Young woman aged 23**

We asked young people what had been more difficult for them. A recurring theme in many of the interviews was the lack of regular communication and information about would happen next.

“.....I felt left on my own and feel like I could have used much more support and felt I did not know what was going on”. **Young woman aged 19**

“The only thing throughout was the system worked well for me, but I felt I had no input, no one listened to my needs or opinions, it just all went on around me. I just felt like a number.” **Young man aged 25**

“The ability to deal with young people with high support needs... don't offer things that aren't delivered as it gives you false hope” **Young woman aged 18, a care leaver**

Reminiscent of the findings which led to the development of the Troubled Families programme, agency involvement was not always effective. Quantity does not always mean quality when there is no lead professional working directly with a young person:

“...I feel a bit on my own, which is mad as there are about four different agencies involved which is a lot but still no communication going on.” **Young man aged 24**

4.6 Access to health services

There is a strong link between mental health problems, substance misuse and homelessness amongst all age groups including young people. Research over many years has indicated that there is, in most areas, poor access to primary care and specialist services for people who are homeless and significantly higher rates of mortality²⁴ amongst people who are homeless. The profound health inequalities experienced by homeless people, in particular those sleeping rough, continues to be a focus for Government, Public Health England, local authorities and the voluntary sector.

In the West Midlands over several years there has been pro-active work, led by Public Health England (Midlands) and Directors of Public Health in local authorities on health inequalities and homelessness. During our interviews with different homelessness officers in local authorities, Public Health within local authorities and Public Health England (Midlands) were mentioned by many people as playing a key role in supporting the work of the homelessness services in local authorities and the voluntary sector:

“We have close links with Public Health – we work with them – it’s a combined approach. The winter night shelter is run jointly and procured through Public Health.... We have done some excellent things over lockdown – but we were doing them anyway.” **(Housing and Welfare lead officer in a unitary council)**

In some areas Public Health officials took a key role in chairing the regular multi-agency meetings on Everyone In. Standard operating procedures for dealing with any outbreaks of Covid-19 in accommodation for homeless people, other guidance and information was issued through briefings. Public Health England (Midlands) and a representative for Directors of Public Health were part of the West Midlands ‘Everyone In’ group with local authority leads.

But on the ground, how did people access the health services they needed – either primary care or more specialist services, in particular mental health and substance misuse services? The MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative funding used in some areas to create specialist posts, most usually around mental health, substance misuse or primary care, has clearly made a significant difference. The access to specialist services for rough sleepers and other homeless people in these authorities were tangibly better, with several authorities recognising the benefits of a more integrated and flexible service model.

“We have been in a privileged position because we have had RSI [Rough Sleeping Initiative] funding - we had a nurse who can prescribe as part of the team, and a mental health practitioner who is designated to work with homeless people and undertake assessments.” **(Rough Sleeping co-ordinator in a voluntary agency working in a unitary council).**

One council which had a nurse with a background in mental health in the team said simply:

“It’s been brilliant’ **(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a unitary council)**

24 See the Office of National Statistics report for 2013 – 2018 here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsofhomelesspeopleinenglandandwales/2018>

“Having a peripatetic service is very helpful – they did quick assessments.” (Team Leader for homelessness in a district council, where there are 4 mental health and primary care health workers based across the county, funded through the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative)

There were accounts from some councils of the coming together of services that really did make an impact including health services.

One council, Wolverhampton, had treatment services three times a week in the hotel, Red Wings, they were using, which accommodated up to 70 people. All assessments and access to a number of treatment services took place in the hotel, including GP registration and appointments. The Probation Service also had a presence and homelessness assessments also took place. People were in their rooms and simply came downstairs to access services, which removed the all too frequently cited 'Did Not Attend' barrier.

They went on to describe how, early on in lockdown, on a single day, 32 people needed substance misuse treatment services. The provider of the service told the council that more work was done on a single day than in 6 months.

Other health services flexed to ensure homeless people locally could access their services. For example, a local GP surgery did on line consultations, offering 2 appointments a day for rough sleepers. But access in other areas was not so straightforward. One council described difficulty accessing health services during the first few months of lockdown:

“NHS employees were not working as we were - they weren't going out and seeing people [and were] very strict about visits and assessments. But that eased off more towards the end of June with more flexibility being allowed.” (Lead officer for Housing Options in a district council)

The response from substance misuse services generally was viewed positively by local authorities, although there were some exceptions. Commissioned by Public Health England at a local level, most councils and voluntary sector providers we spoke to praised the work of those agencies and their responsiveness in fast-moving situations.

Where substance misuse services were viewed by local authorities as delivering effectively, they tended to be working alongside local authorities and homeless people, going into different accommodation settings, or keeping their usual services open, prescribing, and critically moving the address of the pharmacy if needed for people to pick up their scripts more locally in their new accommodation.

“[Name of provider] very quickly operated face to face and were integral in terms of sorting out scripts.” (Team Leader for homelessness in a district council)

One substance misuse service was described as an 'amazing' service by a small local authority which was experiencing high levels of homelessness during lockdown:

"They would script people immediately and they helped to get one person get into rehab."
(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a district council)

Only a few local authorities noted that substance misuse services had not worked effectively, and for one it was more about the circumstances and the timing than the service itself:

"Drug treatment services switched to a new provider on 1st April and staff TUPE-ed over. There were some staffing issues with people shielding. Scripts needed to be changed and moved over to different pharmacies, but we were not able get scripts for some people until mid-May."
(Lead officer for Homelessness and Allocations in a district council)

"[Name of local authority area] Substance Misuse Partnership felt difficult - if someone is a regular drug user, they have regularly asked for face to face, but never got it. It wasn't horrendous, and we could sort it - but it took a lot of organizing and time on our part."
(Service Manager, Housing in a unitary council)

"A roof over someone's head is paramount but homelessness and rough sleeping is a public health issue. 70 – 80 % of clients have substance misuse issues and services are being cut now by Public Health. Issues will continue with people losing accommodation due to substance misuse."
(Rough Sleeping co-ordinator in a voluntary agency working in a unitary council).

Mental health was a significant issue amongst young people who experienced homelessness through lockdown. But the experience of accessing services in the majority of areas was poor during the period of lockdown. From the local authority perspectives, other than the areas which already had specialist mental health posts in place, funded through the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative, the majority of councils did not find accessing services for people straightforward.

"It's been very difficult to access any mental health services – [there are] no face to face services at all and still no face to face appointments. All contact is over a phone and that is not working for the higher needs young people."
(A rough sleeping outreach team leader in a youth homelessness agency in a unitary council).

"CPNs [community psychiatric nurses] generally were hard to engage with - the people we work with will not talk over the phone... we had someone - a woman – with severe alcoholism and needed to establish if she had capacity - it was hard to get someone from the mental health service out to see her – some things can't be done over the phone - but we did it in the end".
(Head of Strategic Growth in a district council)

"Rough sleeping partners meet every day still - there is a council directive to get everyone in for good - we're taking this very seriously but mental health [access to services] is our biggest problem."
(Housing Services Manager in a unitary council)

Capacity within mental health services was also an issue. One district council said the mental health service locally, which homeless people could usually access, had closed their waiting list in the middle of June due to referrals being too high during lockdown.

Most councils spoke of long standing problems however, often related to referral pathways which deter or prevent access and rigid appointment systems. These became harder to resolve over lockdown:

“Historically this [access to mental health services for homeless people] is difficult.... a lack of engagement means cases are shut before work commences and people slip through the net. Nothing changed over lockdown - it was no worse or better. There are occasional successes, but this is due to our staff having good working relationships with particular CPNs. **(Housing Options Manager in a district council)**

“If there is a high level mental health crisis then it’s very hard – the systems work for people who are housed but not people who are not housed.” **(Homelessness Manager in a unitary council)**

“It’s always difficult – you need a GP referral to get into specialist services and that was difficult in itself. Services are hard to access”. **(Strategic Housing Officer in a district council)**

There was one example of where things improved however. In this unitary authority a social work team in Adult Services ‘stepped up’. The officer we spoke to noted that the homelessness service also sits in Adult Services and this had made a difference.

Of the 22 young people we spoke to, 11 told us they had mental health issues. Several had had problems accessing services and some were still not getting any support.

“My mental health was really bad when I was living at my mums. That’s why I had to leave. It took a long time to get the support I needed” **Young woman aged 19**

“... I struggle with my mental health and am on the waiting list for counselling, but the wait is nine months and I feel that is far too long.” **Young man aged 21**

“I was on my own, no foster family, no friends around, in a strange place and college stopped. My mental health went downhill I was so depressed. The only support I was offered was by phone, but I was suffering too badly with mental health that I was too anxious to answer the calls.” **Young person aged 18 who left care just before lockdown**

“The accommodation was lovely and had everything you needed to start up... [but there was] a lack of support with mental health” **Young woman aged 18 who had recently left care**

Section 5: The plans for young people assisted through Everyone In in the West Midlands

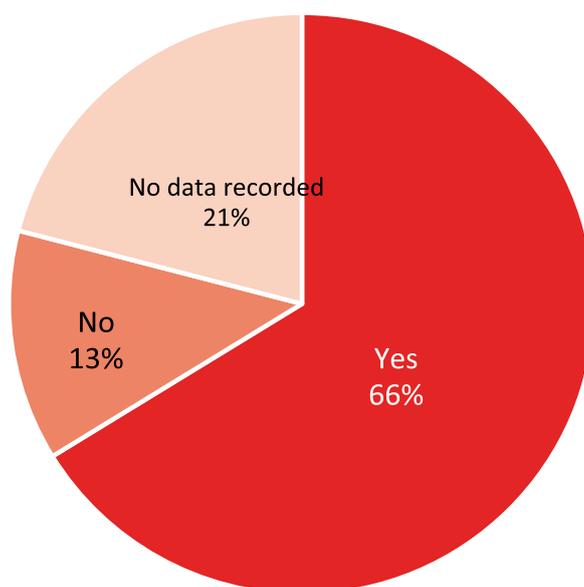
5.1 Move-on plans and housing options for young people

Throughout the summer and early autumn of 2020 local authorities have been planning for move on options for people who have been assisted through Everyone In. Some of the young people we spoke to had already moved out of the B&B or the hotel they were initially placed into, and into more 'second stage' provision, often supported housing. A few were in their own tenancy already.

The MHCLG 'Next Steps' funding bidding process²⁵ was underway when we spoke to local authorities. The funding pot for this is split into £105 million to secure accommodation in the short term for everyone assisted through Everyone In. A further £161 million is aimed at rough sleepers to secure long term accommodation and support solutions. The councils' plans for move-on were, in the main, contingent on being awarded funding to enable suitable move-on options and housing related support. Most authorities we spoke to had significant plans, although none mentioned any specific plans in their bids for young people's move on and support.

We asked authorities to indicate how many of the young people had move-on plans.

Table 32: Is there a move on plan for the young person?



²⁵ The MHCLG bidding guidance setting out the criteria and process is here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907977/NSAP_Guidance.pdf

Not all young people had move on plans and some councils did not report on some young people. The reasons for this are various:

- 19 young people were noted as having abandoned their accommodation or been evicted, including one who had gone into custody.
- Some young people had left already, having made their own arrangements
- One council, which had assisted 49 young people in total, did not fill this part of the data return in at all. Although most young people are likely to have had plans, the council did not have time to check this
- Some of the young people who had no recourse to public funds did not have plans and for them the future was uncertain:

“...I don't know what going to happen to me once council stop paying for me here ” **Young man aged 24 with no recourse to public funds , who was formerly rough sleeping**

The local authorities and youth homelessness agencies supported young people with no recourse to public funds but were not able to reassure them as there was no clarity about the Government policy for this group.

Some councils were more able to move people of all ages out relatively quickly into existing housing pathways, including supported accommodation, some exempt accommodation, and the private rented sector or into social housing. But how true was this for young people?

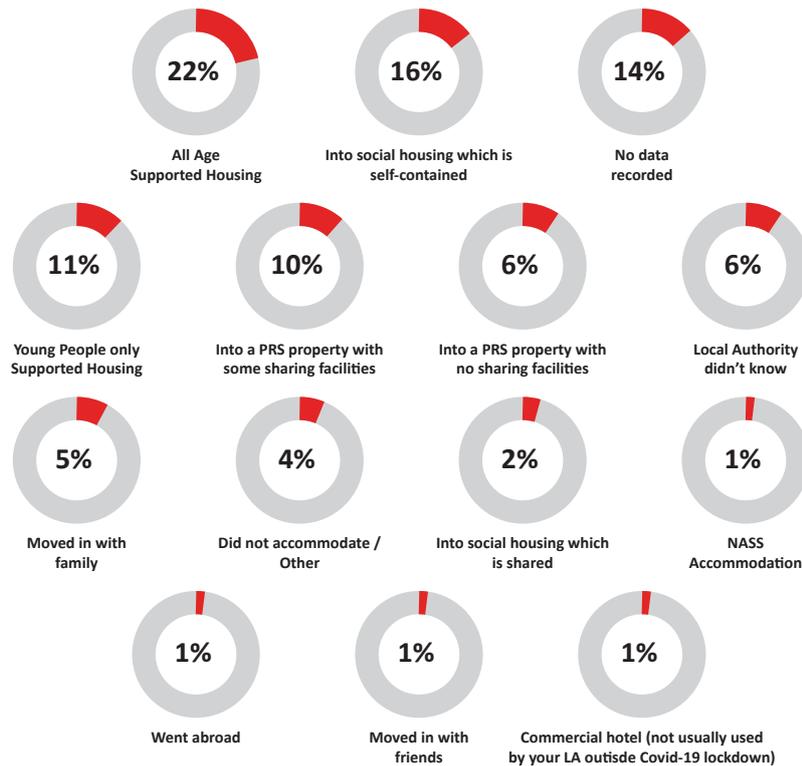
By the point we spoke to councils and voluntary agencies, some young people had already moved on from B&Bs and hotels into more suitable short stay accommodation, and a few had made longer term moves into supported housing or a tenancy, but most were still waiting for moves.

Most councils observed that there was less flexibility in terms of the options available for young people assisted through Everyone In, in part due to affordability issues and also landlord reluctance to take young people.

“There is a staggering lack of move on accommodation. RPs [registered providers] are reluctant to take under 21s – full stop. We did have a massive gap in the shared accommodation rate and the market rent but the LHA [Local Housing Allowance] being uprated has made a difference. However, there is very little shared accommodation round here - it's all in [the main city within the county] not in the local towns. **(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a unitary council)**

“Where do they go? I have 5 young people on my case load now with no options.” **(Young Peoples Housing Officer from a voluntary agency, working with a district council)**

Table 33: Move on plans by type of accommodation



As outlined in Section 2, the longstanding challenges in sourcing suitable move-on was evident in almost every council. Most authorities were moving people of all ages on in to longer stay supported housing or their own tenancies if they could, but they were also waiting for the outcome of their Next Steps funding bids from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Directorate in MHCLG.

Nearly a third of young people had move-on plans to go into supported housing. A move to all-age supported housing was more likely than into young people only supported housing. This could be due to the paucity of young people’s provision generally in some areas or because the only provision has an upper age limit of 21, so the older young people wouldn’t fit the criteria, or their needs were too high for the available provision.

There was no significant difference between the proportions with plans to go into social housing when compared to plans for the private rented sector – either self-contained or more likely was shared accommodation.

In almost every area the private rented sector was not a straightforward option, even if landlords were willing to consider young people:

“It’s very difficult to assist young people into the private rented sector as its unaffordable for most of them unless they are working. **(Strategic Housing Officer in a district council)**”

“There is very little shared accommodation - no one actively seeks out the under 25 year old group and I don’t see that changing.” **(Lead officer for Homelessness and Allocations in a district council)**

One young person had already move from a hotel into shared private rented accommodation, but this was not a positive move for him:

“I was grateful for the accommodation but the property itself is not the best, the boiler has not been working for over two months throughout the lockdown as we could not get anyone out to fix it so no hot water or heating which is not the best during a pandemic, rats have also been an issue as my fellow housemates are not the cleanest and because [the provider] shut their doors during the crisis the normal checks were not carried out. It has been a nightmare.” **Young man aged 21**

Another young person who was in employment told us they were worried about the private rented sector as an option:

“... They were pushing me to private rent, but my wage just wouldn't cover rent and bills and living – I didn't want to get into debt”. **Young woman aged 23**

Social rented accommodation was also challenging for most councils but not all. Unsurprisingly, the local authorities we spoke to which still owned their own housing stock and directly managed it were more likely to be able to flex their systems during lockdown than those which did not. This has had a significant impact in terms of finding move-on accommodation for people of all ages:

“We have done a direct lets programme whilst our lettings have been suspended...everyone has had a homeless application and where a duty would be owed we've tried to make offers. We suspended the register and direct matched... 50 people have been accommodated.” **[Housing Solutions Manager in a district council]**

A unitary council told us they 'held off' choice based lettings for 2 weeks early in lockdown, which freed up some void properties, which they then were able to direct let to households in temporary accommodation, including some families who had been placed into B&B. As a result, their temporary accommodation has almost halved

A slow-down in lettings during lockdown is certainly understandable, but some social landlords stopped letting altogether, furloughed their staff and as a result voids 'dried up'.

“We have had an absolute nightmare with our stock transfer organisation. Over 4 months [March – July] they let 4 properties in total and the council had to do all the sign ups and handing over of keys... Also they are not doing any transfers where houses are in urgent need of repair - there's no sign of this starting again.” **(Head of Strategic Growth in a district council)**

As noted in Section 2, finding social housing was challenging at the best of times in many areas due to the lack of one-bed stock, combined with affordability assessments which several registered providers use. Young people aged under 25 were the most likely to fail affordability tests due to their lower levels of Universal Credit.

In those areas which had had a cessation of any new social tenancies, most councils were not confident of being able to find more settled housing for those assisted through Everyone in through the usual routes into social housing. This did not only apply to young people but related to issues of higher needs and in some cases, histories of offending, anti-social behaviour and debt.

When there is little movement into settled accommodation, the impact is on the supported housing sector, which becomes increasingly 'silted up':

“Unfortunately, due to the restrictions placed on move-ons, even with increased flexibility, there was a bottle-neck situation as young people who were due to move on remained in their current accommodation for that period. This meant fewer young people moving on and fewer vacancies becoming available”. **(Team Leader in a voluntary agency working on young people's housing)**

Two councils mentioned a pressure to find accommodation for care leavers who had their 18th birthday over the lockdown period and were still in children's services placements. As set out in the 'Care Leaver Accommodation and Support Framework' which St Basils developed with Barnardo's,²⁶ most young people aged 18 leaving care are arguably too young and not ready to be moving straight into their own tenancy and this should be the exception not the norm. But in the absence of options in a supported housing pathway, a social tenancy may be the only option.

One council noted:

“...there's lots of demand from Children's Services now for care leavers, as lettings were suspended. All those now 18 and still in placements - well the pressure is on to offer them social housing.” **(Team Leader, Housing Options in a district council)**

Although the Next Steps funding was welcomed and is going to assist with the Everyone In group and the uprating of the Local Housing Allowance would make some difference, neither were viewed by local authorities as a panacea for the shortages of suitable social or private rented housing, the extensive reduction in housing related support and the welfare safety net, the negative attitude of both private and social landlords to younger prospective tenants and the under investment in more specialist services for vulnerable people living in poverty.

26 This is one of the three 'Positive Pathway' documents which St Basils has developed, and we updated this in 2019. See here for the updated version: <https://stbasils.org.uk/about-us/the-positive-pathway/>

5.2 Young people's aspirations and concerns about the future

We asked young people for their thoughts about the future, after moving on from their Everyone In accommodation and beyond. They were at different points, with some more able to think about the future than others, depending on their individual circumstances. Some were already working, or planning for college and training, but others were not in a position to do so, based on their accommodation and their personal circumstances.

“I am literally in limbo waiting for a room to come up for me.” **Young man aged 24**

“My life starts when I walk into my own place then I am going to have time and space to think about my life.” **Young man aged 20, a care leaver who was formerly rough sleeping**

It was particularly difficult for young people who had no recourse to public funds. Their futures were the most uncertain:

“I lost all my independence as no work - nowhere to stay and no access to any money .I have been totally reliant on [the young people's supported housing provider]... I came here [7 years ago] on visa to work which I was doing – my immigration status is in question, so I have nothing...I don't know what going to happen to me once council stop paying for me here. ” **Young man aged 24 with no recourse to public funds, who was formerly rough sleeping**

For others there was more room for optimism:

“I am bidding on properties now, I want to go back to college... I know I need to work on my mental health and slowly get where I want to be again and healthy”. **Young woman aged 19**

“I have just moved in to my own place - I am happy. I want to get settled and get used to my place...get off drugs and alcohol...focus on a job – I did a brick laying course in prison - I enjoyed it so could do that.” **Young man aged 24, formerly rough sleeping**

“I am at college studying to be a professional chef and would not be here if it was not for the staff at [the young people's supported housing provider].” **Young man aged 16**

Some councils reflected that young people were less likely to go into employment, education or training whilst in supported housing, as a high percentage of their income would have to go on the cost of the accommodation, leaving them no better off than before and in some cases, worse off. This is not a new issue, but arguably has even more significant implications for young people in light of the current concerns regarding young people's employment prospects. Another noted that some young people could not work due to mental health issues, exacerbated by the lockdown and the impact generally of the pandemic.

Young people and the impact of the pandemic on their future prospects is at the forefront of many policy makers, practitioners and parents' minds, as well as young people themselves. The new Government training programme, the Kickstart Scheme will provide opportunities for some 6 month work placements aimed at 16 – 24 year olds in receipt of Universal Credit.

Whilst taking time to consider the new 'National Statement of Expectations' regarding supported housing,²⁷ local authorities and their partners could consider a step-change in the commissioning of supported housing services for young people, purposefully aligning supported accommodation with enabling young people to enter into training or employment, so they can retain their supported accommodation, where required. This would need to be led by the Government as a specific strategic objective, supporting the end of rough sleeping and enabling the employment of young people with homelessness experience.

The message from all the young people we spoke to, however nuanced, and despite the very difficult childhood and early adulthood experiences many had had, was clear. They were looking forward – to their lives beyond the pandemic, to settling, and very importantly, to training, to education and to being part of the world of work. Our local and national policy, commissioning and practice need to reflect and support these aspirations.

27 MHCLG published new guidance in October 2020 on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-housing-national-statement-of-expectations/supported-housing-national-statement-of-expectations>

Section 6: Reflections on Everyone In and the future of youth housing and support

6.1 Young people's messages to local authorities and to the Government

We asked young people what the main messages were that they wanted local councils and the Government to hear. Some reflected that it had taken a pandemic to resolve their homelessness:

“Why has it taken COVID crisis for me to be supported and be housed? It should not have taken this for me to get the support I needed but I am happy, so I have to say [to] the Government, you have done a good job.” **Young man aged 20, a care leaver who was sleeping rough.**

“Easy, my message is simple – some young people fall into difficulties out of their control... there needs to be more affordable housing for young workers like myself ... I am not sure where I would have been if COVID hadn't hit ... surely that's not right ?” **Young woman aged 23**

Suitability of the accommodation and local authorities being more aware of and supportive towards the personal circumstances of young people were highlighted:

“They need to come up with a new delivery tactic as people are just not listening... But more importantly more financial help for those on low income as I have said I have had to go into debt to survive. More support through a crisis is needed.” **Young man aged 21**

“Think about where you are placing young vulnerable people as my experience at the [hotel] was awful. I was anxious, fearful, unsafe and alone and it was impossible to sleep.” **Young man aged 24**

“...I was lucky with the help I got but I know so many young people who have been housed in unsafe accommodation for their needs ...like others I felt too young to be with the people I was placed with. They have also been constantly moved from one place to another which under normal circumstances is hard but with Covid even more so.” **Young man aged 21**

“...to allow partners to stay together as you feel isolated enough whilst going through difficult times with family but also Covid. I was frightened, had never been away from home and it upset me we could not be together” **Young woman aged 19**

A key issue almost all of the young people raised was communication. Whilst many things did work well, and young people were grateful for the help they had had, the level of isolation and lack of communication in hotels and B&BS in particular was a key issue for them. There was a plea to be more aware of the impact of this on mental health and levels of anxiety generally:

“... It made me more anxious and worried that I was left for weeks without knowing how things were progressing with my housing options and if I was going to be rehomed at all, I felt like I had been forgotten about”. **Young woman aged 18**

“...throughout lockdown I felt lonely and a bit afraid. I cannot imagine those who had no one to talk to on a regular basis, the despair they must have felt...I really believe daily communication with the youngsters whilst in lockdown is really important.” **Young woman aged 19**

“More support round mental health – lockdown has impacted young people a lot and continues even now things are lifting.” **Young woman aged 18**

“...I am not up on politics really, but I think they should have had proper procedures in place from the start, but am aware it was all new.” **Young woman aged 18**

“Much more support is needed by people who listen to what we say, I was in a position where I did not know what to do and felt forgotten about. Don't forget about us, we need support and regular contact.” **Young woman aged 19**

These messages will resonate with local authorities and with agencies providing support to young people. They are based on experiences of homeless young people during a pandemic, so in that sense they are new. But they are also old messages – young people who have experienced homelessness have been saying similar things for many years.

6.2 Local authorities and other agencies' reflections and learning on Everyone In

When we spoke to local authorities and other agencies over the mid to late summer of 2020, only a few had had the chance to take time and reflect with their teams and partners on Everyone In and what they had learned. Most were still running in some shape or form their Everyone In services, including planning move-on for individuals from short stay accommodation. Next Steps funding bids were being written. Alongside this other forms of homelessness were beginning to rise.

Local authorities were in the process of getting back to 'normal' to some extent. Most were applying the homelessness legislation, which meant some people did not have a priority need for accommodation. Others were about to do so:

“We are not yet applying the legislation strictly, but we will be doing soon. We currently have a spike in Covid so we're being careful. But we can't afford to continue this.” **(Operations Manager for Homelessness in a unitary council)**

“Now we are not accommodating everyone - if they don't have a priority need. We felt a sense of responsibility to reduce risk - for themselves and the public.” **(Services Manager for Housing in a unitary council)**

Some people told us that lockdown and the Everyone In programme had given homelessness a new prominence within local authorities, in particular with senior officers and elected members.

“Since lockdown the Council have exercised discretion and continue to do so, to house everyone...Cabinet Members want Everyone In for Good – so it's not slowing down.” **(Housing Services Manager in a unitary council)**

Reflections and key learning points from local authorities and other agencies included the importance of prevention; learning from changes in delivery of services; the new prominence of homelessness within some local authorities; the future of homelessness services.

Several spoke about reaching young people earlier, through prevention before homelessness as well as more effective resolution of homelessness before rough sleeping occurs.

“On the positive side it's given the opportunity to work with people earlier - it's exposed significant hidden homelessness – which is good in some respects as some of these people may have ended up rough sleeping - but there is no more accommodation.” **(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a voluntary agency)**

One local authority talked about prevention and used the example of a young care leaver who had been sleeping rough in a high risk city centre environment:

“As a Council we missed the chance to intervene earlier - the young person is now a hardened drug user – using opiates to numb everything everyday”. **(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a unitary council)**

Another council talked about the importance of working with people earlier and the need to develop a better partnership with Children’s Services around care leavers in particular.

Several people noted that the pandemic had meant the outreach services reached some people they hadn’t worked with before. Several people reflected this in terms of the impact of city and town centre lockdowns on people of all ages who were surviving on the streets, in part through begging. This was viewed as a significant factor in persuading people in urban areas to ‘come in’ off the streets. Councils noted that people sought help who would not usually do so.

“Because people couldn’t beg – there just was not any point - they were more likely to come into services because they needed things. Being away from the street activity gave more time for proper engagement. Two young people went onto scripts as a result.” **(A rough sleeping outreach team leader in a youth homelessness agency in a unitary council)**

“One described begging as his job, which was illuminating.” **(Housing options manager in a district council)**

Some people talked more specifically about the unique opportunity lockdown provided, including the temporary cessation of ‘street activity’, enabling engagement with people who previously they had not been successful in reaching and working with.

“It’s also given us the opportunity to work with people that have historically been difficult to engage with – female rough sleepers and also adult sex workers”. **(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a voluntary agency working in a unitary council)**

“It was almost a perfect storm – people were engaging with us that wouldn’t previously. They wanted services and help. We have this small window before people go back.” **(Service Manager for Housing in a unitary council)**

The profile of homelessness during lockdown meant that councils were able to be more flexible, as they had internal permissions to take action to relieve homelessness and support people. One council reflected it had been freed up to be more pragmatic and creative, using prevention tools and actions that in the past would not have been considered. For example, it had given some homeless people mobile phones:

“... so we can contact them, and they can ring to make benefit claims – it’s sensible otherwise they won’t make a housing benefit claim and that costs us.” **(Housing and Communities Manager in a district council)**

Another council had made 'goodwill payments' over several weeks or longer to keep young people with other family or friends, rather than accommodate them in hotels or B&BS. This would not have happened in the past in that local authority.

Some of the reflections related to the way in which services had run differently over lockdown and beyond, with many front-line staff being home-based and contact with customers usually being over the phone. At the time of writing the report, as the 'R' rate goes up, this is still the case in most local authorities.

The overwhelming view was that telephone based services do not work well for some people, including many young people.

"For young people, Covid is the least of their priorities. They want things to be the same and for us to be there. Over the phone is not as good as face to face and they don't want to use video or FaceTime. They want to see us". **(Housing Options Team Manager in district council)**

"They [phone calls] can work for other homeless young people at [name of the youth homelessness agency] but not the very chaotic young people as they tend to never have a phone for long and don't like remote contact." **(A rough sleeping outreach team leader in a youth homelessness agency in a unitary council)**

"We have been able to transfer into a phone service for certain groups - but would not want to lose the face to face for the most vulnerable." **(Homelessness Manager in a unitary council)**

"HRA (Homelessness Reduction Act) telephone assessments are a challenge – face to face is always better for this group." **(Housing Options lead officer in a unitary council)**

"We have become a faceless service – we don't want that when we are trying to help people at a very stressful time...there's no sign that we are going back any time soon" **(Operations Manager in a unitary council)**

Some other councils had not opted for a pre-dominantly home-based homelessness service and had continued to see people face to face as well:

"We carried on doing outreach –it was the most important thing we did." **(Housing and Welfare lead in a unitary authority)**

"Because the service is housing benefit and homelessness we just kept going – people kept coming into the office to work – working from home was and still is minimal" **(Team Leader, homelessness in a district council)**

Most people were positive about the response from their teams, and, as outlined in the Section 4.4 on partnership, also about some other agencies they had worked well with.

“A while ago we employed 9 new trainees who all started during Covid lockdown ...a great attitude night and day of rolling up your sleeves and getting on with it.” **(Team Leader for Homelessness in district council)**

“Relationships with the Third Sector were positive but are brilliant now.” **(Housing Services Manager in a unitary council)**

Some officers we spoke to were thinking through how to re-structure their teams in light of what they had learned.

The last council we interviewed, in September 2020, had tripled its Temporary Accommodation Team during lockdown. This had made a difference in the ability to support people in accommodation, get to know them more and better assist them with move-on. She noted:

“It’s been hard to evidence the need for TA [temporary accommodation] support in the past, but that has changed.” **(Service Manager for Housing in a unitary council)**

When we spoke to the local authority officer cited above, she had just heard about their Next Steps funding bid. Part of this was revenue for temporary accommodation support until the end of March 2021, which would assist in move on.

One council which had assisted comparatively few young people through Everyone In, had 3 Young People’s Housing Officers. They defined young people as up to the age of 29, the rationale being that people are still young and continue to need a higher level of support after reaching 25.

“We are looking maybe to take on another officer in the Young People’s team - so an increase in capacity of 25%. I can’t imagine life without a Young People’s team.” **(Housing and Welfare lead office in unitary council)**

6.3 Local authorities views about the future for young people at risk of homelessness

Several councils and voluntary agencies were concerned about the immediate future, as they had no available accommodation for anyone else who was homeless.

“At the moment we have no TA [temporary accommodation] as all the people we have assisted via Everyone In are in the temporary accommodation” **(Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator in a unitary council)**

Many also mentioned concerns about the provision for people who would be rough sleeping in the winter months if night shelters were not allowed to open again. Since we spoke to local authorities, MHCLG has published new guidance on the opening of winter night in terms of sharing facilities and management of the risk of Covid-19 within these.²⁸

In the medium to longer term, local authorities we spoke to all thought youth homelessness – and homelessness more generally - would rise. They were not optimistic about the future. Quite the opposite, they were thinking through the ramifications of the economic downturn and steeling themselves for what was to come.

One described the current situation as:

“A stay of execution on homelessness...we expect the next 3 – 6 months to be an artificial situation due to the moratorium on Section 21's and Section 8's. Unless there is legislative change – which is unlikely - to pay off all the arrears and stop court action on that basis, we expect a surge of homelessness in several months.” **(Team Leader for Homeless in a district council)**

Several councils told us they were trying to prepare in advance for the lifting of the suspension of eviction notices. They had gathered information on the likely number of Section 21 and Section 8 notices issued and household's sizes from registered providers and private landlords. One mentioned identifying NASS cases, where a positive decision would mean the need for accommodation.

One district council which has a significant tourism and hospitality sector told us there had been a 200% rise in claims for universal credit in that area. 9,000 people were furloughed locally, and it was not clear what would happen in the future when the furlough scheme ended. Whilst the numbers of households seeking assistance due to potential or actual homelessness had not risen in comparison to the previous year, the causes and issues were different – there was no eviction from private rented or social housing, but more single homelessness through family, friends and people who were not fixed abode. A rise in other forms of homelessness was expected.

28 The guidance was issued in October 2020 and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-provision-of-night-shelters>

In terms of young people more specifically, most authorities told us they were already seeing a rise in numbers presenting as homelessness, largely due to family and friends 'no longer willing or able to accommodate' or relationship breakdowns.

“Parents /families have managed to contain things over lockdown but now it’s all falling apart.”
(Strategic Housing Officer in a district council)

Local authorities were expecting people to struggle to pay the rent with job losses and were concerned that not every young person would have a parent to help them out or could return to live at home.

“People will struggle with rents. We’ve already had a young person whose lost their job and needed DHP (discretionary housing payments) to keep their accommodation.” **(Housing and Welfare lead officer in a unitary council)**

There was also uncertainty about the housing market as well:

“It’s difficult – landlords are selling up - too high risk, too much regulation and risk of arrears”.
(Strategic Housing Officer in a district council)

“If landlords do sell and the PRS [private rented sector] contracts then the sector will be in decline - and if the supply is not there then prices will go up - affecting this group the hardest’.
(Team leader for homeless in a district council)

Section 7. Conclusions

Based on a moment in time, the 'deep dive' has provided some insights into the experiences of young people in the West Midlands who were homeless during lockdown and were supported through the Everyone In programme.

This report has been written as a second wave of Covid-19 develops. Local authorities, with the NHS and other partners are continuing to be at the forefront of supporting and responding to local communities. There is no 'new normal' yet and for the public sector, the voluntary sector and the business sector, the modus operandi is still dominated by the pandemic. Whilst MHCLG 'Next Steps' funding will help with move-on now, there are key challenges - assisting those with no recourse to public funds and the lack of funding for councils to continue their Everyone In work. Alongside this, councils are anticipating rising homelessness across the piece - not only single people but families as well - as the economic impact of the pandemic coupled with backlog of eviction notices making their way through the courts begins to surface. All this is against a backdrop of acute financial pressures in local government as a result of the pandemic and years of austerity.

There has been an endless flow of people on to the streets over the last few years, much of which started with other forms of homelessness when people were younger - often in their teens. This has not slowed down. Regardless of the operating model that individual councils used and where they 'drew the line' around who they assisted through Everyone In and what was 'business as usual', the issue of homelessness amongst young people remains significant.

We know West Midlands councils assisted at least 375 young people through Everyone In, but this belies the extent of youth homelessness over lockdown, as 9 councils continued their 'business as usual' services in parallel with Everyone In. The figure is more likely to be around 700 young people if these are taken into account. A significant proportion of these young people will tip into rough sleeping in the next few years unless they are assisted with long term sustainable options and support if required.

Because rough sleeping amongst under 26s has not been viewed by policy makers as a particularly significant issue nationally, other than amongst care leavers, it has not had the strategic focus it needs. We have not been inquisitive enough. Public services know who many of the young people are before they sleep rough - they are using homelessness services, they may be care leavers or previously known to children's services and some are working with criminal justice agencies.

Yet we wait until crisis point before we offer a tangible response, just before their 18th birthday, or on the day they leave custody, or are discharged from hospital or at the point they are homeless again. And too often a poorly planned option with limited or no support to address their needs fails - and results in repeat homelessness. And then some young people have no fixed abode....and then for some, who have fallen out of every service and option, rough sleeping.

The spotlight on rough sleeping during lockdown has been understandable. Local authorities anticipate significant rises in homelessness across the board and so too, no doubt, will the Government. Focussing in on rough sleeping is a partial and short term response at best. Young people did not think this was a desirable or sensible public policy position either:

“I am not sure where I would have been if COVID hadn't hit ... surely that's not right?”
Young woman aged 23

“Why has it taken COVID crisis for me to be supported and be housed? It should not have taken this for me to get the support I needed but I am happy, so I have to say the Government you have done a good job.”

Young man aged 20, a care leaver who was sleeping rough.

If we are to end rough sleeping, then we need to think much more deeply and strategically about the under 26 year old group, but not only at the point of crisis. Given the rising numbers of people who are unemployed at the moment and in particular, high levels amongst young people, it is reasonable to project that youth homelessness is likely to rise as a consequence. We know what works; our Positive Pathway documents are full of examples from across England of ways to better prevent and manage youth homelessness. But this requires councils to invest time and possibly some resource in more effective prevention work, to create more specialist youth focussed services and support options based on needs, which minimise risks of homelessness, address mental health and enable young people to learn, train and work. This would be a shrewd and timely investment, but they are unlikely to do this alone, and will need Government backing and support.

Everyone In has been a truly brilliant response to the pandemic. But the challenge now is not to look away from the light that shines on young people who are homeless. They have exposed the longstanding challenges in national policy, local disinvestment and acute housing shortages faced by young single people who are poor and have no parental support to fall back on. If we look away now, the arbitrary patchworks of services in many areas will fray and fall apart under more pressure.

Young people need a timely, coherent, needs-based response wherever they live, not only when there is a national and global crisis. Youth-specific prevention options and swift, effective relief actions can purposefully work to minimise homelessness and protect against recurring homelessness. Only then will we have a fighting chance to end rough sleeping.

Recommendations

Government

Department for Work and Pensions

- Increase the amount of Universal Credit payable to all single under 25s to the same level as over 25s in order to enable fair and equal access to housing options
- Bring forward the revised exemptions to the Shared Accommodation Rate for care leavers and young people in resettlement/supported housing. These were announced in the March 2020 budget and are due to commence in April 2023. We urge the Government to lay new regulations before Parliament as soon as possible, to commence no later than April 2021

Department for Work and Pensions and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government:

- Re-visit the system for setting and payment of supported housing costs, including in exempt accommodation, in order to enable young people to take up training and work opportunities

Department for Education:

- Continue with the funding to support care leavers at high risk of rough sleeping: Review the impact of the additional funding to previously identified children's services authorities to reduce rough sleeping amongst care leavers and its impact over lockdown. Identify with MHCLG any new areas with high levels of care leavers assisted through Everyone In.

Department of Health and Social Care:

- Create a dedicated funding stream for Health and local authorities to bid into together for specialist mental health provision specifically aimed at young people aged 18-25, including care leavers, living in supported housing and homelessness systems.

Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government:

- Create a 'Commitment to Collaborate', beyond the Duty to Refer, dedicated nationwide scheme which identifies and plans with all under 26 year olds in and leaving custody at risk of homelessness, learning from the HMPPS work with care leavers

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government:

- Lead on the creation of a new cross-departmental national investment pot for local authorities for supported housing options which is not contingent on the experience of rough sleeping but is for prevention and relief of homelessness for young people and other client groups. This should link to the KickStart Fund and ensure additional support to enable young people to take up training and employment, as well as housing related support for those with high and complex needs including offending behaviours, mental health issues and substance misuse.
- Continue to promote the Positive Pathway frameworks with local authorities through the Youth Homelessness Advisers and ensure they are continually updated to take into account changes needed due to Covid-19 and its impact

- Strengthen MHCLG guidance to local authorities on allocation of social housing to allow care leavers from other areas to qualify for the housing register through their time spent in care in the local authority district being accepted as meeting any local connection requirement , and to ensure that they receive the same 'reasonable preference' priority as care leavers for that local authority area without needing to present as homeless.

Homes England and Registered Providers:

- Ensure there is a truly affordable youth housing offer within affordable housing programmes which enables young people to live, work, earn and learn.
- Increase supply of social housing for single people including Housing First.

Local authority areas:

- Undertake an analysis of the numbers and needs of young people likely to require assistance with housing and support and map these against the options available, using the Positive Pathway frameworks to guide this work
- Establish youth homelessness prevention partnerships where they don't already exist and plan to address gaps in prevention and relief options specifically for young people, utilising Government funding for homelessness, including Homelessness Reduction Grants, Rough Sleeping Initiative and Next Steps funding

Sub-regions or combined authority areas:

- Develop regional versions of the CHAIN reporting systems, drawing on local intelligence on rough sleeping from outreach services
- Undertake 'deep dive' rapid reviews into the journeys into rough sleeping and hidden homelessness amongst young people in order to identify gaps in earlier upstream prevention and relief services/activity

Appendix One	2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation - Rank of average rank	Proportion of population aged 16-25	Lower Quartile Rent		Local Housing Allowance 2019/20		Households assessed as threatened with homelessness per (1000)	Households assessed as homeless per (1000)	Owed a prevention or relief duty (Number and % of households)				Number of people rough sleeping, Autumn 2019 'snapshot'				
			Room	One Bed	Room	One Bed			16-17	(%)	18-24	(%)	Under 18	18-25	Over 26	Not Known	Total
Birmingham	6	16.64%	£312	£550	£249.16	£442.52	4.876	10.467	52	(0.8%)	855	(13.1%)	0	2	42	8	52
Sandwell	8	11.79%	£347	£395	£260.71	£374.99	5.451	4.051	11	(0.9%)	238	(19.6%)	0	2	8	0	10
Stoke on Trent	15	12.70%	£325	£360	£239.81	£350.01	5.592	8.483	55	(3.5%)	313	(20.1%)	0	0	16	0	16
Wolverhampton	19	11.64%	£300	£400	£260.71	£374.99	7.538	12.582	25	(1.2%)	464	(21.5%)	0	0	13	1	14
Walsall	31	11.72%	£350	£395	£260.71	£374.99	4.738	4.941	18	(1.6%)	292	(26.6%)	0	1	5	0	6
Coventry	81	18.50%	£355	£500	£302.65	£399.98	3.606	10.270	1	(0.0%)	455	(22.0%)	0	0	19	4	23
Telford and Wrekin	99	11.96%	£347	£425	£295.00	£379.82	3.949	2.342	23	(5.1%)	123	(27.1%)	0	2	18	0	20
Nuneaton and Bedworth	101	10.60%	£303	£420	£302.65	£399.98	8.711	8.207	17	(1.8%)	234	(24.9%)	0	0	8	0	8
Dudley	104	10.88%	£282	£395	£260.71	£374.99	1.621	11.434	0	(0.0%)	425	(24.1%)	0	0	4	0	4
Wyre Forest	114	9.53%	£325	£425	£267.01	£399.98	5.015	5.167	10	(2.1%)	90	(19.3%)	0	0	6	0	6
Redditch	118	10.31%	£355	£495	£267.01	£399.98	5.639	6.830	15	(3.4%)	138	(31.4%)	0	0	2	0	2
Tamworth	125	10.83%	£430	£495	£289.83	£394.98	2.965	6.857	7	(2.2%)	76	(23.9%)	0	0	5	0	5
Cannock Chase	126	10.61%	£355	£400	£289.83	£394.98	1.888	3.800	1	(0.4%)	59	(23.6%)	0	0	1	0	1
Herefordshire	137	9.34%	£381	£425	£260.50	£399.98	6.042	5.041	1	(0.1%)	230	(24.7%)	0	0	29	0	29
Newcastle under Lyme	150	14.03%	£336	£380	£239.81	£350.01	4.623	3.485	18	(3.9%)	100	(21.9%)	0	0	6	0	6
North Warwickshire	155	10.01%	£405	£425	£302.65	£399.98	4.393	1.536	1	(0.6%)	39	(23.5%)	0	0	0	0	0
East Staffordshire	157	10.59%	£320	£425	£260.89	£365.13	2.325	3.429	4	(1.4%)	64	(21.9%)	0	0	5	0	5
Worcester	159	14.12%	£412	£500	£305.56	£443.34	8.686	9.139	40	(5.1%)	218	(27.7%)	0	0	18	1	19
Shropshire	165	9.63%	£398	£395	£295.00	£379.82	2.784	4.596	3	(0.3%)	195	(18.5%)	0	1	15	0	16
Malvern Hills	187	8.95%	..	£475	£305.56	£443.34	2.611	3.605	1	(0.5%)	45	(20.5%)	0	0	7	0	7
Wychavon	191	9.04%	£400	£495	£305.56	£443.34	3.521	4.995	3	(0.6%)	117	(24.7%)	0	2	4	1	7
Staffordshire Moorlands	204	9.61%	.	£350	£239.81	£350.01	3.822	2.426	2	(0.7%)	51	(18.7%)	0	0	4	0	4
Solihull	206	10.50%	£480	£550	£327.85	£506.35	5.656	5.678	32	(3.1%)	354	(34.3%)	0	1	4	1	6
Rugby	222	10.03%	£410	£525	£286.35	£424.36	4.171	7.816	5	(0.9%)	117	(21.4%)	0	1	7	4	12
Stafford	233	9.77%	£300	£425	£295.00	£379.82	1.157	2.347	0	(0.0%)	55	(25.9%)	0	0	5	0	5
South Staffordshire	235	10.28%	.	£475	£295.00	£379.82	2.001	0.724	1	(0.8%)	29	(22.7%)	0	0	1	0	1
Lichfield	250	9.92%	£395	£500	£289.83	£394.98	2.348	3.753	4	(1.5%)	56	(21.1%)	0	0	5	0	5
Stratford upon Avon	259	9.26%	..	£595	£305.90	£485.93	5.714	5.048	11	(1.8%)	115	(18.7%)	0	0	6	0	6
Wanwick	263	14.84%	£386	£650	£327.85	£506.35	3.272	3.744	10	(2.3%)	104	(24.1%)	0	0	20	1	21
Bromsgrove	271	9.26%	£260	£450	£267.01	£399.98	4.606	2.122	1	(0.4%)	70	(25.1%)	0	2	1	0	3

Appendix Three

Detail of accommodation types prior to homelessness and cause of homelessness:

Accommodation at time of Application (H-CLIC)	Total	%
Private rented sector: self-contained	4	1.35%
Private rented sector: HMO	5	1.69%
Private rented sector: lodging (not with family or friends)	2	0.68%
Council tenant	3	1.01%
Looked after children placement	3	1.01%
Living with family	100	33.78%
Living with friends	31	10.47%
Social rented supported housing or hostel	9	3.04%
Refuge	1	0.34%
Rough sleeping (in judgement of assessor)	44	14.86%
Homeless on departure from institution: Custody	12	4.05%
Homeless on departure from institution: Hospital (psychiatric)	4	1.35%
Temporary accommodation	8	2.70%
No fixed abode	36	12.16%
Caravan / houseboat	1	0.34%
Other	8	2.70%
Don't know	10	3.38%
No data recorded	15	5.07%

Cause for homelessness (H-CLIC)	Total	%
End of private rented tenancy – assured shorthold tenancy	7	2.36%
End of private rented tenancy – not assured shorthold tenancy	2	0.68%
End of social rented tenancy	3	1.01%
Eviction from supported housing	12	4.05%
Family no longer willing or able to accommodate	118	39.86%
Friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	18	6.08%
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent breakdown)	33	11.15%
Domestic abuse	17	5.74%
Non-racially motivated / other motivated violence or harassment	3	1.01%
Left institution with no accommodation available	16	5.41%
Left HM Forces	1	0.34%
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	1	0.34%
Other	35	11.82%
Property disrepair	1	0.34%
Don't know	8	2.70%
No data recorded	21	7.09%

*** Code for question Where did you accommodate the young person?**

AASH = All Age Supported Housing

YPSH = Young People only Supported Housing

B&B = bed and breakfast type accommodation

CH = commercial hotel (not usually used by your LA outside Covid-19 lockdown)

SCHL = self-contained holiday let accommodation (could be any type - caravans, log cabins etc.)

PRS - SC = into a PRS property with no sharing facilities

PRS - SH = into a PRS property with some sharing facilities

RP SC = into social housing which is self-contained

RP SH = into social housing which is shared

if there are other sorts of accommodation options used, please state 'Other'

Acknowledgments / Thanks

We'd like to thank:

The 22 young people who took time to speak to Tamzin Reynolds-Rosser and Youth Voice members to share their experiences and insights during a very difficult time for them.

The 25 local authorities and the other agencies who found the time to engage and talk with us, often for well over an hour. And also for taking the time to fill in and return the data forms and providing more detail when requested. We know that some individuals worked until the early hours of the morning to do this.

Sam Dalton for his work managing the data elements for this report with such diligence.

MHCLG Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Directorate for commissioning this piece of work.