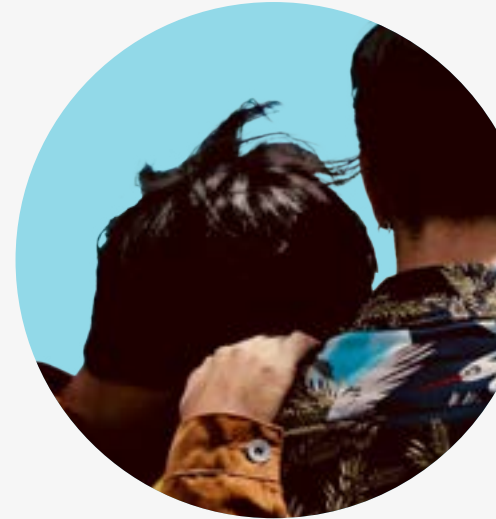


March 2025

there's
no
place



like
home

Uncovering LGBTQ+ youth homelessness in the UK

Dr Carin Tunåker, Dr Trude Sundberg, Shiyu Yuan and Dr Flora Renz, University of Kent; Dr Ed Kirton-Darling, University of Bristol; Professor Helen Carr, University of Southampton





about akt

akt (formerly known as the Albert Kennedy Trust) is the national LGBTQ+ youth homelessness charity. Its mission is to ensure that every LGBTQ+ 16 to 25-year-old facing homelessness or a hostile living environment has a safe place to live. Because no young person should have to choose between a safe home and being who they are.



about this research

This research was commissioned by akt and completed by the University of Kent, in collaboration with the University of Bristol and University of Southampton. The research was carried out in 2024 and was co-produced with a team of young people with experience of LGBTQ+ youth homelessness.



There is genuinely no place like home. Because much more than just four walls and a roof, home is – or should be – your place of rest and safety. Somewhere you can love and be loved. But today that place of rest, safety and love is still being denied to far too many LGBTQ+ young people.

You might not know that the UK is experiencing an LGBTQ+ youth homelessness crisis because it is almost completely hidden. It is not recorded in government data, it is not a talking point in the media or with politicians, and – despite the best efforts of our sector – it is even hidden in service provision.

This groundbreaking piece of new research, commissioned by the national LGBTQ+ youth homelessness charity akt, and completed by the University of Kent in collaboration with the University of Bristol and the University of Southampton, aims to bring this issue into the light, where it belongs. It is the very first report of its kind to examine the urgent issue of LGBTQ+ youth homelessness in the UK today.

It is a mighty piece of work, richer in detail and evidence about LGBTQ+ young people and their lives than, we believe, anything that has gone before. We are immensely grateful for the research team's diligence and sensitivity in completing this project.

To read this report is to read young people's own, often heartbreaking, words about the reality of far too many young LGBTQ+ lives today. It tells a story about a lack of understanding, responsiveness or even indifference to their lived experience. It speaks of increased vulnerabilities which go unacknowledged or addressed. And it shows that we have much further to go to ensure that every LGBTQ+ young person in the UK facing homelessness or a hostile living environment has a safe place to live.

“The waiting list, the fight, the constant fight that you just have to put up every single day, there is just no rest from it. It's just a constant battle and I think that's just awful.”

– non-binary, neurodivergent young person

Homelessness impacts the LGBTQ+ community disproportionately and trans and non-binary young people most of all. LGBTQ+ people are twice as likely to experience hidden homelessness as non-LGBTQ+ peers, and this increases again if you are trans. Despite this, LGBTQ+ specific services are limited.

This report makes crystal clear that:

- We need flexible, easy-to-access, and high-quality services nationwide that meet the specific needs of LGBTQ+ young people wherever they are, tailored to their individual needs.
- All organisations involved in housing and supporting young people need to recognise the unique needs of this group and think deeply about how they could do better for the LGBTQ+ young people they serve.
- Everyone working with young LGBTQ+ people needs to understand better and respond to the intersectionality that impacts upon their lives. This means not only considering different vulnerabilities and disadvantages, but also the greater risk of exclusion, oppression and, in this case, homelessness.
- There are specific changes to law and policy – especially around better data collection, liaison with experts and providing referral information – that are urgently needed to help make these improvements happen.

This crisis won't go away with a click of the heels or if we just wish hard enough, it requires and deserves meaningful action. So, in publishing this report, akt is recommitting itself not only to its own still-vital mission, but also to working with partners of all kinds to make this happen. That is why the conclusions from this report talk explicitly in terms of what we need to do **together**, be that national or local government, housing providers, organisations working with homeless young people and the public – to end homelessness for LGBTQ+ young people. We hope you will join us on that journey.

how we can end homelessness for lgbtq+ young people together

Rather than seek to shame, we believe that we can lift up examples of excellence and focus on small changes which will make the most significant differences to young people facing real, immediate challenges. We want to use these examples and positive work already being done to support LGBTQ+ young people to provide a route map for others to follow. And we want to use proposals for change to national policy as a way of supporting further improvements in support of young LGBTQ+ people at risk of homelessness. (More detail on these proposals can be found on pages 33-36).



For national government: This means improving the collection of homelessness data on young LGBTQ+ people; revising the homelessness code of guidance to require housing teams to work with local experts and to take account of intersectionality; and amending s.179(2) of the Housing Act 1996 to specifically include young LGBTQ+ people as a group to be considered when designing services.



For local authorities: This means ensuring your homelessness plans recognise the needs of LGBTQ+ young people and intersectionality, making that commitment visible and real for young LGBTQ+ people and working with local experts to understand issues – particularly the specific nature of LGBTQ+ familial/domestic abuse, mental health needs and the risks to LGBTQ+ young people in mediation.



For providers of housing: This means learning how to support LGBTQ+ young people more effectively and considering how to prioritise that support in your services.



For homelessness/housing organisations working with young people: This means deepening your understanding of the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ young people and how to reflect that in your service provision.



For everyone: This means recognising that, despite many advances in recent decades, young LGBTQ+ people in the UK still face significant challenges and continue to need your love and support, especially when they are forced to choose between a safe place to live and being who they are.

As it has been for the last 35 years, akt is here to help you make this happen. Through our direct work with young LGBTQ+ people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or living in hostile environments, we bring unrivalled experience and insight of what works. If you would like to discuss how we can work together to end LGBTQ+ youth homelessness and ensure every young person has a safe place to call home, then contact us at contact@akt.org.uk.

“I just want my own stability and I’m getting no help with it. I’m just waiting. It’s all a waiting game really. That’s what I just feel like my whole life in a waiting game.”

– young cis man who identifies as gay and lives with depression

executive summary

This research finds that everyone is not at equal risk of homelessness. Despite many advances in the lived experience of LGBTQ+ people in the UK in recent decades, LGBTQ+ young people (trans and non-binary young people in particular) still face increased risks of losing their home. LGBTQ+ youth homelessness is a growing and concerning issue and intersectional disadvantage places many LGBTQ+ young people at even greater risk.

LGBTQ+ young people are at high risk of homelessness

- LGBTQ+ people are twice as likely to experience hidden homelessness (e.g. sofa surfing, squatting) as non-LGBTQ+ peers. LGBTQ+ people from racialised minorities face 50% higher risk.
- More than 1 in 4 of the young people surveyed had previously experienced homelessness, with the majority experiencing hidden homelessness. Of those surveyed, 1 in 4 LGB+ people had experienced homelessness, compared to official government figure of 4%.
- Pathways in and out of homelessness are exacerbated by the compounding effects of intersecting disadvantages, and these are evident in all stages of homelessness.

LGBTQ+ young people are not taken seriously

- Many young people experiencing LGBTQ+ youth homelessness have also experienced familial domestic abuse but are not always considered for priority status in housing applications as the abuse can be difficult to evidence or authorities have not considered LGBTQ+ domestic abuse in their assessment.
- Few housing services cater specifically to LGBTQ+ young people (10% exclusively, 5% predominantly), while mainstream services lack knowledge and prioritisation (41% don't see it as a priority).
- Government data underestimates LGBTQ+ homelessness, failing to capture its breadth and complexity.

Intersectionality has a significant impact on LGBTQ+ young people's experience

- Intersectionality worsens homelessness for young trans and non-binary people, as transphobia and compounding vulnerabilities exacerbate their challenges.
- Trans young people were found to be particularly vulnerable, with 37% expected to experience homelessness compared to 22% of those who had not changed their gender (statistically significant at the 1% level).
- Non-binary survey respondents were twice as likely as women to be at risk, while bisexual and other non-heterosexual individuals were twice as likely as heterosexual young people (30% vs. 15%).
- Being LGBTQ+ and from a racialised minority means you are 50% more likely to experience hidden homelessness.
- Mental health issues significantly increase the risk of homelessness (37% vs. 19% without mental health conditions).
- 80% of LGBTQ+ people rough sleeping live with mental health issues. LGBTQ+ young people sleeping rough also have higher support needs for drug use (42%), and alcohol use (27%), and are more likely to have support needs for two or more issues.
- Protections for intersecting vulnerabilities are inadequate under current laws (Housing Act 1997 Part 7 and Homelessness Code of Guidance).

contents

i

Foreword

ii

How we can end homelessness for LGBTQ+ young people together

iii

Executive Summary

1

Introduction

2

Background

3

Methodology

5

What does homelessness look like for LGBTQ+ young people?

12

How intersectionality impacts on young LGBTQ+ people's experience

26

The journeys of young LGBTQ+ people

33

Recommendations

37

Conclusion

37

Acknowledgements

38

References



1 introduction

LGBTQ+ youth homelessness is a persistent issue. Yet it is rarely highlighted for policy intervention, despite a number of studies suggesting it is of significant and growing concern. This report contains personal stories and sensitive topics. Readers should be aware that some topics and stories may be upsetting or trigger emotional responses.

In this report we discuss findings from a research project conducted by the University of Kent, University of Bristol and University of Southampton between January and September 2024. The project investigated homelessness and intersectional disadvantages among LGBTQ+ young people in England, paying attention to:

- **Localisation, spread and persistence** of LGBTQ+ youth homelessness across the country
- Review of existing **data for youth homelessness** including an intersectional analysis
- **Homelessness law** and recent case law relating to LGBTQ+ populations
- **Policy and practice** among Local Authorities
- **Experiences of young people who identify as LGBTQ+ and as homeless**, including rough sleeping, core homelessness (Bramley 2017) and 'hidden homelessness'

Our research questions were:

1. Building on existing research, how prevalent is homelessness for young LGBTQ+ people, and how does this vary depending on intersecting characteristics and homelessness definitions?
2. What, if any, geographical variations exist in LGBTQ+ young people's experience of homelessness, and how do these vary depending on intersectional characteristics?
3. What impact do different characteristics, including disability, gender identity, race/ethnicity and religion have on young people's experience of homelessness?
4. What are the experiences of homelessness and services for young people at the fringes of homelessness definitions?
5. What current best practice in service provision currently exists in the sector, particularly from local authorities?

The project has full approval from the University of Kent ethics board (lead institution), and researchers have worked closely with akt staff to ensure that any participants in the research had full anonymity, appropriate compensation

for their time and opportunities for reflection and support throughout the project. Researchers worked together with akt's youth engagement team and with a youth panel, which comprises young people with experience of homelessness, to co-produce the project. Their advice and guidance were invaluable for the shape and process of the research, and their critical insights have affirmed our findings.

Throughout this report we refer to different 'types' of homelessness.

statutory homelessness

When discussing statutory homelessness we mean people who have contacted their local authority and been accepted as homeless and owed a duty according to UK law (Housing Act 1996, Part 7).

rough sleeping

When discussing rough sleeping we mean people who are noted as roofless through official counting strategies, including the annual 'rough sleeper count' snapshot data carried out in each Local Authority area, as well as people who self-define as rough sleeping when seeking support from non-government organisations.

hidden homelessness

The category of hidden homelessness is more challenging to define, as there is no official definition (Hermans and Pleace 2020). We understand hidden homelessness to include anyone who is experiencing homelessness who is not included in statutory statistics. People who are sofa surfing, squatting, staying in unsuitable/unsafe environments and those who are transient between rough sleeping and other temporary arrangements would be included in our definition of hidden homelessness.

2 background

In 2015, akt published the report 'LGBT Youth Homelessness: A UK National Scoping of Cause, Prevalence, Response & Outcome', now one of the most cited pieces of research concerning LGBTQ+ youth homelessness in the UK.

The report found that 24% of young people who experience homelessness identify as LGBTQ+, a figure that echoes similar research in other countries (Ecker 2016, Ecker et al 2019, Fraser et al 2019, McCarthy & Parr 2022). The finding has come under scrutiny in recent years given the challenges of conducting research in this field, partly because of poor data collection from official sources such as government homelessness statistics as the hidden nature of homelessness for this group makes data collection challenging, and partly due to the low number of survey respondents in the original research. Nonetheless the report highlighted crucially important knowledge regarding LGBTQ+ youth homelessness, a field of research that at the time was only just emerging in academia and practice.

Since then, LGBTQ+ homelessness for both young people and adults has become an established field of enquiry globally, and many countries have raised concerns about hidden, marginalised and vulnerable populations experiencing homelessness at higher rates than ever (Carr & Tunaker 2024, McCann & Brown 2019, NZ Stats 2023, Matthews et al 2019, Gov.uk 2024). In 2023 akt commissioned a research team consisting of experts in social anthropology, social policy, politics and law, from the University of Kent, together with the

Universities of Bristol and Southampton, to update the 2015 research. Almost a decade on from the original research, and with significant new political and societal challenges for LGBTQ+ and other vulnerable populations, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, and in an increasingly hostile environment for trans people, this research is timely and necessary.

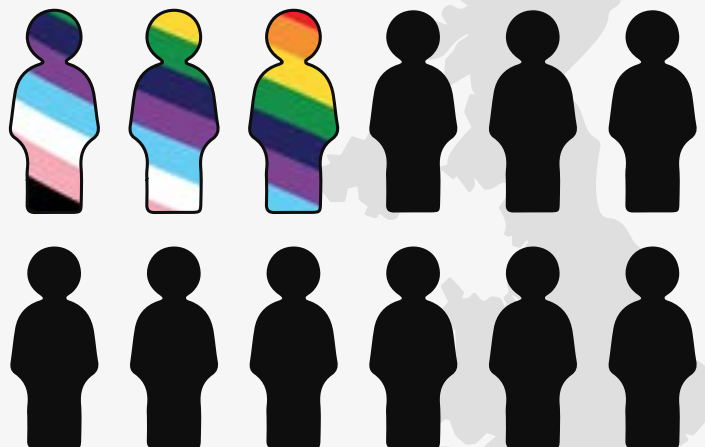
The research team together with akt agreed that the project needed to address not only the experiences of LGBTQ+ young people experiencing homelessness, but also importantly what impact intersecting societal disadvantages have on experiences and journeys through homelessness. Although intersectionality has been highlighted in previous research as an important consideration when examining the impact and possible outcomes and solutions for people experiencing homelessness (Tunaker 2023, Matthews et al 2022, Carr and Tunaker 2024), no intersectional analysis of existing homelessness data has to date been carried out.

This research project therefore explores what an intersectional lens can tell us about who becomes homeless and why, and hopefully will pave the way for future research in homelessness and intersectionality.

24%

of young people who experience homelessness identify as LGBTQ+

(akt's 2015 research report "LGBT Youth Homelessness")



3 methodology

The project used mixed research methods to enable us to analyse the complexity and the full range of issues and experiences relating to LGBTQ+ youth homelessness. The methods have been designed to enable us to analyse and understand three main strands of youth homelessness:

1

Scale/prevalence analysis of primary and secondary data to create a comprehensive understanding of the intersectional factors, including an understanding of geographies of youth homelessness

2

Mapping and understanding young persons' journeys, including by focusing on the differential impact of intersecting inequalities, in particular race, religion, disability and gender and exploring experiences that transgress the porous concept of homelessness

3

Services, specifically housing support and services offered by local authorities, through a multidisciplinary approach using a range of methods to innovate how we establish meaningful data



This included carrying out quantitative analysis to understand trends and likelihood of young LGBTQ+ people to experience different types of homelessness and to understand geographical and intersectional variations. We also carried out qualitative analysis to understand young

people's journeys and experiences, and those of people working in the housing sector. We also carried out a legal review, focusing on variations across local authorities in their application of rules and regulations. The latter to help us identify best practices.



Co-creation has been at the heart of the whole project. We have met with a group of young people at different stages of the research to get their guidance and to advise us on our approaches, the questions asked, our research tools, analysis and findings.

Quantitative Research

We carried out secondary and primary data collection and data analysis to enable us to understand the scale and prevalence and the underlying drivers of young LGBTQ+ people's experiences of homelessness as well as exploring intersectional and geographical variations.

We analysed the following secondary datasets: Understanding Society, CHAIN data on London from Homeless Link and akt user data. It should be noted that gatekeeping and bureaucratic obstacles for obtaining government held data prevented additional analysis needed to examine prevalence and scale. This impedes understanding of and creation of solutions to experiences of homelessness and needs to be urgently addressed. We carried out two large-scale quantitative surveys using the licenced survey programme Qualtrix. One focused on young people, both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ young people enabling us to compare experiences between these groups.

The survey was designed with our youth advisory group and akt staff, with a focus on understanding the characteristics of young LGBTQ+ people experiencing different types of homelessness. With the help of akt staff and other organisations, we achieved 602 responses for the survey. The second survey was aimed specifically at service providers, such as LGBTQ+ services, homeless services and housing providers, for this survey we achieved 80 responses with 54 full responses.

Qualitative Research

Our qualitative research was a combination of virtual and face to face interviews and ethnography.

Interviews:

15 semi-structured interviews were carried out with people with current or previous experience of LGBTQ+ youth homelessness in the different target areas of akt. The overall sample included a range of individuals (by age, gender, education, occupation, ethnicity, disability etc.), targeting samples that will ensure breadth of sexual orientations and gender identities in each area. The interviews used 'life history' methods, aiming to obtain a broad understanding of the experiences, journeys and feelings regarding LGBTQ+ youth homelessness. To ensure safety and wellbeing of participants, a member of the akt team was

available onsite or virtually, and all participants were offered wellbeing check-ins following their interviews. Some of the interviews were carried out via Microsoft Teams or by phone, and the geographic spread of participants covered the whole of England. We also completed 10 interviews with akt members of staff from different teams and roles, including the 4 main offices and the digital team, and roles ranging from support workers/case workers, engagement workers and managers.

Ethnographic work and participant observation:

We visited three key locations where akt have offices and immersed ourselves into the daily activities in each location. The locations we visited were Manchester, Newcastle and London. In each location we spoke with staff members on site about key challenges and areas of work, as well as speaking to other organisations in the area with relevant expertise.

Virtual ethnography:

We completed 'area scoping' by finding out what services are available in each area, mapping out services used by young people and connected with them to understand needs in their area. The aim of this method was to immerse ourselves, as much as possible, within the virtual and physical worlds of the areas of study. We also spoke with some local authority officials and other organisations working either with homelessness, with LGBTQ+ young people or both.

Co-production:

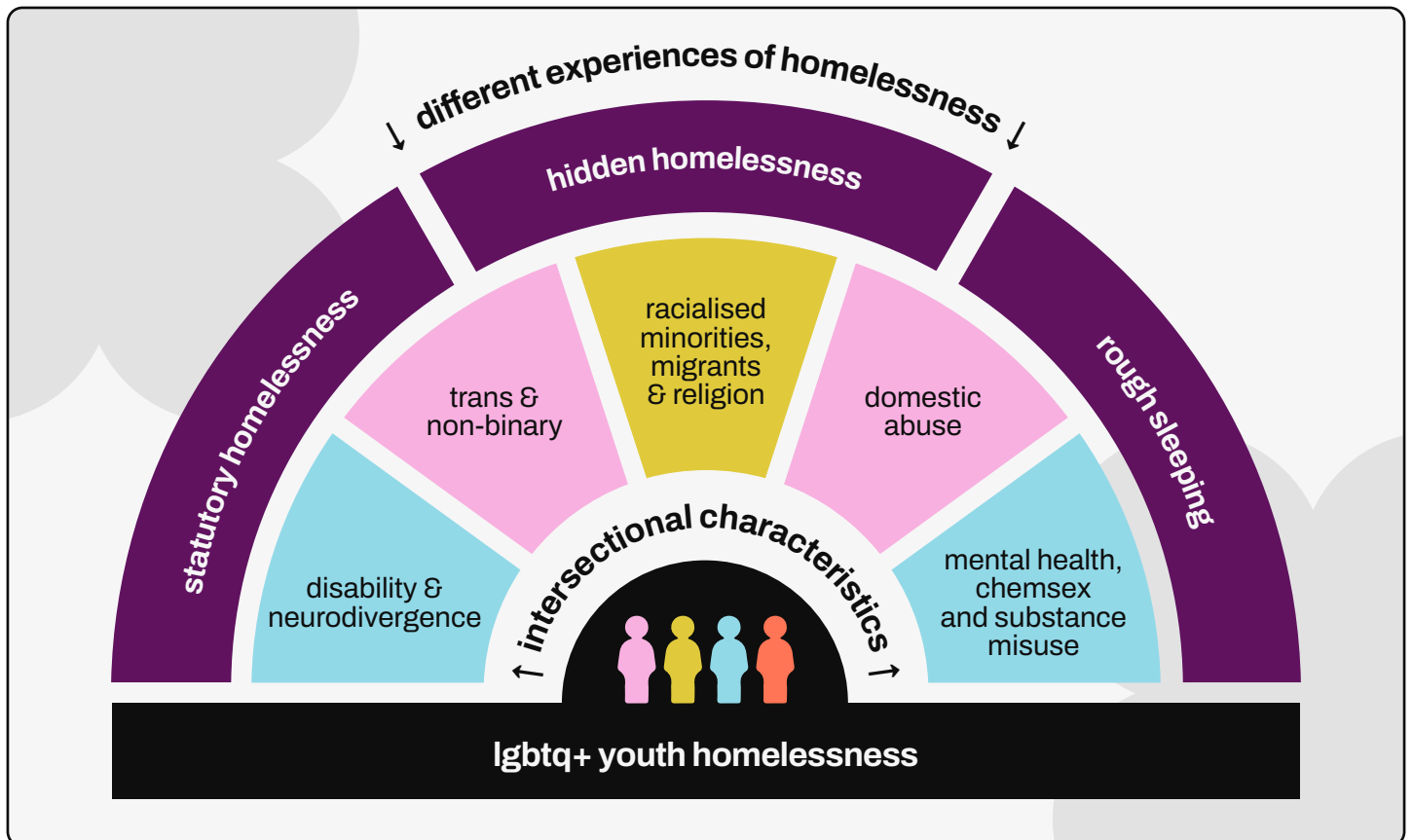
Throughout the project, from the initial scoping and setting survey questions, as well as for review and continuous reflection, we collaborated with akt's youth engagement team and a youth panel consisting of young people with experience of LGBTQ+ youth homelessness, either currently or in the recent past. This included virtual group sessions where we discussed the project together and formulated ideas at each phase of the research.

4 what does homelessness look like for lgbtq+ young people?

The quantitative part of this study set out to map the scale and prevalence of experiences of homelessness among LGBTQ+ young people. It is notoriously difficult to get accurate estimates of these experiences. To address the limitations that would occur with only one single study, we have analysed both existing datasets as well as carried out two surveys ourselves.

What we find is a complex story where LGBTQ+ young people are not only at high risk of different types of homelessness, but that their experiences are often not counted or are underestimated in government data and in rough sleeping counts. This finding is not surprising and is in line with findings from the Women's Census (Wright et al 2024). We analyse the multifaceted nature of homelessness by looking at statutory government data, hidden homelessness and rough sleeping, and highlight important differences between these.

We also demonstrate the need for intersectional analysis that highlights how different characteristics intersect with experiences of homelessness.



Summary overview of statistical findings

- The proportion of young LGBTQ+ people who experience homelessness far outweighs the share of overall youth homelessness across different types of homelessness.
- Our study shows the need for a multidimensional approach to studying homelessness, both in terms of types of data and intersectional analysis.
- To address the experience of homelessness among young LGBTQ+ people we need to understand the complex, and different sets of needs emerging from the different experiences of homelessness (statutory, rough sleeping and hidden homelessness), and the combinations of intersectional characteristics associated with these experiences.
- **Statutory homelessness data:** It was not possible to analyse government data as the government does not provide the granular data that would allow us to understand the scale of experiences of homelessness amongst young LGBTQ+ people. However, according to official figures, 4% are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other, and 1% in temporary accommodation are 'other gender' across all age groups.
- **Hidden homelessness:** LGBTQ+ people across age groups were more than twice as likely to experience hidden homelessness as non-LGBTQ+ people. When it comes to hidden homelessness, being LGBTQ+ and from a racialised minority means you are 50% more likely to experience hidden homelessness. Furthermore, more men (75%) respondents who were LGBTQ+ experience hidden homelessness. Young people with mental health issues are more likely to experience hidden homelessness. Alcohol use was not associated with young LGBTQ+ people experiencing hidden homelessness.
- **Rough sleeping:** Whereas the majority population of young people sleeping rough were men, the gender distribution among young LGBTQ+ people sleeping rough includes young people across genders. The majority of young LGBTQ+ people found rough sleeping are UK nationals and White British. 80% of LGBTQ+ people rough sleeping live with mental health issues. They have higher support needs for drug use (42%), and alcohol use (27%), and are more likely to have support needs for two or more issues. The data on non-binary LGBTQ+ individuals is unreliable and vary depending on local authority, which indicates need for better training and more detailed data collection. This is also true when it comes to understanding how we can ensure that local authorities provide LGBTQ+ individuals with suitable accommodation.



Young people survey:

- Most of the 26% of respondents who reported having experienced homelessness, had experienced hidden homelessness.
- Young LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be homeless compared to non-LGBTQ+ young people, 35% likelihood for LGBTQ+ young people compared to 15% for a non-LGBTQ+ individual.
- Trans youth were found to be particularly vulnerable, with 37% expected to experience homelessness compared to 22% of cis-gender youth.
- Non-binary individuals were twice as likely to be at risk of homelessness compared to women, and bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, asexual people, or those with another non-heterosexual identity (30%) were twice as likely as heterosexual young individuals (15%) to be at risk of homelessness.
- Young people with mental health conditions (37%) were found to be significantly more likely to have experienced homelessness compared to those without mental health conditions (19%).

Likelihood of homelessness by demographic

35% LGBTQ+ vs **15%** Non-LGBTQ+

37% Trans youth vs **22%** Cis-gender youth

30% Non-heterosexual vs **15%** Heterosexual

37% With mental health conditions vs **19%** Without mental health conditions

Organisation survey:

- Most organisations* collect gender (95%) and sexuality (85%) related data, with 80% specifically collecting information about trans and non-binary identities.
- Most organisations provide Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training (65%). However, only 10% of housing providers provide accommodation services exclusively targeting LGBTQ+ youth. Another 5% focus predominantly on LGBTQ+ service users, while 10% offer some services for LGBTQ+ youth as part of a broader accommodation framework.

*Surveyed service providers, such as LGBTQ+ services, homeless services and housing providers.

Addressing LGBTQ+ homelessness

65%

of organisations provide **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training** but only...

10%

provide **accommodation services exclusively targeting LGBTQ+ youth**

- Organisations have limited internal knowledge (47%) of young LGBTQ+ homelessness, with 41% stated that LGBTQ+ homelessness is not a priority in their services.

Overview of government data

Statutory government data (MHCLG 2024) from the first quarter of 2024 underestimates experiences of homelessness recording that 4% are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other, and 1% in temporary accommodation are 'other gender'. In a report from 2021 the Office for National Statistics found that:

"Of people identified as homeless, more than double identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or "other" (LGB+) (8%) than in the rest of the population of England and Wales (3%). More people identified as homeless chose not to answer the question (14%) compared with the rest of the population of England and Wales (8%)" (ONS, 2021).



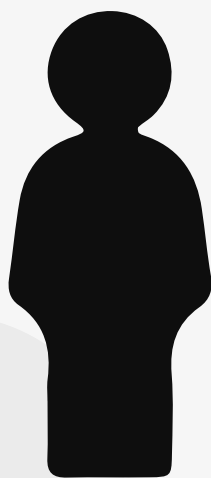
Data on statutory homelessness is not available in a format that allows for intersectional analysis, which is a barrier for a deeper understanding of the drivers and experiences of homelessness among young LGBTQ+ people.

Hidden homelessness

- Using the 'Understanding Society' survey, a longitudinal survey run and coordinated by the University of Essex, we created a measurement of probable, hidden, homelessness. This followed the methodology of Bramley et al. (2022), who generated a homelessness variable based on the presence of indicators of probable homelessness.* Hidden homelessness for young LGBTQ+ people has not been possible to accurately estimate previously, and these findings therefore give us a unique understanding of this dimension. We found that LGBTQ+ people across age groups were more than twice as likely to experience hidden homelessness than non-LGBTQ+ people. This was proven through logistic regression analysis before adjusting for age and other characteristics.
 - Being of a minoritised ethnicity matters. Being LGBTQ+ and of a racialised minority means you are 50% more likely to experience hidden homelessness, which is statically significant (at 10% level).
 - Gender matters. This is an area that needs to be explored further. For example, more men (75%)
- respondents who were LGBTQ+ also experienced hidden homelessness (statistically significant at 10% level).
 - Young people with mental health issues are more likely to experience hidden homelessness. For non-LGBTQ+ people improving mental health leads to lower likelihood of hidden homelessness but improving mental health does not reduce risks of hidden homelessness for LGBTQ+ people showing that there is a far more complex set of drivers of homelessness for this population.
 - LGBTQ+ people who experience mental health issues have a lower likelihood of hidden homelessness. This could be because they either are experiencing other kinds of homelessness or are getting support via mental health care.
 - Alcohol use was not associated with young LGBTQ+ people experiencing hidden homelessness.
 - Young people were more likely than other age groups to be experiencing hidden homelessness.



>



x2

x1

LGBTQ+ people are
twice
as likely

to experience hidden homelessness than non-LGBTQ+ people

Young people are also more likely than other age groups to experience hidden homelessness.

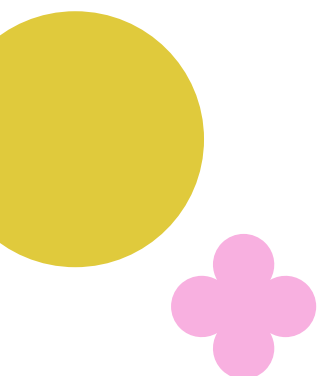
*These indicators include experiencing relationship separation, eviction, being offered new accommodation by the council, making multiple moves, or having a previous dwelling type categorised as an institution or other temporary accommodation.

Rough sleeping

To understand the scale of rough sleeping we obtained CHAIN data from Homeless Link, analysed by Homeless Link staff. The data only included data from the London boroughs, and did not include other areas included in the larger CHAIN dataset. However, this represents a unique, robust dataset on rough sleeping. The data covers the years 2019-2024. The analysis allowed us to compare descriptive data on all young people and compare it to LGBTQ+ young people. As the findings below show, LGBTQ+ young people sleeping rough have different characteristics from the larger group of young people.

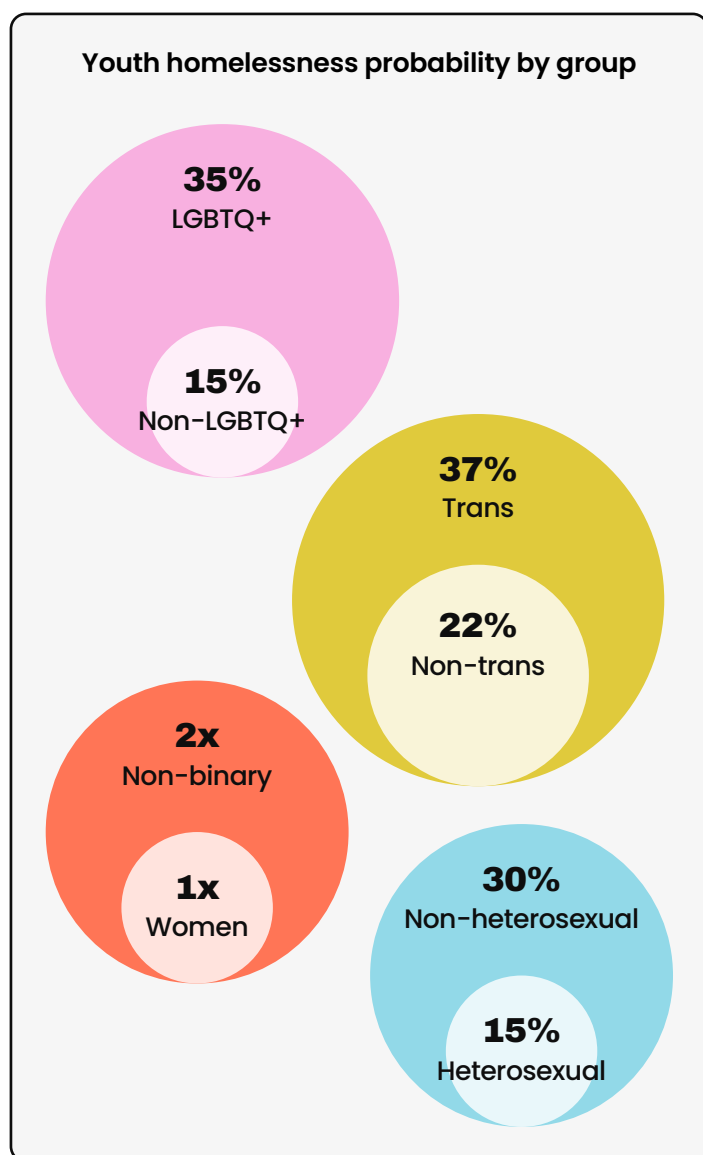
The following findings stood out:

- Inconsistent with findings across all categories of young people, which shows majority of rough sleepers are men, our research found no gender majority among LGBTQ+ rough sleepers. Overall data tells us that more men sleep rough than women, whereas within LGBTQ+ populations this is not the case. This has also been questioned by findings in the Women's census, and we expect more accurate counting would reveal even higher percentages of women and non-binary individuals even in the overall datasets.
- The majority of young LGBTQ+ people rough sleeping are UK nationals and are White British, although a significant proportion of young homeless people are from Black or Black British African backgrounds. In 2023/2024, 39% of young LGBTQ+ individuals found sleeping rough were White British, with 13% identifying as Black or Black British African. This can be contrasted with the higher number of minoritised ethnicities among those experiencing hidden homelessness, as highlighted in hidden homelessness analyses. This might be due to undercounting but also due to factors such as safety and a higher number of this group experiencing hidden homelessness.
- Among the young LGBTQ+ people rough sleeping there is a much higher percentage living with mental health issues (80% compared to 35% of all young people).
- They also have higher support needs for drug use (42% of LGBTQ+ versus 14% of all young people) and alcohol use (27% of LGBTQ+ versus 11% of all young people) than the broader population of young people, and are more likely to have support needs for two or more issues (across mental health and drug use).
- We do not know how disability has been measured, and the trend varies, although LGBTQ+ young people are more frequently reporting having a disability (13% versus 3% for all young people in 2023/24).
- The percentage of non-binary LGBTQ+ individuals is low, ranging from 3-6% and varies depending on local authority which indicates that it is due to training and awareness in the different boroughs rather than an actual variation in real numbers.
- Large variations in reported numbers by boroughs highlights need for training. Camden, Lambeth, Croydon and Newham are reporting the highest numbers of LGBTQB+ young people sleeping rough.
- In terms of accommodation, LGBTQ+ people do not get sent to the same accommodation as young people generally, with variations as to where they are sent across the years. What is consistent is that LGBTQ+ young people must be seen as having a separate set of issues, which is supported by our findings, but that there is no adequate provision for them.



Online survey among young people

The analysis is based on an online survey with 602 young people (16–25 years old) in the sample, focusing particularly those who identify as LGBTQ+. 78% of young people in the sample identify as bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, asexual, or other non-heterosexual orientations, with only 22% identifying as heterosexual. Most respondents identify as women, including trans women (63%), while 21% identify as men, including trans men. Additionally, 13% identify as non-binary, and 4% are unsure or questioning their gender identity, reflecting the diversity of gender identities in the sample. This demographic was chosen to explore the specific challenges and experiences related to homelessness within this community, which is often at a higher risk for housing instability and related issues. The survey was distributed through social media, targeting LGBTQ+ young people with experiences of homelessness. It was also distributed via organisations working with either homelessness or LGBTQ+ youth nationally.



Key findings:

- Approximately 26% of respondents reported having experienced homelessness. Among this group, the most frequently reported duration of homelessness was 1–6 months (38%). The majority first experienced homelessness between the ages of 18 and 21 (36%).
- ‘Sofa surfing’ (staying with friends) emerged as the most common form of homelessness, affecting 67% of respondents. In contrast, only 16% reported staying in hostels during periods of homelessness, highlighting a significant reliance on informal support networks.
- Disability and mental health conditions are widespread among young people who experience homelessness. A substantial proportion of respondents (32%) reported having disabilities, with 37% of this group reporting physical, visual, hearing, or sensory disabilities. Mental health conditions are even more prevalent, affecting 80% of respondents. Young people with mental health conditions (37%) were found to be significantly more likely to have experienced homelessness compared to those without mental health conditions (19%) (statistically significant at the 5% level).
- LGBTQ+ young people face significantly higher risks of homelessness compared to their non-LGBTQ+ peers. LGBTQ+ young individuals had a homelessness probability of 35%, compared to 15% for non-LGBTQ+ individuals (statistically significant at the 1% level). Trans youth were found to be particularly vulnerable, with 37% expected to experience homelessness compared to 22% of cis-gender youth (statistically significant at the 1% level). Non-binary individuals were also shown to have twice the risk of homelessness compared to women (statistically significant at the 1% level). Additionally, young individuals identifying as bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, asexual, or another non-heterosexual identity (30%) have also double the risks of experienced homelessness, compared to heterosexual young individuals (15%) (statistically significant at the 1% level).
- Finally, there is some evidence that trans young people with physical, visual, hearing, or sensory disabilities may face significantly higher homelessness risks compared to those without such disabilities or who are cis-gender.

Online survey among organisations

The analysis was based on an online survey with 80 participants (54 providing full responses) who work in homeless/housing, youth, or LGBTQ+ related organisations. The survey mainly focused on organisational characteristics and the services provided to LGBTQ+ young people. Among the organisations surveyed (allowing for multiple responses), 50% offer housing advice and support services, while 13% operate day-centre models. Emergency shelters make up 9% of organisations and 26% identified as "Other," including local authorities, housing charities, and youth charities, reflecting the diverse range of services and approaches to supporting LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness.



Challenges for organisations

47%

lack of internal knowledge



41%

don't see LGBTQ+ homelessness as a priority



38%

varying referral services



What will help?



greater resources



awareness



political support

Key findings:

- Most organisations operate as charitable non-profitmaking (91%) and function independently of local authorities, with only a small portion fully integrated into government systems, indicating potential limitations in formal partnerships and resource access.
- Majority of organisations collect gender (95%) and sexuality (85%) related data, with 80% specifically collecting information about trans and non-binary identities. Most organisations provide Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training (65%), with 58% of respondents reported organisations or initiatives to refer LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness in their area. However, few housing services specifically target LGBTQ+ youth. For instance, among these identified as housing providers, only a small proportion (10%) provide accommodation services exclusively targeting LGBTQ+ youth. Another 5% focus predominantly on LGBTQ+ service users, while 10% offer some services for LGBTQ+ youth as part of a broader accommodation framework.
- Organisations face significant challenges such as limited internal knowledge (47%), lack of funding, and LGBTQ+ homelessness not being a priority (41%), with referral services varying across regions (38%), suggesting a need for greater resources, awareness, and political support.

5 how intersectionality impacts on young lgbtq+ people's experience

a. Introduction to Intersectionality

In recent years, homelessness research has highlighted that societal disadvantage is likely to exacerbate experiences of homelessness, and people with 'protected characteristics', as defined by the Equality Act 2010, are more likely to become homeless than White, non-disabled cis-hetero people. The Equality Act outlines age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership (in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation as characteristics that are afforded protection from direct and indirect discrimination in the UK (with more limited protections in Northern Ireland). Whilst research has found concerns for specific groups, such as people who identify as LGBTQ+ (Tunaker 2023), those from ethnic minority backgrounds (Bramley 2022), disabled people (Housing Rights Watch 2018), and migrant populations (Bramley et al 2021), the intersecting nature of experiences remains unexplored. The Covid-19 pandemic revealed existing 'multiple and interrelating structures of inequality' (Maestripieri 2021: 1) that taken together increase the risk of homelessness.

Inequalities in housing are reflected in the quality of housing and the security of tenure

provided, and as Clark et al (2022) argue, some groups are more susceptible to 'evictions, isolation, mental health crises, violence and financial distress'. Disabled and neurodivergent people, people who identify as LGBTQ+, and people from racialised minorities are likely to experience marginalisation, micro aggressions and discrimination in society, and a combination of one or more are therefore also more susceptible to homelessness.

Homelessness is often the result of combinations of various forms of social disadvantage. In homelessness law and policy there are many discussions about 'deserving' and 'undeserving' social welfare claimants, or about whether homelessness is the result of individual problems or structural failings. Intersectionality crosscuts these approaches by focussing on the consequences a person's characteristics, many of which are out of their control, such as oppression based on a person's skin colour, a person's sexual orientation or whether they are disabled.

Intersectionality is a theory that stems from Critical Race Theory and Black Feminism. The term was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a renowned critical race theorist and key proponent of "intersectionality theory", an

Core ideas of intersectionality



A person with **more than one** intersecting disadvantage is located at the **cross sections** of these roads



*Structural, disciplinary, cultural and interpersonal

approach that suggests that identity politics has failed to embrace multiple forms of difference by relegating these to group differences (Crenshaw 1989, 2017). The intersections of race, gender and class together create new power dimensions and marginality that need to be examined when studying oppression and discrimination. The theory itself has grown in popularity over recent years and is now often applied in various contexts to talk about intersecting aspects of disadvantage, discrimination and oppression.

One way to think of intersectionality, according to Crenshaw, is as an intersection of roads, where a person with more than one intersecting disadvantage is located at the cross section of those roads. The reason it is important to pay attention to intersectionality, is because power relations do not affect everyone in the same way. According to Patricia Collins and Sirma Bilge in their important writings on intersectionality, using this concept can dismantle the operations of interconnected power relations on global, national and local scales. They show how global social and economic inequality affects people differently alongside the lines of race, gender, class, age, sexuality and citizenship status (among others), and how lived experiences of intersecting oppression and exploitation can give rise to activism. The authors present six core ideas of intersectionality as an analytical tool: social inequality, intersecting power relations (structural, disciplinary, cultural and interpersonal), social context, relationality, social justice and complexity. So, to be able to understand inequalities, we need to look at how they work together, how they overlap and are interwoven in complex ways to create even more social disadvantage for people. Collins and others engage in debates regarding how we can utilise intersectionality theory to theorise social inequality in ways that would facilitate social change. It offers a way of understanding how power operates, and how it can be contested. Collins and Bilge explain that “...in a given society at a given time, power relations of race, class, and gender, for example, are not discrete and mutually exclusive entities, but rather build on each other and work together; and that, while often invisible, these intersecting power relations affect all aspects of the social world” (Collins & Bilge 2020: 1). This is exceptionally important to consider when we analyse disadvantages that are commonly discussed in homelessness research, because more often than not we consider them in silos.



What we have found from this research is that there is immense complexity interwoven with people’s experiences of homelessness and intersecting disadvantages. Looking at sexual orientation or gender identity alone will not show us the full picture. We need to think about how disadvantages **intersect** to create unique pathways to homelessness and what we need to adjust in our approaches to alleviation and prevention for the combined challenges of social disadvantages.

b. Trans and Non-binary

“[When] I came out as bisexual, it was faced with a bit more hostility than my brother being gay. I would get all sorts of, it was just jokes with my sexuality, just like me being greedy or I think one of the things was said was I had spins on my ass from being on the fence all the time and stuff like that up. But when I came out in terms of being non-binary, it was a much bigger issue. It was very hush hush.”

– non-binary person, South-West

One notable aspect emerging from this research is that LGBTQ+ young people feel that while stigma against non-heterosexual relationships has reduced over time, acceptance of trans and non-binary identities has not. Several interviewees remarked that while their family has accepted their sexual orientation, they were ultimately forced out of their housing due to their gender. Others noted that their families had been “not great” regarding sexual orientation but that their response had been significantly worsened by further disclosures regarding interviewees’ gender. This did not only amount to a lack of acceptance, but in a number of cases involved threatened or actual physical and sexual violence, which is also reflected more generally in the increasing amount of hate crimes perpetrated against trans people in England and Wales (conversely sexual orientation related hate crime are decreasing, see Home Office 2 November 2023).

Understandably interviewees felt that this extreme hostility to their gender identity had in many cases triggered or worsened various mental health conditions. This dynamic, with more acceptance for sexual orientation than gender identity, was also felt as being reflected in society at large, for instance one interviewee noted that they were even misgendered at Pride. There was some suggestion that in this context larger cities provided safer living arrangements due to greater inclusivity for gender non-conforming people rather than ‘just’ for LGB people. This was also supported in the quantitative part of the research, with 37% of trans and non-binary people expected to experience homelessness compared to 22% of cis-gender people.

“Luckily, I know I will adapt my appearance in order to get what I need. But for some people that’s going to cause severe dysphoria. And it’s just like I have to put myself in the shoes of some of the people that I’ve met who, I mean by the time you’re homeless, if you’re trans, you are not going to have access to gender affirming care. Most of the time you are struggling. And people judge a lot based off appearances.”

– non-binary person, London

Young people who did not identify as cis gender highlighted that their gender identity had put them in a worse situation regarding stable housing. Conversely lacking stable accommodation also made it harder for them to live as trans and non-binary people, since not having a permanent address was felt to make it impossible to access gender affirming care. Given that most gender identity clinics currently have waiting lists exceeding two years, with some exceeding five years, this is plausible as a change of location could force someone to start all over at a new clinic and rejoin the bottom of the relevant waiting list (Zaccaro and Fagg 2024).

Having to pay for items related to gender affirming care, as noted by interviewees, also creates additional financial stressors, which in turn may negatively impact young people’s ability to access stable housing. Interviewees felt that being trans also made accessing homelessness services riskier, with several noting that they had chosen not to use shelters because they were worried about their personal safety as a potentially non-passing trans person (this is a relatively consistent concern replicated in other research, see England 2024).



c. Disability and Neurodivergence

“Yes, I’ve got an appointment actually on, I don’t know what date it’s, it’ll be in the calendar, but I’ve got an appointment for talking therapy with the [an LGBTQ service]. And that took, absolutely, that’s took, I think [12] months it’s took since last year, August to receive this.”

– gay man, North-West

There are documented links between being LGBTQ+ and neurodivergent, with studies suggesting that people who are neurodivergent are more likely to be trans and/or gender diverse (Warrier et al 2020). From our survey with young people (N=602) we found that disability and mental health conditions are widespread among young people who experience homelessness. Service workers noted that they felt there was a high percentage of young people they work with who are neurodivergent or autistic, which was also reflected in the interview data from young people. Similarly to issues around gender affirming care, interviewees also reported that they had trouble accessing diagnosis and support for conditions on the neurodiversity spectrum, which is in line with the fact that these NHS services currently have extremely long wait times (NHS Digital 8 August 2024), as well as support for mental health conditions, again due to long NHS wait lists. Consequently, service workers reported that they felt a lot of the young people they interacted with had to rely on self-diagnosis.

“I got kicked out at the start of December due to some family trouble. Family trouble had been going on for years. Part of it was who I was dating at the time as well. I know that played a factor into it. I am still with my partner now, but that influenced it. And also my mental health as well, because I suffer with autism and depression anxiety, and my parents didn’t really take the time to take into consideration that I needed additional support and that sort of thing. And it escalated and I ended up being kicked out because of it.”

– non-binary person, North-West

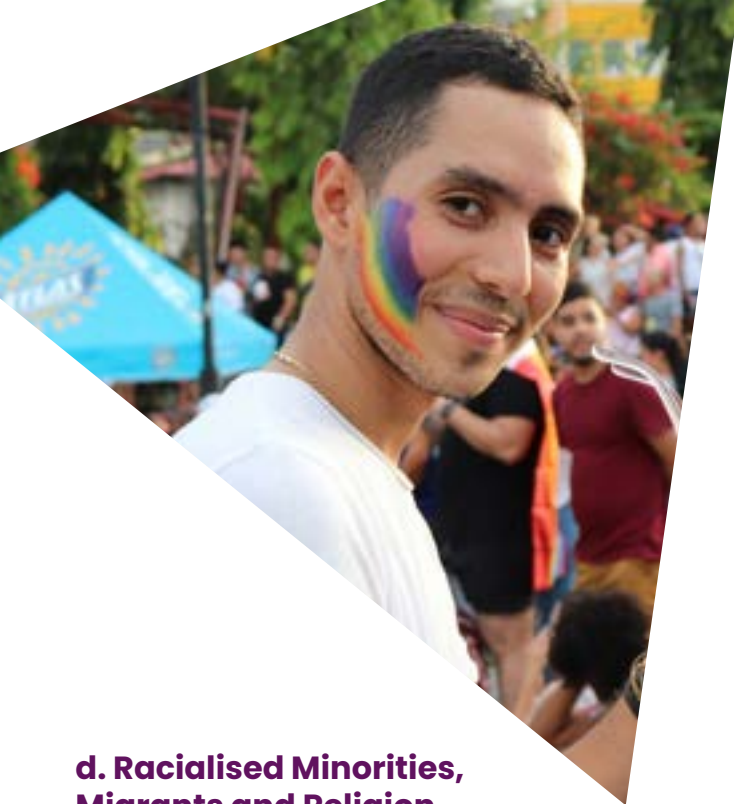
A substantial proportion of respondents (32%) reported having disabilities, with 37% of them indicating physical, visual, hearing, or sensory disabilities. Some service workers noted that in their area this number seemed to be significantly higher, reporting up to 80% having a disability. This is also an intersectional issue, as several interviewees noted, the hostility and stigma they faced due to being trans triggered or worsened mental health conditions.

Having a disability, mental health condition or

“I’m not able to live in a shared accommodation because of being autistic, and I’ve got anxiety conditions and stuff, and I just can’t cope with being around people when I’m not choosing to be around people, if you know what I mean.”

– trans woman, North-West

being on the neurodivergent spectrum also posed challenges around finding housing. One interviewee commented that the long wait for disability benefits (including PIP) had a significant detrimental impact on their housing situation due to the precarious financial position they were left in while waiting for the DWP. Similarly, interviewees noted that mental health conditions made certain kinds of housing, e.g. student housing, inherently unsuitable for them while also simultaneously making it harder to find and stay in employment. This also applied for physical conditions, either because it meant people required accessible housing or because disability aids, such as service dogs, may make someone more likely to be rejected for certain kinds of housing despite disability discrimination being unlawful under The Equality Act 2010. Service workers also reflected on the fact that being disabled can make it harder to find and stay in employment, making a disabled person more likely to experience homelessness, which has also been documented in international research as a widespread issue (Housing Rights Watch 2018). In the UK this is further compounded due to a lack of accessible social and private housing (House of Commons Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee 20 May 2024), with only 7% of housing in England having the most basic accessibility features.



d. Racialised Minorities, Migrants and Religion

Although people from racialised minorities do not represent a large proportion of people experiencing homelessness, it is nonetheless disproportionate in comparison to the number of people from racialised minorities nationally, with research showing that people from Black and Mixed ethnic backgrounds experience the highest risks of homelessness, 3.5 times higher than White UK-born people (Bramley 2022). In our research we found that more than half of men and women young homeless clients registered in akt identify as Black or from other minority ethnic groups, while fewer trans men and women come from these backgrounds. Ethnicity plays a significant role in the experiences of young homeless people, particularly in the context of also identifying as LGBTQ. Our qualitative research found that people from Traveller, Gypsy or Roma backgrounds have specific needs and require tailored support (see Greenfields 2017). Intersections with gender roles and expectations and domestic abuse were highlighted as especially important for this group. Young migrants with no recourse to public funds are also among those whose experience of homelessness is particularly challenging due to language barriers, lack of options for support and histories of trauma (see Boobis et al 2019).

Crucially, we found that LGBTQ+ young people from racialised minority backgrounds are more likely to experience hidden homelessness, and that most of those sleeping rough where UK nationals and from White British background.

There are particular issues at play here that need attention, to ensure we are providing adequate support to these hidden groups of young people; something which is made extremely difficult by the invisible nature of hidden homelessness. We found from our qualitative work that many LGBTQ+ people from racialised minorities did not feel safe to sleep rough, and instead had to seek out alternatives such as using dating apps to find a place to stay for the night, or staying awake in cafes, public transport or clubs. This means they are not visible in rough sleeping statistics nor in statutory data on homelessness.

Intersections are important to consider regarding ethnic identity. In our research we found that not only are ethnic minorities disproportionately represented in the data on homelessness, but also that the type of homelessness had significant bearing on this intersection. More people from racialised minorities are experiencing hidden homelessness, rather than rough sleeping. The reason for this is a question of safety; young people from Black and Mixed ethnic minority backgrounds do not feel safe sleeping in public spaces due to high levels of harassment and violence. There are also intersections with religion and neurodiversity that affect LGBTQ+ people from racialised minorities, particularly in how cultural and religious values shape experiences. In our statistical evaluations, we found that religion shows a slightly significant correlation with sexual orientation. Gay and Pansexual young homeless people (around 60%) are marginally more likely to have a religious affiliation than other groups (around 40%), though the difference is small.

A member of staff at akt explained:

“Often when there’s those intersections with ethnicity or religion, that can be more difficult because especially if they’re a migrant, for example, they’re trying to integrate into society, but they actually don’t feel safe being around people from their own culture, maybe because of homophobia or transphobia. I’ve [supported] a Pakistani trans woman saying, ‘I don’t want to be in an area with Asian people because I just don’t feel safe there.’”

– staff member, akt

People from Black and Mixed ethnic backgrounds mentioned facing barriers in the housing market, with discrimination from landlords and from councils when making homeless applications. Many instances referred to microaggressions. A young person we interviewed explained how the intersection of their gender identity and ethnicity caused issues when they sought help from a charity:

“Even when I went to a homeless youth centre, I was going up to this woman we were talking, they were like, oh, you don’t need to use that silly pronoun stuff, do you? Because I guess we were both Black, right? And it’s like, no, I actually am. But I couldn’t really say that.”

– non-binary person, London

Many of our interviewees mentioned issues in the family home stemming from religious beliefs in the family. Our respondents from Christian and Muslim backgrounds said that religious and cultural beliefs were catalysts to arguments in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity, both directly and indirectly. Some had experiences of conversion therapy, and some had been encouraged to maintain binary identities, arranged heterosexual marriages, or imposed prayers for

heterosexuality. In other situations, experiences were more subtle but led to serious consequences such as repressed emotions and mental health issues. Many who spoke to us about faith recognised it as challenging, especially for those who wanted to reconcile faith, culture and LGBTQ+ identities and found families and friends less willing to do so. An interviewee from a Muslim family explained the challenges of disclosing a change in gender identity:

“My mum was very heavy on me being a female in the way I talked and the way I presented myself. It sort of made a lot of conflicts in the house. She was afraid of me not being this thing that she was taught was bad. I think culture also plays a part as well because it’s like you’re always worrying about, especially in our culture, you are always worrying about what your neighbours are going to say about you, what lies they’re going to spread. Because if one person in the family is sort of a f-k up, unquote, then it sort of affects everybody else in the family.”

– trans man, North-West



from nadeem’s story:

“In our religion, they got something in our faith, they got something more like you did a big mistake. So they were forcing me to accept, they’re forcing their faith on me as well. And that kind of pushed me from the faith or me away from the faith. And that once they forced me to, you can stay if I ask for forgiveness. So I kind of forced myself to do that. And then they had the audacity to say, we didn’t force you to do anything and we didn’t put a gun to your head or

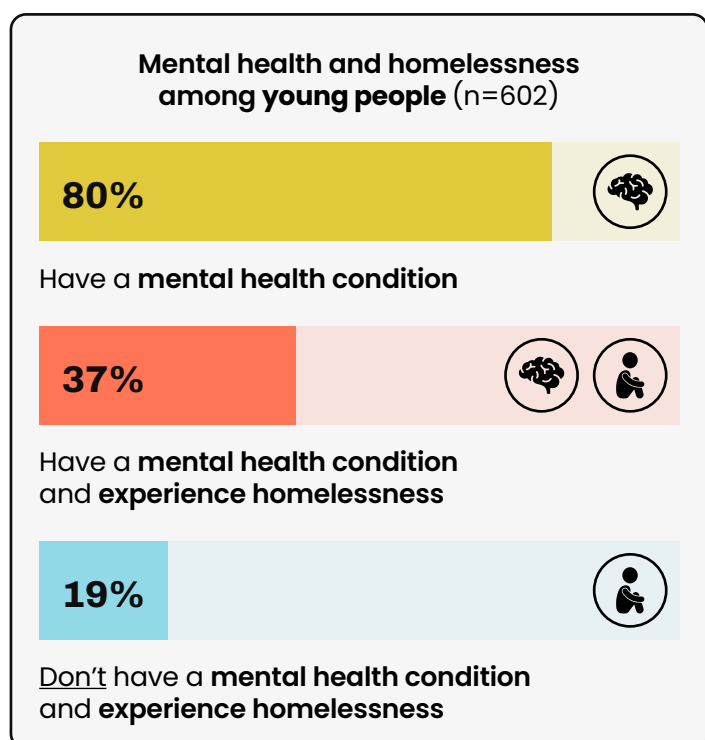
something. I’m like, there’s other ways of forcing it. At that time I was just being gaslit. I didn’t know what understanding anything. And maybe it’s because I’m neurodivergent and autistic, I just took it literally. But they were like, you have to ask for forgiveness, then you can stay at home. And I did that just for my own safety. And I managed to stay at my parents’ house. [...] I just had no safe space to go. And I literally crumbled and got depressed, but at least I had some friends during college time that I could just escape to and be myself. But in school I didn’t have that. I just crumbled.”



Nadeem’s story shows how not only do experiences based on faith, neurodiversity, cultural specificities and LGBTQ+ identities influence outcomes in silos. It is the intersection of experiences that renders Nadeem’s challenges particularly difficult. To support Nadeem, we need to understand exactly how intersecting factors in his life compound and we need to see his experience as holistic, complex and intertwined.

e. Mental Health, Chemsex and Substance Misuse

From our survey with young people (N=602) we found that disability and mental health conditions are widespread among young people who experience homelessness. According to our data, 80% of respondents had some type of mental health condition. As noted in our statistical findings, young people with mental health conditions (37%) were also found to be significantly more likely to have experienced homelessness compared to those without mental health conditions (19%).



In addition to this, the findings from akt data also highlighted that trans men and non-binary young homeless individuals are significantly more likely to report mental health issues compared to other gender groups. Lesbian, Pansexual, and Queer individuals also reported higher levels of mental health problems. In our qualitative interviews we found that there were high levels of complexity in mental ill-health and many of our research participants reported having to wait a long time for support, and that the support offered often did not sufficiently meet their needs as LGBTQ+ young people. A member of staff from akt who works with digital services across the country explained some of the complex and intersecting challenges relating to mental health that young people they support face:

“I’d say a lot of young people are either on a waiting list for some kind of talking therapy or they’ve not even bothered to self-refer because of the waiting lists. And often in that case, if they’re not receiving any support, then they’re repeatedly in some form of crisis or experiencing self-harm or suicidal ideation. So again, we’re often having to look for those LGBTQ+ inclusive mental health services. That’s really having a big impact I think, on how we can deliver our service because there’s a need for us to be so much more trauma informed, psychologically informed, the level of risk that we are seeing overall in our young people has increased. So there’s much more work that needs to be done around safeguarding and risk management. And I think that’s a combination of obviously a young person facing housing issues, but also the general hostile environment in the UK. And that hostile environment obviously then feeds into how families and communities treat our young people and how those young people see themselves, but also how professionals treat them.”

– staff member, akt

We also found through our qualitative research that mental health issues commonly lead to barriers in housing. For example, being unable to share housing with other people and therefore not being able to rent privately as the Local Housing Authority (LHA) will only cover a shared room rate, or young LGBTQ+ people being placed in unsuitable or unsafe housing situation where they experience high levels of discrimination, bullying and hate crime, which exacerbates mental health concerns. Additionally, young LGBTQ+ people are more likely to have experienced trauma, suffer from PTSD, adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) and be survivors of sexual abuse and familial abuse of various forms, which our interviews with both young people of staff confirmed.

Our data did not reveal significant issues with substance misuse for young people experiencing LGBTQ+ homelessness. What we were able to establish was a correlation between higher levels of drug and alcohol misuse and rough sleeping, compared to sofa surfing or hidden homelessness. This indicates that young people who sleep rough are more likely to turn to substance misuse than those who live precariously or hidden.

This underscores the importance of challenging homelessness stereotypes; young people's homelessness is rarely caused by substance misuse. However, one prominent issue among LGBTQ+ young people is survival sex - using the party scene, dating apps and so-called 'chemsex' to find a place to stay. Chemsex is a term referring mostly to men who have sex with men, who engage in unprotected sex whilst under the influence of drugs with the aim of enhancing sexual experiences. It is also known as 'Party and Play' (PnP) or 'High and Horny' (HnH). In the United Kingdom, it involves the use of drugs like mephedrone, GHB, GBL, and crystallized methamphetamine (McCall 2015). Survival sex, defined as trading sex to meet one's survival needs, and sex work, are cited in literature as being more common among LGBTQ+ youth than their cis-hetero counterparts. Fraser et al (2019) in their global review of LGBTQ+ homelessness also note that "LGBTIQ+ homeless populations engage in riskier behaviours and survival strategies while on the street when compared to their non-LGBTIQ+ counterparts". Engaging in survival sex poses serious safety risks and affects mental health negatively.

One of our interviewees said that they felt it was especially important that mental health services, drug services and general support were available to LGBTQ+ people, as their needs are different, and entering mainstream services can be alienating. After some negative experiences in mainstream services, they had found LGBTQ+ specific support:

"I really could have done with some therapy, or even just some, I dunno, just some kind of counselling or some support from someone else who was LGBT. I think it would've just been helpful, as not having from someone who was LGBT, I felt like I couldn't go in. It's nice to just have other queer people who have had similar experiences or you'd be like, oh I can relate to that or I'm glad you feel comfortable sharing that to us, rather than a group of straight people who are going to be like, what is Grinder? What is Chemsex?"

– trans man, North-West



f. Domestic Abuse

One of the most prominent issues emerging from our qualitative research was young people's experiences of domestic abuse, from families/carers and from partners. In previous research, akt have highlighted the high instance of domestic abuse experienced by LGBTQ+ young people, and its direct links with homelessness (akt 2021). Our research shows high instances of trans and non-binary young people, in particular experiencing harassment, bullying and discrimination at home, creating unsafe and hostile environments. Young people sleeping rough are also commonly victims of violence and sexual abuse, and there are high instances of abuse for those who engage in survival sex – making contact with a person through dating apps and other means to have a place to stay for the night. Young trans and non-binary people are particularly vulnerable to abuse, in the family home and when experiencing homelessness, as they are likely to be vulnerable to predatory adults, people who are fetishising them and finding them easy to coerce. This is a common experience for young trans and non-binary people who have been cut off from social connections. This means that many young trans and non-binary people experience homelessness invisibly, because they have nowhere safe to live, making them an extremely hard to reach population.

Many of the staff members we spoke to, in akt and in other organisations, highlighted abuse as one of the leading causes of homelessness, and simultaneously as one of the most challenging barriers to housing. As one staff member explained, a prominent issue is getting appropriate support for LGBTQ+ young people who have experienced abuse in the family home:

“I think quite often the young people that we're supporting are homeless due to domestic abuse, which is often linked to their identity. And having that recognised as domestic abuse by local authorities can be really difficult. So that we have to deal with a lot of gatekeeping and unlawful decision making or unlawful actions.”

– staff member, akt

Another staff member explained that meeting the statutory definition of abuse is not always straightforward, despite the experiences being discussed falling firmly into the category of 'emotional abuse' or 'coercive control' according to Section 1 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.



from nadeem's story:

“So he [father] used to take his anger out from work that he probably didn't have good shift or whatever it was and didn't get as much money as he was hoping. And then he would come home and then listen to that and just take all his anger out on me [...] whilst I was asleep a few times, he would wake me up in the middle of the night, get me in his car, drive to the local park, and we used to go to the car park and he used to take me out and beat me up there so no one could hear me make any noise. So none of the neighbours would find out. And so he would pick me up and throw me about. I looked like I was malnourished but I wasn't, but it was just, I'd never used to eat. I used to just take so long to eat and everything. And so what happened is he used to be able to pick me up, just properly pulling me and that. And he used to throw me downstairs or throw me against the wall, this sort of stuff. He used to lay me next to the wall and he used to hold onto the wall and bounce on my chest with his feet. And then that carried on for a while and it went from there to getting slapped and stuff like that, occasionally getting kicked and stuff like that.”

“A lot of young people who are homeless are homeless due to relationship breakdown with family or a partner because relationships are less likely to last if you are young. But the reason for that relationship breakdown a lot of the times is because they’ve come out or they’ve been outed to the family and that’s not been accepted or because they’ve left, it might not have been abusive or it might not have met statutory definitions of abuse. But the young person, they don’t want to be dead named. They don’t want to be misgendered, they don’t want to constantly be criticised or made fun of, which obviously would fall under abuse. But local authorities don’t necessarily recognise that a lot of the time.”

– staff member, akt

When a young person presents as homeless to the Local Authority and states that they are experiencing abuse, the authority is bound by chapter 21 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance (2018) which sets out the responsibilities where there is domestic abuse. The code makes clear that survivors of domestic abuse are to be considered as in priority need for accommodation, and it also highlights that Local Authorities should not turn people away because they lack evidence of domestic abuse. According to paragraph 21.2 of the code, “A person who is homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse has a priority need as set out in section 189 of the 1996 Act. Section 193(2) of the 1996 Act requires housing authorities to secure that accommodation is available for occupation for applicants who have a priority need for accommodation [...]”. Further to this, the code emphasises that Local Authorities have a responsibility to understand what domestic abuse is and how impacts may be different on different groups of people (21.11). The guidance is very clear about evidence of alleged abuse: housing authorities should not approach the alleged perpetrator and they should only contact other sources if they have the victim’s consent to do so. The guidance states: “In some cases, corroborative evidence of abuse may not be available, for example, because there were no adult witnesses and/or the applicant was too frightened or ashamed to report

incidents to family, friends or the police. The housing officer may be the first person that the victim has confided in. **Housing authorities should not have a blanket approach toward domestic abuse which requires corroborative or police evidence to be provided”** (Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018, S21.24, emphasis in original).

Noting the legal requirements is important, because non-normative family situations are less common and therefore it is unlikely that housing authorities have developed best practice. There is an urgent need to ensure that all authorities with decision-making power are aware that LGBTQ+ domestic abuse may manifest differently from abuse in more traditional settings, and responses need to be tailored to these needs.

“Almost all of my young people say domestic abuse, domestic violence, hostile home environments as the reason for their homelessness. But when you approach the council or student accommodation or benefits and things like that and you say to them, this person can’t live at home because they’re trans and their family aren’t accepting of it, I feel like it’s never quite the same response as if it was your typical DV situation, your typical domestic abuse situation.”

– staff member, akt





Another concern is the specific needs for young people between the ages of 16–17, who fall under the legal remit of Social Services (Children Act 1989). Familial abuse at this age is not within the remit of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and the responsibility is on Social Services. The general guidelines for local authorities is to follow section 17 of the 1989 Children Act and section 195 of the 1996 Housing Act in their preventative work for this group, but the outcome is often that young people are bounced between the two, which slows down the provision of support.

“And we also face a lot of issues, especially when we’re dealing with 16- and 17-year-olds because there’s always that fight between housing options and social services as to who should be dealing with it. And it always goes to social services. They don’t want to know. They’ll tell the young person to go home and then it makes it harder for the young person to present as homeless because the housing options team will just say, well, social services have said you can go home.”

– staff member, akt

The age group 16–17 is notoriously challenging in terms of homelessness (Watts et al 2015), as they fall between statutes and responsibility is shared between different authorities. For LGBTQ+ young people there are additional layers of complications, since many experience homelessness as a result of family relationship breakdown. In MHCLG and Department of Education’s official guidance for how to address homelessness for 16–17-year-olds, they note that “it will be in the best interests of most young people to live in the family home” (MHCLG Guidance s2.1). S47 of the Children Act 1989 does emphasise that if there is a risk of harm or suffering for a child in the family home, they have a duty to investigate, but despite the well-intentioned tone of the legislative guidance, LGBTQ+ victims of abuse often report insensitive handling of discretion and contact with family members.



from freddie's story:

"My boyfriend passed away when I was 15 and I spoke to a counsellor in the school about that and I mentioned that he was 18 and I was 15. Even though he passed away, the counsellor was like, oh, did you have any sexual relationship with him or anything? And I was like, yeah. And so the counsellor then contacted social services and I had to have a sexual exploitation assessment by social services, which meant the social services come to my house with me not even knowing anything. I didn't even know they were coming in and my dad was home. I think my mom was out somewhere and the social worker just came in and was like, oh, we have to do a sexual exploitation assessment, you need to be in the room, stuff like this. And so they were asking all these questions in front of my dad, have you had sex with men? Stuff like this. And they said to my dad, just to let you know, the reason why we're doing this is because Freddie has been having sex with men. And I was like, this is crazy. I was like, this is absolutely wild. I think my dad already knew that I was gay, but I'd never really had a conversation about it. That was kind of extremely awkward and painful to look my dad in the eyes while someone's telling him Freddie's had sex with men. I'm just like, I wish I could just die right now and get out of

this situation. And I think because of that, the homophobia definitely increased. The amount of abuse, he would just be shouting, he'd be like: you're "f-ing fag" I used to have physical fights with him.

I get why it [the assessment] happened and I get it was to protect me and safeguard and all that. But the way they went about it was just, it didn't feel ethical in a way. I dunno. It just felt like I was outed and then it was like, oh hey, we are here to make a situation better. And then that's actually probably led to me becoming homeless because it led to a bigger relationship breakdown. He started threatening to hit me and raising his hand and just always threatening to hurt me. And I was just done. He also sexually assaulted me, and that's what kind of made me realise he's a terrible person. He was dropping my mental health while I was extremely suicidal and I could not stay there anymore. So I left and started staying between a few friends' houses, and that's kind of what I'm doing, just so for surfing until I have somewhere more permanent. And then, yeah, he hasn't tried to contact me or anything, surprisingly, he's tried to contact me through my mum where he's just told her what to say to me basically. But I'm not willing to speak to him."



Evidence from our research points to the need for holistic services to support LGBTQ+ people with concerns regarding domestic abuse. This needs to be available as a specialist service, given the potentially hostile environment that women-only services can present for trans and non-binary people. Further, there need to be clear signposting in Local Authorities towards specialist LGBTQ+ domestic abuse services, and staff need to be appropriately trained to approach, assess and signpost young LGBTQ+ people seeking advice due to homelessness or threatened homelessness.

g. Conclusion on Intersectionality

Our qualitative research has shown that intersectionality does not mean having regard to a person's different vulnerabilities and disadvantages, it means considering how the **combined** effects of different disadvantages places an individual at even greater risk of exclusion, oppression and, in this context, homelessness. Pathways in and out of homelessness are exacerbated by the compounding effects of intersecting disadvantages, and these are evident in all stages of homelessness. A person's homelessness 'journey' does not have a distinct beginning and end, but rather forms a part of their life story and will impact them long after they find suitable housing. Sade's story provides a useful example of how the disadvantages of being from a racialised minority and LGBTQ+, and experiencing domestic abuse, leaving care and being neurodivergent intersect, making homelessness more likely and housing inaccessible:



from sade's story:

"I have been thinking that there literally needs to be an organisation or something across queer charities where we actually have in-house advocates, especially for disabled people, because luckily I have the gift of the gab sometimes if I'm not stuttering and I can write for my life, that is because I'm lucky. I have other neurodivergent cousins if they're in my position, can't, they're basically nonverbal and they can't really spell or write, but they're very good at science. It's great, but not good when it comes to having to advocate for yourself. Not everyone can do that and neither should they be expected to. It was exhausting. It was crazy. I was exhausted. I had to write a whole statement basically proving that I had local authority, connection, all of this stuff, and it's like, yeah, I did a history degree so I can make a good argument, but I shouldn't have had to be doing that. That is insane. And I just think it's a lot.

They basically denounced that I went through domestic violence. It was like I wasn't even using that terminology for myself, to be honest. It was the other council that I approached that were so nice to me. She [the housing officer] was so helpful and nice and she was like, what you went through was domestic violence, and it was easy with her. I think I got relief duty and all that main duty really efficiently. I think it varies from council to council as well.

I think there's a bit of compassion fatigue, not only with the people that work in charities, but also across councils when it comes to this housing. [In the first council I applied] she kind of denounced my instance of domestic violence and also my local authority connection, even though I was a care leaver there."



recommendations



intersectionality

In both policy and practice, intersectionality needs to be considered as a factor that influences and exacerbates a person's journey through homelessness



intersecting disadvantages

Further training for local authorities on how intersecting disadvantages affect a person's vulnerability and safety



preventive interventions

Our data indicates a need for preventative interventions, as people with intersecting disadvantages are likely to go on to have more complex needs in the future



intersectional needs

Recognition that issues of race, disabilities, neurodiversity, sexual orientation, gender identity, cultural factors and migrant status are often compounded to create additionally complex support needs, and interventions for rough sleeping need to be designed to these complex intersectional needs



targeted training

Targeted training to be provided for Local Authorities on LGBTQ+ domestic abuse. Abuse for this group may manifest differently from abuse in more traditional settings, and responses need to be tailored to these needs. Local Authorities also need to signpost to LGBTQ+ specific services in their areas, for both domestic abuse, mental health and trans support



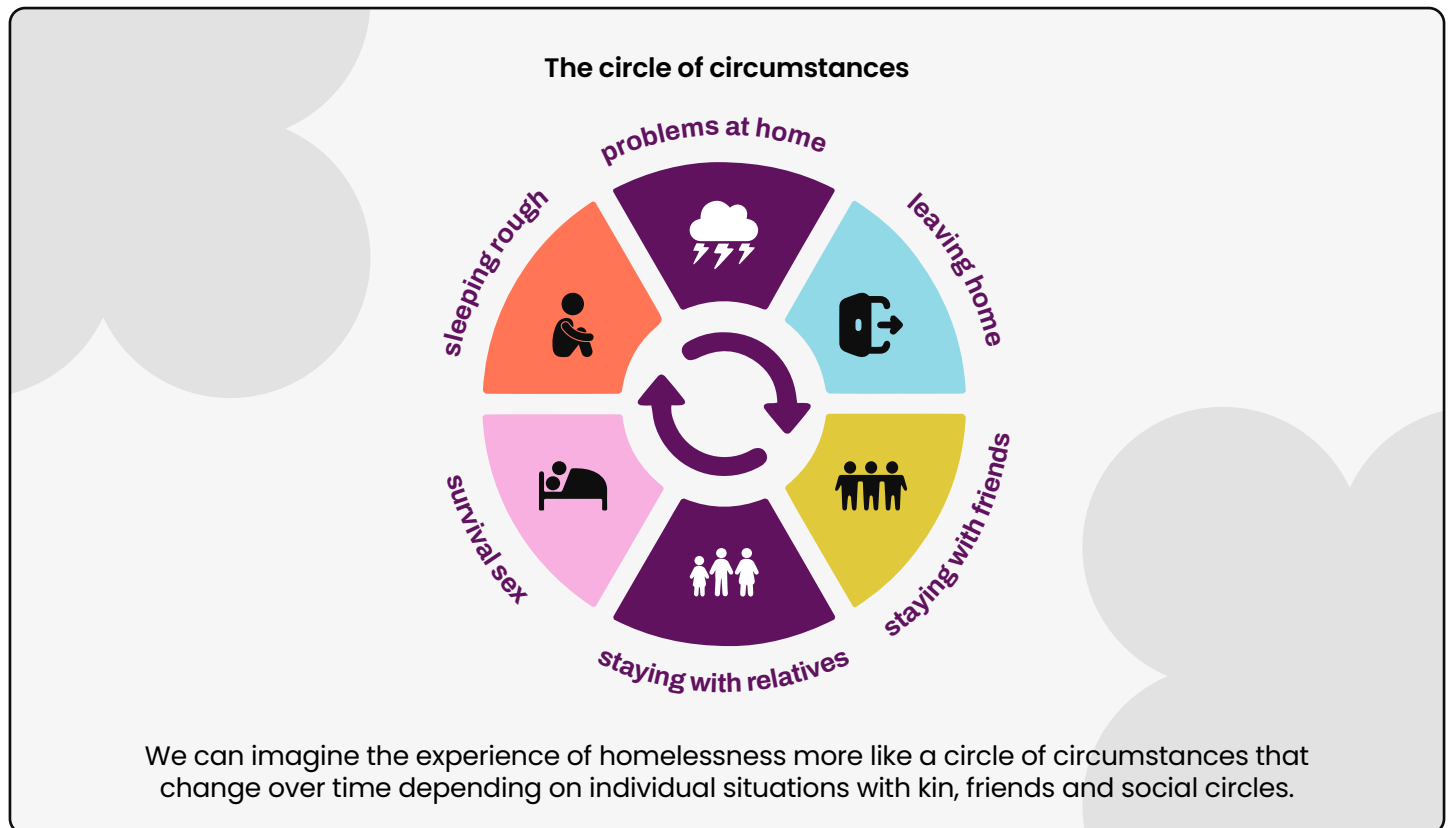
cross-sector services

Better cross-sector work to be facilitated, particularly between housing authorities, social services, domestic abuse services and LGBTQ+ support services

6 the journeys of young LGBTQ+ people

While it is important to consider the intersecting social disadvantages that may make some people more susceptible to homelessness than others, it is also important to emphasise that all journeys into and out of homelessness are unique. There are some aspects that we can see as commonalities, such as a young person who identifies as LGBTQ+ being asked to leave home because of coming out to their parents, or a young person having challenges relating to mental health, disabilities and race that may impact their journeys and experiences of homelessness. But each journey is different, made up of multiple strands of experiences and circumstances. When we discuss reasons for LGBTQ+ youth homelessness, we need to keep in mind that there will be many journeys that stray away from what we have established as more common routes, and any policies and support mechanisms need to account for this.

Individual journeys of homelessness do not begin with the moment a person becomes homeless. They often begin long before that and do not follow specific trajectories. For example, a person might spend years living in unsuitable housing where they experience abuse and discrimination before they ask for help and even after finding somewhere to live they will need to address the trauma of homelessness. This can lead to a struggle to sustain tenancies and lead to homelessness being a recurring event. Many also dip in and out of homelessness, staying for some time with parents or carers, some of the time with friends or relatives, staying in temporary accommodation or hostels, using dating sites to find hookups for the night, or rough sleeping.



Each case study in this report is a composite story. Whilst we conducted interviews with real LGBT youth at risk and those who have experienced homelessness, the names have been altered and elements from various interviews have been blended together. Although every component is based on genuine experiences, the resulting narratives have been synthesised to effectively illustrate broader issues.



alys

Alys is non-binary, White British and pansexual and lives in the South-West. They are 23 years old. They do not consider themselves religious but grew up in a Christian household. Their mum is a Sunday school teacher and Christianity was an important aspect of their upbringing.

When they were 15, they identified as a cis woman and came out as bisexual to their parents. This led to some family arguments and tensions at home, and as Alys and their brother had lived with abuse from their father, this escalated when Alys first came out. They found some support at school, but also experienced bullying from friends. When Alys was 19, they came out to their dad as non-binary. Their dad said non-binary people don't exist, only women and men. Alys described their situation living at home as being 'emotionally homeless'; having a home but not feeling safe to live in it.

A few months later their dad got drunk at a Sunday dinner and outed Alys to the whole family. Alys felt too unsafe to stay at home, grabbed a few belongings and went to stay with their partner. The partner started showing coercive and abusive behaviour, but Alys didn't have anywhere to go so they

stayed with the partner for months, as their behaviour became more and more abusive. Alys felt like they were living a double life, pretending to be cis gender at college and non-binary at home, not feeling safe in either place.

They got some help from a counsellor at college to apply as homeless to the council. At the council they were told they were not in priority need for housing because they had no evidence of abuse from either their dad or their partner. They decided to stay on friends' sofas instead for months at a time, until a worker from akt helped them to appeal against the council's decision and they were given temporary accommodation. The worker also helped them get on a waiting list for a diagnosis of autism, and a queue for support with their mental health concerns.

They are still waiting for a place to live more permanently.



bea

Bea always felt different growing up. She grew up as a boy who was teased at school for acting more like a girl. She is now 19 years old and lives in a rural area in the North-East.

She had lots of mental health issues, including depression and she quite often felt suicidal. Her family moved around a lot and her parents divorced when she was 8.

She came out as a trans woman when she was 14, just before lockdown. Her dad who had never been abusive before suddenly became aggressive and sexually abusive, stating that because she was now a girl, he had the right to treat her differently. Bea ran away from home at the age of 17 after lockdown. She was wearing heels when she ran away and hasn't had a chance to return to collect her trainers.

Living locked up with her abusive dad and without any other support had become too much and she tried to end her life. Following release from a mental health unit some months later she had nowhere to go. She had just turned

18 and decided to sleep rough with a group of trans friends. She sometimes stayed with a friend on her sofa, but the friend had two kids and there was not enough space for Bea.

After applying as homeless, the council offered her supported accommodation in a youth hostel, but because it was a mixed hostel it was agreed not being safe enough for Bea. Instead, she waited for three months whilst staying with a cousin until an independent flat was available in a rural area. Here she has her own space, but she is far from friends and support networks and there are no LGBTQ+ support services or mental health services in the area.

She has recently found out that one of her trans friends who was rough sleeping with her died by suicide, and another friend has gone missing.



nadeem

Nadeem is 20 years old. He grew up in an extended family setting in the North-East, with siblings, parents and grandparents. He is Pakistani and Muslim, and he identifies as queer.

In his early teens he experienced sexual abuse from his male cousin. During the Covid-19 lockdown his mother caught Nadeem watching gay content on his phone and sending messages to men on dating apps. The family was distraught and worried about what the neighbours and Asian community might say, so he moved into a different house with his grandparents.

His family sent him to conversion therapy to deal with his sexual orientation, or as he said, "some therapy to get rid of the queerness somehow".

When he turned 18 he signed up to all the gay dating sites he could find, and with his new freedom he participates in a lot of risky sexual behaviour, without using protection or concern for his own

safety. Things became unmanageable at home and instead he moved in with a boy he met online, but the relationship was abusive.

A safeguarding lead at his college helped him apply as homeless, but the council did not consider him priority need because he lacked evidence of the abuse he experienced. Nadeem eventually found housing and support through a charity who offered supported accommodation.

He has found a queer Mosque in London who he follows online, and is working on finding employment and independent housing, whilst receiving mental health support and coaching from the supported accommodation.



sade

Sade is Black British/Nigerian and lives in London. They identify as non-binary and bisexual. They have ADHD and Autism. Growing up, their dad showed a lot of uneasiness about their sexual orientation and gave Sade an ultimatum to find a boyfriend before turning 18 or they will be kicked out.

Sade explained that their dad's cultural values from Nigeria impacted his beliefs regarding LGBTQ+ identities. Sade moved in with an aunt instead, but in this setting, they witnessed a lot of abuse between their aunt and uncle, which affected their mental health and wellbeing.

Sade's only way of escaping was to start University and get student accommodation. They stayed in student accommodation for some time but did

not feel safe there. They experienced harassment and aggression from peers in the shared accommodation and had to leave. They squatted in the student union building for a while and stayed here and there with friends and relatives.

After many arguments and a long wait they got temporary accommodation from the council and are now bidding for properties to find their first ever safe home.



eric

Eric is a trans man, 18 years old, White British who lives in the North-East and identifies as gay. He considers himself agnostic, and he is neurodivergent.

He was put into care at the age of 8, and until he was 16 years old, he moved around various care homes, never staying in the same location for more than a year and never with a family. Because he moved around a lot, he started school in lots of different locations. In school he was labelled the 'bad kid' and was expelled on several occasions.

When he was 15, he had a boyfriend who he was close with, but who had serious mental health issues and died by suicide.

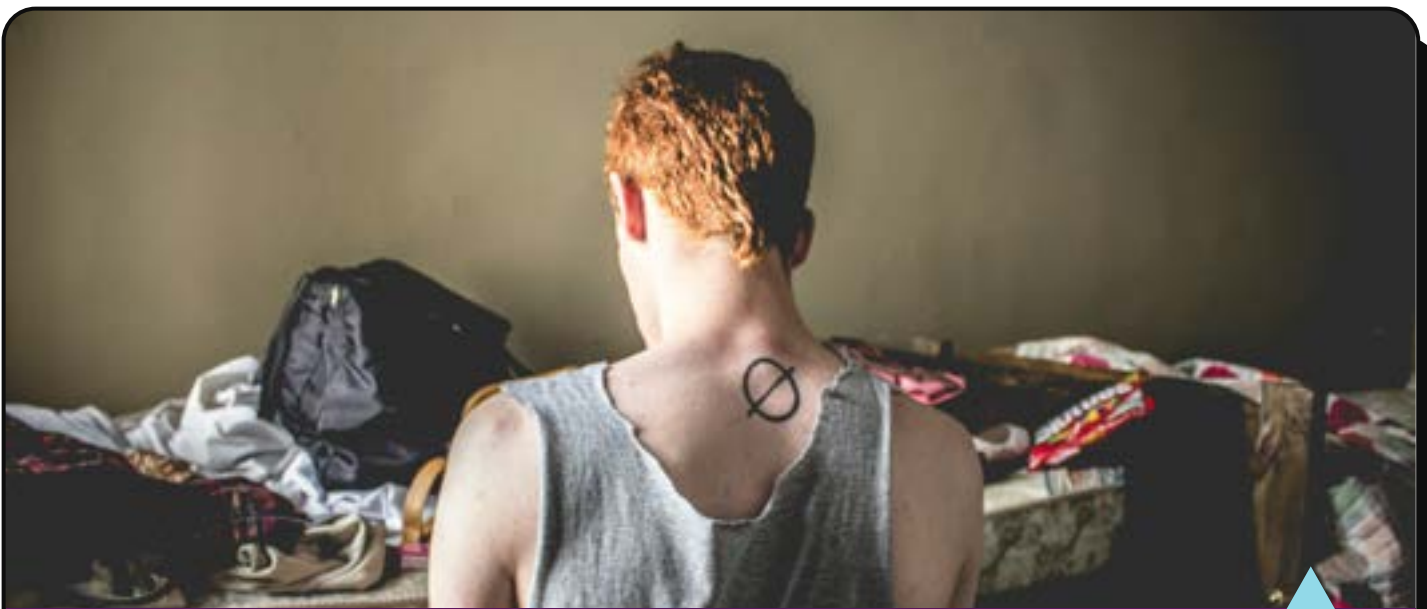
Eric became depressed and suffered PTSD, but mental health services were oversubscribed, and he had to wait for over a year to get support. His behaviour deteriorated and he was kicked out of the care home he was in

at the age of 16. He moved to supported accommodation that was funded by Social Services.

Eventually he started college and joined a local LGBTQ+ support group and was doing well. He moved into shared accommodation through private renting with a friend and started a course in social care.

At the age of 18 his brother died by suicide, and this spurred a drug binge for Eric, making him homeless again.

After support from the council, he is in temporary accommodation, but as he has experienced transphobic abuse at the apartment, he has been too afraid to sleep there at night and instead has spent the last 7 months sleeping on buses at night.



freddie

Freddie grew up with mum, nan and 4 siblings in the North-East. He is 25 years old, White British and he does not consider himself religious. He identifies as gay. Growing up his mother was neglectful, and he usually went to school without having eaten, with dirty clothes and often with nits.

He was bullied at school for having nits and had a bad time there, but he was happy that the teachers at school sometimes gave him food parcels to take home for dinner, because otherwise he wouldn't eat. In his late teens he had lots of trouble at home. His family were not ok with his sexual orientation and more and more issues came up at home. He stayed with his sister for a while, but this didn't last either.

When he was 18 he became homeless, slept rough for nearly a year, sometimes in his car and sometimes sofa surfing. Sometimes he would spend the whole night sitting in McDonalds or walking around supermarket aisles, because it felt safer than being out in the park. Whilst rough sleeping he experienced rape multiple times and he lives with severe mental health issues, social phobia and depression.

He was offered supported accommodation for a few months

when he was 19, but the placement broke down because he experienced homophobia and responded violently to it, therefore being asked to leave due to threatening behaviour. He managed to find a job in the food industry, and when he applied as homeless to the council, he was deemed not in priority need as he was working. He had nowhere to wash his clothes and had to go to work in dirty clothes, which he felt was wrong since he was serving food.

He eventually managed to find a cheap flat with a friend, but it was mouldy and there were rats that the landlord refused to deal with. He is now on a waiting list for his own flat with a Housing Association.

He feels like he has spent his whole life waiting; waiting for appointments for his mental health, waiting for LGBTQ+ support, and waiting for somewhere to live.

7 recommendations

our asks from the government

Data Collection

We would ask the Government to fund a drive for better and more robust data collection of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersectional data. This data needs to be transparent and publicly available, to ensure that research and investigation can continue and improve. To achieve this, we suggest:

1

A new database for the collection and amalgamation of LGBTQ+ and intersectional data, similar to the CHAIN database for rough sleeping in London. This needs to be a national initiative that considers the complexities of data collection in rural and remote areas, and with hidden and vulnerable groups in mind.



2

Data collection focusing on the different types of homelessness, including hidden homelessness, which is found to be a large problem among young LGBTQ+ people.

3

Ongoing work with academics and specialists in intersectional disadvantages to improve current data collection for statutory homelessness and for the annual rough sleeper count.

Structural Change

We ask the Government to continue to improve provision of safe, affordable and suitable housing, including social housing and supported accommodation in the general sense. This is vital to reducing and preventing homelessness for anyone that experiences it. We also suggest that particular focus should be aimed at:

1

Availability for safe temporary accommodation for LGBTQ+ people, especially for trans and non-binary people. This needs to be separate to mainstream services, and it needs to be available across the country – not only in metropolitan areas.

2

Funding for LGBTQ+ specific supported accommodation, for longer term support and housing of LGBTQ+ individuals.



Structural Change (cont.)

3

Availability of holistic services for LGBTQ+ people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including care and support through cross-sector working.

5

Improvement of services and support for gender affirming care in the UK.

4

Housing that is suitable for people with disabilities. This includes a drive to increase the number of social housing that is purpose built for people with accessibility needs.



Policy and Law

As outlined in our law and policy report, we urge the Government to reconsider current policies and legislation in light of these findings. Protections need to be afforded to LGBTQ+ people experiencing intersections of disadvantage.

1

The Homelessness Code of Guidance should direct that local authorities liaise with LGBTQ+ liaison officers when seeking information relating to an LGBTQ+ individual.

3

Any new policies regarding rough sleeping and homelessness to take into account intersectionality and issues of discrimination and oppression that render minorities more likely to experience different types of homelessness.

2

The chapter focused on young LGBTQ+ people in the Homelessness Code of Guidance which we discuss at length in our law and policy report, should emphasise the importance of this contextual consideration of intersecting protected characteristics.



our asks from local authorities

We recognise the financial strain that Local Authorities are under, and have made these recommendations with this in mind. Many of these recommendations can be achieved through a shift in culture and improved knowledge regarding LGBTQ+ people's needs. To achieve this we suggest:

1

All Local Authorities to develop mandatory LGBTQ+ policies that are publicly available through their websites.

2

All local authorities ensure they consider the particular needs of young LGBTQ+ people in the development of their homelessness, rough sleeping and housing strategies.

3

All local authorities should ensure that there is liaison with LGBTQ+ officers (if applicable) when seeking information relating to a homelessness application.

4

All local authorities should seek to develop working relationships with support organisations.

5

All local authorities should provide referral information to support organisations such as the akt and similar organisations in publicly facing materials such as their websites.

6

Local authorities need to exercise caution in the provision of mediation services, given the particular challenges experienced by young LGBTQ+ people. Such services must be placed in the context of a heightened risk of parental rejection, domestic and sexual abuse, and mental health issues experienced by young LGBTQ+ people.

7

All local authorities should consider the potential intersecting protected characteristics of young LGBTQ+ people, including the risk of discrimination when placed in a private sector tenancy, temporary accommodation or supported accommodation.



We would also welcome additional Government funding for Local Authorities to provide:

1

Training for collection of LGBTQ+ data.

2

Training for how to recognise and address domestic abuse towards and within the LGBTQ+ community.

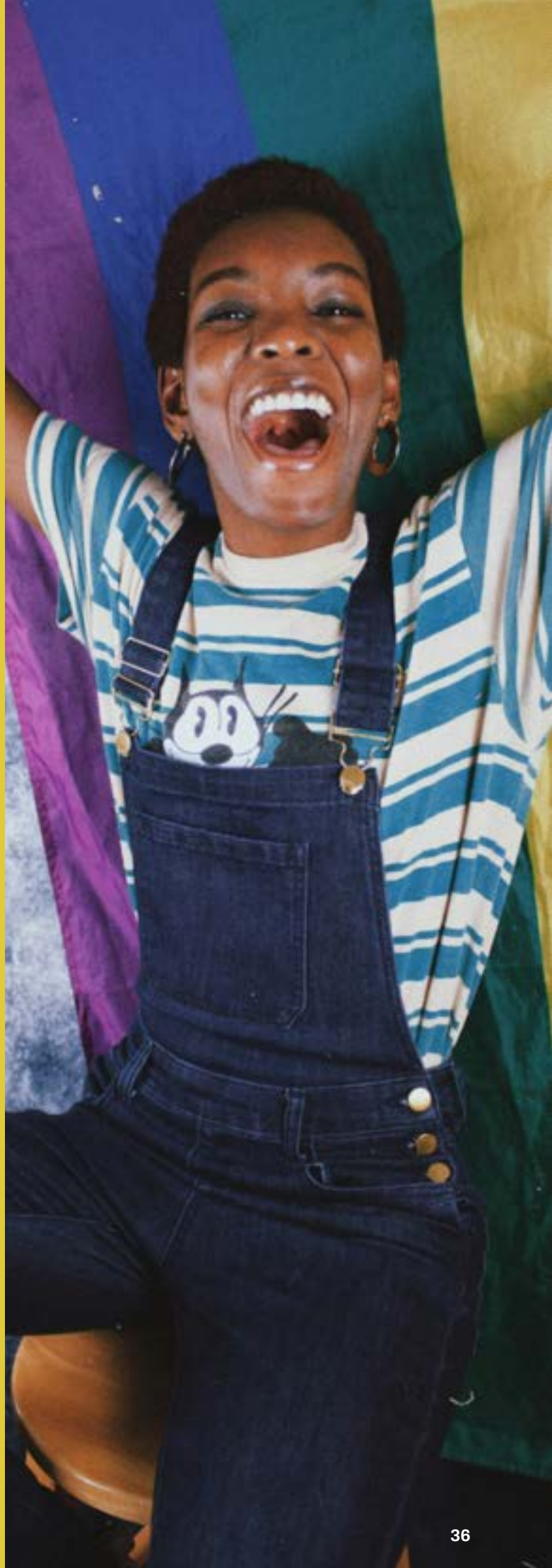
our ask from the general public

We call for better awareness of LGBTQ+ homelessness and intersectional disadvantages among the general public. We are in a critical historical moment when the LGBTQ+ community is at heightened risk and target of increased harassment and hate crime. To make our society a safe place for our LGBTQ+ young people to grow up in, we need everyone to help us create this. Nobody should have to live in fear of being their true self.

In the words of one of our research participants:

“It is about being aware of the people that you share space with and being caring and mindful of your words.”

– young non-binary person



8 conclusion

Our research demonstrates that LGBTQ+ youth homelessness is an urgent issue and growing problem. The political climate surrounding gender and sexual orientation is increasingly hostile, and protection and safety measures for young people identifying as LGBTQ+ are more crucial than ever. Our findings are a clear indication of this. Knowing that LGBTQ+ people are twice as likely to experience hidden homelessness, we must take urgent action to prevent this. LGBTQ+ youth homelessness is often referred to as a 'hidden' or 'invisible' problem. It is our duty to ensure that this is no longer the case; we need to make this a visible and prioritised concern.

The data available for LGBTQ+ youth homelessness, and other intersecting disadvantages is severely inadequate. Without adequate data we are limited in understanding

and providing appropriate prevention and support. It is vital that efforts are made with data collection, which needs to be streamlined and treated as critically important.

We need to improve homelessness prevention for LGBTQ+ young people and provide appropriate support for those already experiencing homelessness and we have made recommendations to this end. However, these changes will only provide a sticking plaster for a much bigger problem. The real work is cultural; we must create a society where discrimination, oppression, and harassment are the exception and not the rule. This research shows that there are clear links between societal inequalities and homelessness, and to achieve real change attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people and intersectional disadvantages must be transformed.



acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank all of the young people that have taken part in this project and helped us understand what life is like in the UK today as an LGBTQ+ young person experiencing homelessness. Your knowledge and wisdom is invaluable.

Thank you also to akt for funding this project, providing guidance and access, and for continuing to work towards making young LGBTQ+ young people's lives better.

We have had some fantastic insights and support from organisations across the UK, including (but not limited to); The Outside Project, Stonewall Housing, Depaul UK, Centerpoint, Homeless Link, Porchlight.

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