

Executive summary



Young &

Homeless 2018



Key findings from our 2018 Young and Homeless research, which explores the trends, causes and nature of homelessness experienced by young people (aged 16-24) in England, and looks at the support available.

# Trends in youth homelessness

**Key characteristics** of the young people supported by the 109 service providers taking part in this survey

**“Just because circumstances have dictated we’re homeless, we’re still people and we deserve the same things that everyone else gets.”**

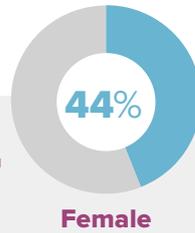
Young person



young people



## Gender



Female



Male



## Age



16-17 years



18-21 years



22-24 years

## Main support needs



**44%**  
Not in **education, employment** or **training**



**41%**  
Lack **independent living** skills



**35%**  
Have **mental health** problems



**28%**  
Have illegal **substance misuse** issues



**20%**  
Lack **relationship** skills



**16%**  
Lack of **literacy** and **numeracy** skills

## Socio-demographic characteristics

Some young people are at a higher risk of homelessness:



Our 2018 Young and Homeless research is based on surveys with **79 local authorities** and **109 service providers**, and **interviews with 25 young people** with experiences of homelessness, carried out between September 2017 and February 2018.

# Pathways into services

**“I don’t always think there’s enough support for them. And I don’t know, I think they just get a bit lost.”**

Young person



Of the **188 local authorities and providers** taking part in our survey:



They said that a **lack of affordable housing**, a **lack of supported accommodation** options and **welfare benefit reform** were causing this increase.

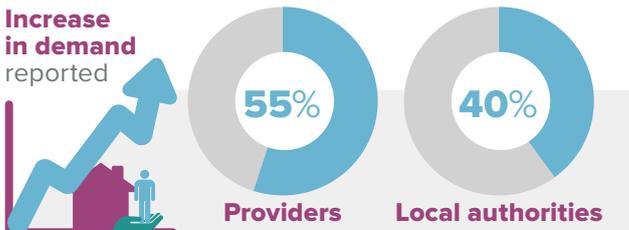
It’s important that **emergency accommodation** can be accessed:



Providers said that usually it is **difficult for young people to access**:



# Demand for services



Increased demand may be **due to a range of factors** such as closure of other services or increased youth homelessness in certain areas.

**Of local authorities:**

**43%** said that youth homelessness had **increased** a little.

**Most** said this was because of welfare **benefit reform** and limited **housing availability**.

**17%** said that youth homelessness had **decreased** a little.

**Most** said this was due to the use of a **co-ordinated service approach** e.g. the Positive Pathway model.

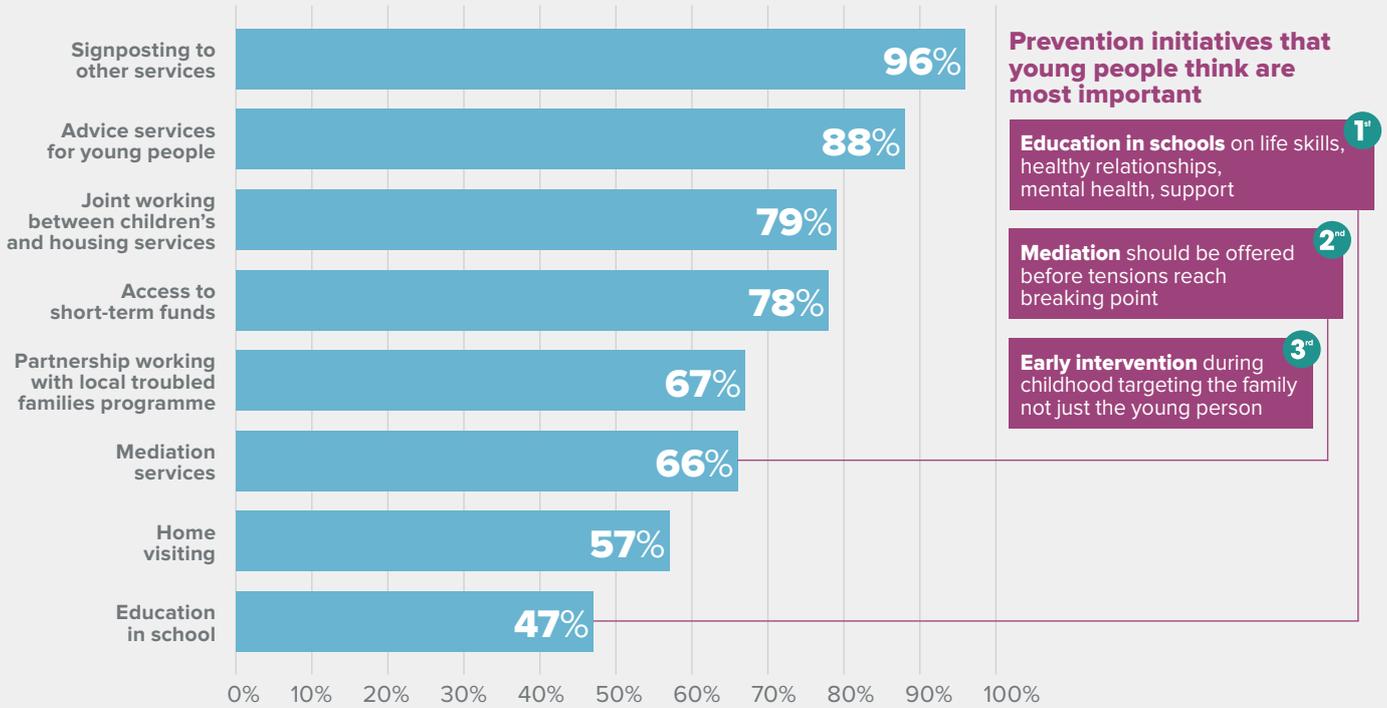
**66%** told us that the **Positive Pathway model is being used** or developed in their area.

# Preventing youth homelessness

**“If you want to tackle the problem of homelessness, you approach people before they become homeless, or before they start experiencing all this.”**

Young person

## Prevention initiatives offered by local authorities and providers



## Multiple and complex needs

Young people with multiple and complex needs can face particular difficulties in accessing the support they need



**82%** of providers said the number of young people accessing their service with complex needs had increased because of:

... **lack of capacity and resources** in homelessness services

... **lack of specialist mental health services**

... **lack of early prevention and intervention**

## Reasons for not being able to assist

The top three reasons why services were unable to assist young people in the past year were:



# Drivers of youth homelessness

**“That’s why a lot of people end up like this, because the system’s letting them down.”**

Young person

1<sup>st</sup>

## Family relationship breakdown



Accommodation providers reported that **49% of young people** they support became **homeless because of relationship breakdown** with their family or care-giver. Young people told us this was usually due to:



### 1 Structural factors

e.g. over-crowding, welfare benefit reductions and financial difficulties



2

### Individual factors

e.g. mental or physical health of a family member

2<sup>nd</sup>

## Welfare benefit reform

We asked providers and local authorities if welfare benefit reform was impacting young people’s ability to access and sustain accommodation.



**92%** said **delayed** payments under **Universal Credit** were having an impact



**90%** said **sanctions** were having an impact



**80%** said the **capping of LHA rate to SAR rate** was having an impact

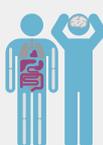
3<sup>rd</sup>

## A range of other factors also play a role

For example accommodation providers reported that of those young people they supported:



**31%** had experienced **drug or alcohol** problems



**26%** had experienced **mental or physical health** problems



**17%** had **left care**



## What we do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness agencies and the wider housing with health, care and support sector. We work to improve services through research, training and guidance, and to promote policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

## Let's end homelessness together

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