



**DEPAUL**

Homelessness has no place

# **Danger Zones and Stepping Stones: Phase Two**

**A quantitative exploration of young people's  
experience of temporary living**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Depaul UK would like to thank all those who generously gave their time and insights to help create this report. In particular, we would like to thank: the young people from all participating organisations for completing our questionnaire; staff from participating organisations who helped facilitate the research; the Ethics Committee set up for this project comprising Professor Jenny Pearce, Dr Carole Easton, Dr Beth Watts, Becky Hug, Jennifer Harris, Jason Stacey, Alexia Murphy, Simone Newman, Kester Young and Melissa Noel; the report’s sponsors, LetterOne, and all at Depaul UK who have contributed to the publication and launch of this report.



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**This report presents the findings of the second phase of the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones research conducted by homelessness charity Depaul UK.**

The first phase, in 2015-16, involved a qualitative exploration of young people's experiences of temporary living between periods of stable accommodation. Based on the findings of that research, Depaul UK proposed a new approach to assessing temporary living circumstances - using the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model.

To further the understanding of young people's experiences and enhance the thinking behind the Model, in 2017 Depaul UK undertook the second phase of Danger Zones and Stepping Stones research: a quantitative survey involving 712 young people aged from 16 to 25 who were receiving help from homelessness organisations.

Below are key findings of the second phase of the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones research.

Throughout the report we have used the term "temporary living arrangements" to denote places young people stay for periods of up to six months while out of stable accommodation. "Service-provided accommodation" means all formal housing solutions provided by statutory or charitable services, such as hostels or small accommodation projects.

### **Leaving stable accommodation**

**The majority (59 percent) of survey respondents lost their stable accommodation when they were younger than 18, and were, therefore, in temporary living arrangements as children.**

Young women were found to be more likely to lose stable accommodation at a young age (under 18) than young men.

LGBT young people were more likely than non-LGBT young people to say they had left stable accommodation: to escape emotional or mental abuse (36 percent compared with 17 percent); to escape violent abuse (21 percent compared with 12 percent), or because of their own mental health issues (21 percent compared with eight percent).

The most common reason for losing stable accommodation for the first time was found to be relationship breakdown.

## Finding a place to stay

**While not in stable accommodation, young people made considerable use of “informal” living arrangements, such as staying with family or friends. To find a place to stay, young people were found to adopt a number of “risky” strategies that may put their safety at risk:**

- Twelve percent of survey respondents said they had engaged in sexual activity in exchange for a place to stay.
- This proportion rose considerably for LGBT young people of whom nearly a quarter (23 percent) had engaged in sexual activity in exchange for a place to stay.
- Around one in five (19 percent) of the young people involved in the research had attended an all-night party for somewhere to stay.

Survey respondents had stayed with people they did not know well while out of stable accommodation, with around a quarter (23 percent) having stayed with “friends of friends” and one in 10 (11 percent) with strangers. Young men and young people with a disability or long-term mental health condition were found to be particularly likely to have stayed with people they did not know.

More than a quarter (27 percent) of our sample had slept rough on the streets and almost one in five (18 percent) had slept in a public place such as a train station. Thirty-eight percent of young men were found to have slept rough on the streets compared with 18 percent of young women.

Young people were found to frequently move on from temporary living arrangements because they felt they were a burden on the people with whom they were staying. More than half (53 percent) had left somewhere they were staying for this reason, with 21 percent saying they had done so several times.

Respondents with disabilities or long-term mental health conditions were more likely than others to say they had consistently left places they were staying as they felt they were making life difficult for the person or people they were staying with.

## Harm in temporary living arrangements

The following forms of harm were considered:

- Sexual assault or abuse
- Mental or emotional abuse
- Physical assault or abuse
- Pressure to consume alcohol or drugs
- Theft or damage to belongings

**More than half (55 percent) of the young people involved in the research had experienced at least one of these forms of harm while in temporary living arrangements.**

Twenty-nine percent of young people had experienced mental or emotional abuse, 28 percent had experienced physical assault or abuse, and 25 percent had experienced pressure to consume drugs or alcohol while in temporary living arrangements.

Young people were found to be most at risk of harm while staying in “informal” living arrangements with people they did not know well. Fifteen percent of those who had stayed with strangers had been sexually assaulted or abused while doing so.

**Experience of harm was generally lower in service-provided accommodation. Of all the accommodation types considered in the research, young people were least likely to have experienced harm while staying with a member of the community through a service such as Nightstop.**

LGBT young people, those who had previously been “looked-after children”, and those with disabilities or long-term mental health issues were found to be particularly likely to experience harm while in temporary living arrangements. Around two-thirds of each of these respondent groups (66 percent, 68 percent and 67 percent, respectively) had experienced some form of harm.

Young women were nearly four times as likely as young men to have had experienced sexual abuse while in temporary living arrangements. Nineteen percent of young women and five percent of young men had experienced sexual abuse.

More than one third (36 percent) of young people experienced theft or damage to property while staying in temporary living arrangements.

## Support in temporary living arrangements

**Young people were found to be most likely to receive support while in service-provided accommodation that was specifically designed for their age group.**

This included both small and large accommodation projects and, to a lesser extent, community solutions such as Depaul UK’s emergency accommodation, Nightstop.

Young people were found to be much less likely to receive support while staying with strangers or in bed and breakfast accommodation. “Informal” arrangements with friends and family appeared far less supportive than all types of service-provided accommodation, including community solutions such as Nightstop.

It should be noted that the research assessed the availability of support only, and not support quality, so no judgments can be made regarding the effectiveness of the support provided by accommodation projects. Furthermore, no distinction was made between emergency and longer-term community solutions (e.g. supported lodgings), between which there could be much variation in support provision.

## Impact of temporary living

**Temporary living was found to have a considerable negative effect on young people’s lives.**

Two-thirds (66 percent) of those involved in the research said that not having a stable place to live had damaged their mental or emotional health, and the majority (55 percent) said that their physical wellbeing had been negatively affected by temporary living.

Nearly half (48 percent) said that temporary living had had a negative impact on their relationships and more than four in 10 said it had damaged their education or their ability to find or keep work (42 percent and 43 percent respectively).

Young women, LGBT young people and those with stated vulnerabilities were particularly likely to say temporary living had had a negative impact on their lives.

## Recommendations

Following this research, Depaul UK recommends that:

- 1 **Central Government and commissioners increase the provision of preventative services, such as family mediation and short respite accommodation, particularly for under-18s.** This would reduce the number of homeless young people in potentially dangerous temporary living arrangements;
- 2 **Central Government ensures sufficient and secure funding is made available for supported accommodation projects.** This would prevent young people staying in “informal” arrangements where the risk of harm is higher;
- 3 **Commissioners and service providers ensure young people are placed in accommodation specifically designed for them.** In these projects, young people are more likely to receive the support they need to escape homelessness than in all-age projects;
- 4 **Further research is undertaken into the experience of particular groups of young people in temporary living arrangements, including young women, LGBT young people, those who had previously been looked-after children, and those with disabilities or long-term mental health issues.** This should help determine how they can be better supported and protected from harm.
- 5 **Central government, commissioners and service providers increase the provision of community-based accommodation, such as Nightstop and supported lodgings.** This would help ensure that, where appropriate, this type of safe accommodation is made available for more young people.
- 6 **Schools and colleges should ensure more young people are made aware of the dangers of staying with people they don't know.** Young people should also be told of the available alternatives.
- 7 **Service providers increase measures to control drug and alcohol use in young people's services.** This could help protect young people from the harms of substance use while they receive the support they need to escape homelessness.
- 8 **Commissioners and service providers use the revised Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model.** This is to identify young people in urgent need of support and prioritise them for crisis accommodation. See p.36-37 of this report.

## INTRODUCTION

Depaul UK is a national homelessness charity that supports young people who are, or at risk of becoming, homeless, with an interlinked family of projects ranging from emergency accommodation through to longer-term supported housing and pathways to education, training and employment.

The charity believes that no young person should be forced to sleep in an unsafe place and that, to prevent this, it is important to increase understanding of young people's experience of living in temporary accommodation. **Danger Zones and Stepping Stones** is a multi-phase exploration of the temporary living experiences of young people in the UK.

In 2015-16, Depaul UK undertook the first phase of Danger Zones and Stepping Stones with a qualitative assessment of the experience of 18 young people it was supporting. This led to the first Danger Zones and Stepping Stones report, which was launched in Parliament in April 2016 by Depaul UK President Sir Trevor McDonald, and is downloadable from the Depaul UK website at: <https://uk.depaulcharity.org/danger-zones-and-stepping-stones>

The initial research found:

- **No universal definition of “sofa surfing”** used in academic literature or by young people or practitioners. Young people were found to not commonly use the term.
- The **breakdown of family relationships** was the most common reason for young people losing stable accommodation and moving into temporary living arrangements.
- **“Staying with friends”** was the most common and diverse category of temporary living arrangement. Young people described a wide spectrum of experiences in this way, ranging from relatively safe arrangements with family friends to those that were potentially very dangerous such as all-night parties or accommodation with near-strangers.
- Young people were trapped in temporary living by a sense of being a **burden on those supporting them**. Such feelings led young people to move away from potentially beneficial circumstances and towards situations where they felt less of a burden but were considerably less supported and more at risk.
- Young people were at risk of harm in several temporary living arrangements, but particularly while **staying with people they did not know well** or in large accommodation projects used to house people of all ages rather than only young people.

- The most supportive environments were smaller accommodation projects or accommodation provided by friends or family where there was a strong relationship between the young person and those accommodating them, the host cared about the young person and their future, the young person did not feel like a burden and was willing to accept help, and the host supported the young person - practically and through knowledge and advice.

circumstances are assessed according to the level of risk they could experience harm as a result of their temporary living arrangements, and the capacity of the people accommodating them to help them leave homelessness. If this model were to be widely adopted, Depaul UK believes it would lead to more effective prioritisation of cases, more young people receiving the help they need, and more young people moving on to situations that are helpful and safe.

### The Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model

Based on the first phase of the research, Depaul UK created the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model - a new approach to assessing young people's temporary living circumstances. The aim of the model is to support decision-making within the homelessness sector by preventing judgments based on inappropriate assumptions of what phrases such as "sofa surfing" or "staying with friends" mean. Using the model, young people's

The findings of the initial research allowed us to estimate the position on the Model of several types of temporary living arrangement, as shown in Figure 1.

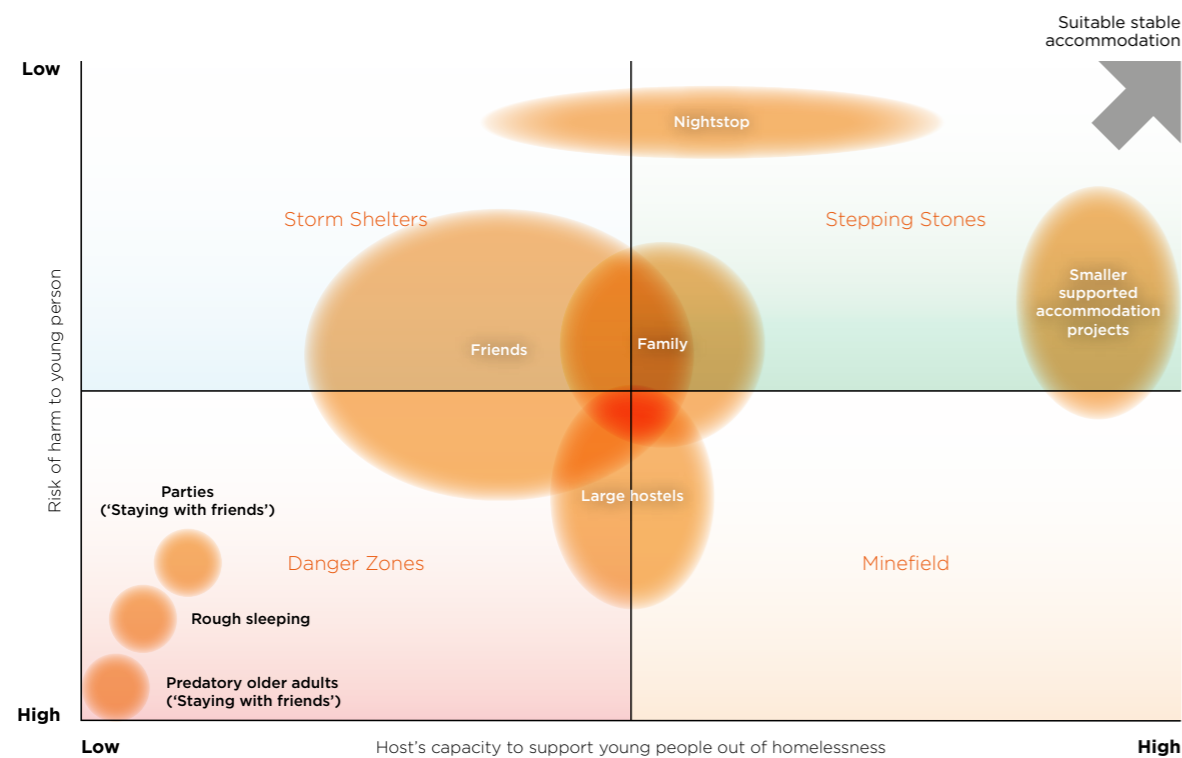


Figure 1: Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model



## **THIS RESEARCH**

To establish the scale of the issues identified in the initial research and enhance the thinking behind the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model, Depaul UK undertook a quantitative survey in 2017 to explore young people's experience of temporary living more widely. This report presents the findings of this research and relates them to the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model.

Throughout the report we have used the term "temporary living arrangements" to denote places young people stay for periods of up to six months while out of stable accommodation. "Service-provided accommodation" means all formal housing solutions provided by statutory or charitable services, such as hostels or small accommodation projects.

### **Research methodology**

#### **Governance and ethical approval**

To protect the interests of the young people involved and the integrity of the research, Depaul UK formed a Governance and Ethics Committee to oversee the first phase of Danger Zones and Stepping Stones. This Committee was reinstated for the current project with some additional members from the homelessness sector and Depaul UK's services.

It comprised academic researchers from Bedfordshire University and Heriot-Watt University; representatives from Homeless Link and the YMCA; an independent consultant working within the homelessness sector, and a trustee, senior managers and project managers from Depaul UK.

Part of the Committee's role was to help shape the research methodology and review all project documentation. This included: an ethical statement, a risk assessment, information papers for young people and participating organisations, and the final questionnaire. These documents, as well as further details regarding the composition of the Ethics Committee and its Terms of Reference, can be found in Appendices A to G: <https://uk.depaulcharity.org/danger-zones-and-stepping-stones-phase-2>

#### **The questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed by Depaul UK's Research Manager in close consultation with the Governance and Ethics Committee. Questions related to the following topics:

- Journeys into temporary living
- Use of temporary living arrangements
- Engagement with risk-taking behaviours while without stable accommodation
- Experience of harm and/or risk in temporary living arrangements
- Experience of support in temporary living arrangements

A draft questionnaire was piloted with five young people using Depaul UK's services. This involved sitting with the young people while they completed the questionnaire and asking for detailed explanations of the responses they gave. The pilot allowed for young people's understanding and/or interpretation of questions to be tested, and for the researchers to confirm that the language used in the questionnaire was suitable.

Once finalised, the questionnaire was professionally designed to ensure it was as user-friendly and accessible as possible. It can be found in Appendix G.

#### **Survey distribution**

Homelessness services for young people operating in the UK were identified through various channels, including but not limited to: Depaul UK's current partners (including other organisations managing Nightstop services), contacts of Depaul UK staff members, contacts of the Governance and Ethics Committee, and desk research. These services were contacted and asked to contribute to the research by distributing the questionnaire to all their clients aged 16 to 25. In total, 22 external organisations agreed to take part.

Participating organisations were sent packs of paper questionnaires that also included information sheets for both young people and project staff. These explained the purpose of the research, detailed data protection and confidentiality procedures, and provided contact details of the researchers. A letter to the person coordinating the research at each service included a shortened version of the project's Ethics Statement as well as detailed instructions for how and when completed surveys should be returned. Stamped, addressed envelopes were included for this purpose.

Questionnaires were distributed to all external contributors, and to 26 of Depaul UK's services, on 15 November 2017. Services were requested to ask as many of their clients, in the 16-to-25 age range,

as possible to complete a questionnaire before 6 December 2017. While the questionnaire was designed to be as simple as possible, it covered sensitive and some complex issues. For this reason, staff were permitted to help young people to complete the questionnaire, where necessary.

To maximise response, an online version of the questionnaire was also made available. This was used by services that had limited or no face-to-face contact with their clients. To maintain control over who was completing the survey, services and young people were asked not to forward the link to anyone or publish it online. It was made clear to all services that paper completions were preferred.

The questionnaire was anonymous and asked for no identifying information. However, young people who participated were invited to enter a prize draw to win one of 18 shopping vouchers. To do so, they were required to leave their name and contact details.

#### **Data analysis**

Completed questionnaires were sent directly to an external research agency, Qa Research, for data entry. A comprehensive set of data tabulations was created and sent back to Depaul UK. All further analysis was undertaken by Depaul UK's Research Manager.

It should be noted that unless otherwise stated, all subgroup differences described in this report were statistically significant as per the Student's t-Test (95 percent confidence level). This means that they are likely to be real differences rather than down to chance.

Region	No. of responses	Percentage of responses
London and South East	197	28%
Midlands	181	25%
Yorkshire and the Humber	95	13%
East of England	74	10%
North West	68	10%
North East	57	8%
South West	29	4%
Wales	6	1%
Scotland	2	<1%
Online (region not identified)	3	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1: Region

### The sample

Seven hundred and twelve young people aged from 16 to 25 completed a Danger Zones and Stepping Stones questionnaire. One hundred and fifty-five (22 percent) were clients of Depaul UK, and the remaining 557 (78 percent) were clients of one of 22 external organisations. For a full list of contributing organisations, please see Appendix H.

As shown in Table 1, most regions of the UK were represented in the sample. A large proportion of responses were from services in the Midlands. This is due to the homelessness charity, St Basils, being a key contributor to the research. Very few questionnaires were completed by young people from outside England.

All the young people who completed a questionnaire were aged between 16 and 25. Almost a fifth (17 percent) of respondents were under-18, and the majority (59 percent) were aged 18 to 21 years old. In terms of gender, young women (50 percent) and young men (48 percent) were represented in the sample equally. Seven young people were transgender.

Eight in 10 (81 percent) of the young people who completed a questionnaire said they were heterosexual. One in 10 (nine percent) said they were bisexual, four percent said they were gay or lesbian, and a further two percent said they were “undecided” or identified with another sexuality.

Within this report, we have explored the difference in the experiences of LGBT and non-LGBT young people. LGBT combines the sexual orientation categories of lesbian and gay, bisexual, undecided and other, and the gender category of transgender. Sixteen percent of the sample was LGBT. This is a high proportion considering only around four percent of 16-to-24-year-olds in the UK identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual<sup>1</sup>.

1 Office for National Statistics (2016), Sexual identity, UK: 2016 . Accessed online at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2016#people-aged-16-to-24-are-more-likely-to-identify-as-lesbian-gay-or-bisexual-than-any-other-age-group>



Base: All respondents (712)

Chart 1: Relevant disabilities/conditions

Other research has suggested that LGBT young people are disproportionately likely to be homeless<sup>2</sup>, which could explain the high proportion of LGBT young people within our sample. It could also be, however, that the young people involved in our research are facing a number of complex, interrelated issues, including the discovery of their sexual identity. The high proportion of young people identifying as non-heterosexual – particularly bisexual – could be a reflection of uncertainty around sexual identities and of high levels of sexual experimentation within the group.

Almost three-quarters (73 percent) of the sample was white. Black young people accounted for 11 percent, and eight percent of respondents were from a mixed ethnic background. Two percent were Asian.

Almost half (49 percent) of the young people who completed the questionnaire had at least one of the disabilities/conditions (termed “vulnerabilities” throughout this report) shown in Chart 1. More than a third (36 percent) had a long-term mental health issue that they had experienced for a year or more, and one in five (19 percent) had a learning disability (diagnosed or undiagnosed). Smaller proportions of respondents had a long-term dependency on drugs and alcohol (eight percent) or a physical disability (six percent).

A third (34 percent) of the young people who completed the questionnaire had been in the care of the authorities – a “looked-after child” – for at least part of their childhood.

2 Bateman, W. (Albert Kennedy Trust, 2015), LGBT youth homelessness: A national scoping of cause, prevalence, response and outcome. Accessed online at: <https://www.akt.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=c0f29272-512a-45e8-9f9b-0b76e477baf1>



## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Leaving stable accommodation

For the purpose of this research, stable accommodation was defined as a living arrangement that was for longer than six months. Survey respondents were asked about their experience of leaving stable accommodation for the first time.

As shown in Chart 2, the majority (59 percent) of those who completed the questionnaire had fallen out of stable accommodation before they were 18; nine in 10 (89 percent) were 21 or younger.

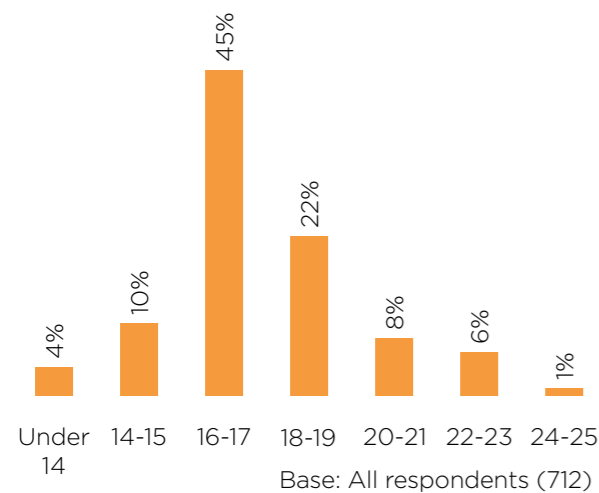


Chart 2: Age when first left stable accommodation

Chart 3 shows that that young women were more likely to have fallen out of stable accommodation as children than young men, with 64 percent of female

respondents saying they were younger than 18 at the time compared with 55 percent of male respondents.

Respondents who had once been “looked-after children” were likely to say they had fallen out of stable accommodation earlier than others (68 percent said they were younger than 18 compared with 54 percent).

In terms of the place they had left when they first fell out of stable accommodation, three-quarters (74 percent) of survey respondents had left their family home. One in 10 (nine percent) had left accommodation they were in as a “looked-after child”. No other types of accommodation were mentioned by more than five percent of respondents. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who were under 18 when they left stable accommodation were significantly more likely to say they had left the family home than those who were older.

Survey respondents were asked why they had left stable accommodation for the first time. Chart 4 shows responses given by at least five percent of respondents.

The most commonly cited reasons for leaving stable accommodation for the first time related to relationship breakdown or abuse. This is in line with the findings from the first phase of the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones research, and with other research into the causes of homelessness<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Watts, B., Johnsen, S., and Sosenko, F. (2015). Youth Homelessness in the UK: A Review for The OVO Foundation. Institute for Social Policy, Housing, Environment and Real Estate (I-SPHERE). Edinburgh: Heriot-Watt University.

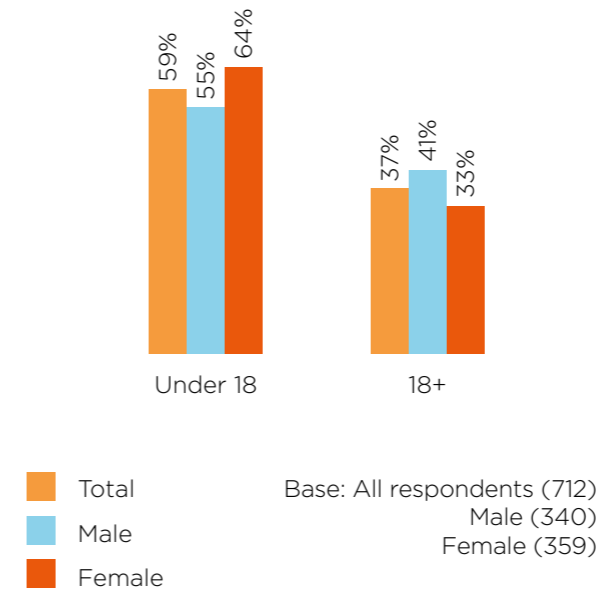


Chart 3: Age when first left stable accommodation - gender comparison

Respondents were most likely to say they had left because of a breakdown in their relationship with the person or people with whom they were staying, with more than half (55 percent) citing this as a reason for their loss of stable accommodation. Three in 10 (30 percent) said they had been asked to leave their accommodation. One in five (20 percent) said they had left to escape emotional or mental abuse, and 13 percent to escape violent abuse.

Young women were more likely than young men to say they had left stable accommodation because of relationship breakdown (60 percent compared with 51 percent) or to escape emotional or mental abuse (25 percent compared with 14 percent). Female respondents were also more likely to cite sexual

abuse or exploitation as a cause of their homelessness, with three percent of young women saying this was a factor compared with one percent of young men.

LGBT young people were more likely than non-LGBT young people to say they had left stable accommodation: to escape emotional or mental abuse (36 percent compared with 17 percent); to escape violent abuse (21 percent compared with 12 percent), or because of their own mental health issues (21 percent compared with eight percent).

Those with any of the vulnerabilities respondents were asked about (i.e. a physical disability, a learning disability, long-term mental health issues, or long-term dependencies on drugs or alcohol) were more likely than those with no vulnerabilities to say that relationship breakdown was a factor in their loss of stable accommodation (61 percent compared with 50 percent). These respondents were also more likely to say they had left stable accommodation: to escape violent abuse (18 percent compared with seven percent); to escape emotional or mental abuse (28 percent compared with nine percent); because of their own mental health issues (19 percent compared with less than one percent); because of their own substance use (eight percent compared with one percent), or because of someone else’s substance use (eight percent compared with three percent).

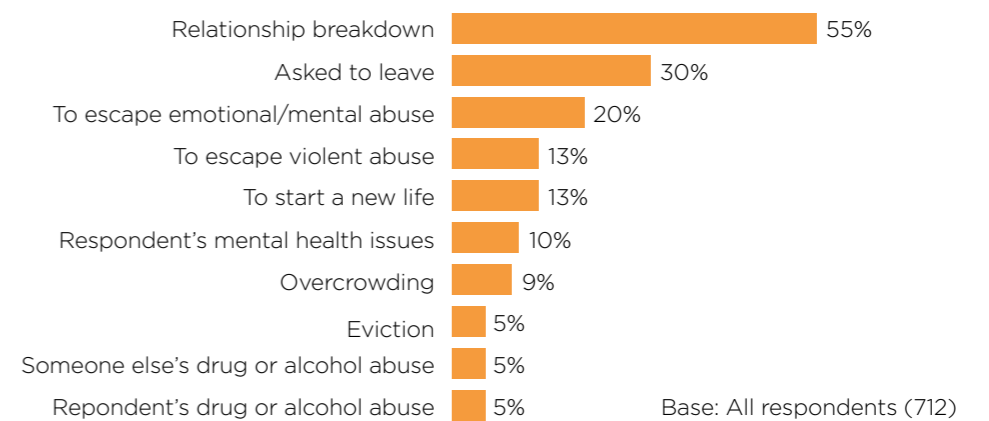


Chart 4: Reason for leaving stable accommodation for the first time

Those who had previously been “looked-after children” were more likely than others to say they had lost stable accommodation because they had been asked to leave (34 percent compared with 25 percent), or because where they were living was overcrowded (10 percent compared with six percent).

### Types of temporary living arrangement young people had stayed in

The first phase of the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones research found that young people lived in a range of different living arrangements while without stable accommodation. Some accommodation was provided informally through personal connections (e.g. family or friends) and some more formally by statutory or homelessness services. The qualitative research indicated that young people may be exposed to different levels of risk, and receive different levels of support, in different types of temporary living arrangement.

Survey respondents were presented with the living arrangements shown in Chart 5 and asked where they had stayed when out of stable accommodation. Small and large housing projects/hostels were defined, respectively, as for “up to 10 people” or “more than 10 people”. Our previous research indicated that there may be a difference between young people’s

experiences depending on who else was housed with them. Therefore, services for young people and services for people of all ages were listed separately.

The young people who completed the questionnaire had made considerable use of “informal” types of living arrangement, i.e. those that may traditionally be referred to as “sofa surfing”. Sixty percent of survey respondents had stayed with good friends while out of stable accommodation, and almost as large a proportion (57 percent) had stayed with family members. Almost a quarter (23 percent) had stayed with acquaintances or friends of friends, and one in 10 (11 percent) had stayed with strangers (not through an organised service such as Depaul UK’s emergency accommodation network, Nightstop).

In terms of service-provided accommodation for homeless people, survey respondents were more likely to have stayed in accommodation that was specifically for young people than they were to have stayed in accommodation for people of all ages. They were also more likely to have stayed in larger accommodation projects than smaller ones.

Young men and young people with a disability or long-term mental health condition (including long-term dependencies on drugs or alcohol) were particularly likely to have stayed with people they did not know while not in

stable accommodation. Fourteen percent of young men had stayed with strangers compared with nine percent of young women, and 15 percent of those with vulnerabilities had stayed with strangers compared with eight percent of those with none. Vulnerable young people were also more likely to have stayed with people they knew through others but not personally. Three in 10 (30 percent) had stayed with “acquaintances or friends of friends” compared with 17 percent of other respondents.

Thirteen percent of those who completed the questionnaire had stayed in a bed and breakfast while out of stable accommodation. Those who had previously been “looked-after children” were more likely to have done so than others (17 percent compared with 11 percent).

Forty-two percent of survey respondents had been placed in temporary accommodation by a local authority at some point in their homelessness journey. Of these respondents, around one in five (19 percent) had been placed in a bed and breakfast. Those who had previously been “looked-after children” were significantly more likely to have been placed in a bed and breakfast by a local authority than others (26 percent compared with 15 percent), as were those with disabilities or long-term mental health issues (24 percent compared with 11 percent).

In terms of other accommodation used by local authorities to house young people, large accommodation services for young people were also likely to be used. Of those who had been placed in temporary accommodation by a council, one third (34 percent) had been placed in a large housing project/hostel for young people at some stage.

### Engagement in ‘risky’ behaviours

The first phase of Danger Zones and Stepping Stones revealed that young people without stable accommodation find places to stay through a variety of means, some of them putting their safety at risk.

Survey respondents were asked which of the strategies shown in Chart 6 they had used to find somewhere to stay.

One third (34 percent) of those who completed the questionnaire said that while out of stable accommodation they had arranged to meet friends purely for a place to stay. We know from the first phase of the research that young people describe a range of people as “friends” in this context, so it is not possible to make any judgments regarding the level of risk this may involve. For some young people, however, meeting with friends for a place to stay may involve attending all-night parties, and our qualitative research found that this resulted in poor sleep and pressure

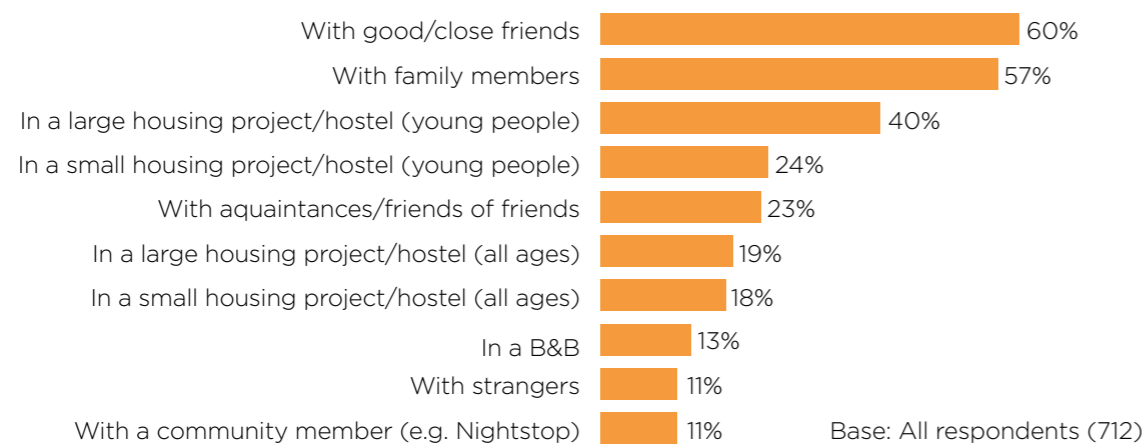


Chart 5: Type of temporary accommodation used

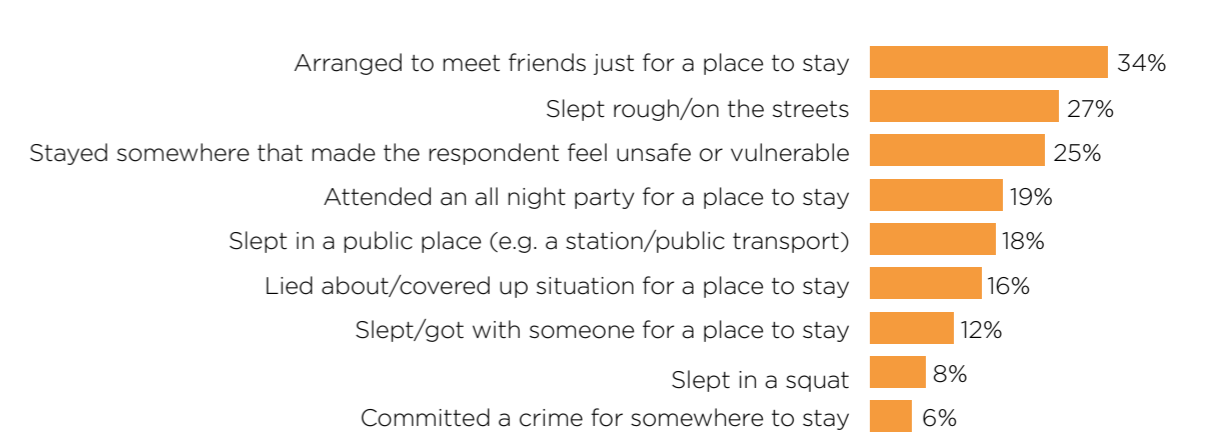


Chart 6: Engagement in “risky” means of finding a place to stay

to consume drugs and alcohol. One in five (19 percent) of the young people who completed the questionnaire said they had attended an all-night party for a place to stay while out of stable accommodation.

More than a quarter (27 percent) of our sample had slept rough on the streets while out of stable accommodation and almost one in five (18 percent) had slept in a public place, such as a train station or on public transport. Young men were more likely than young women to have slept on the streets (38 percent compared with 18 percent) or in a public place (25 percent compared with 11 percent). They were also more likely to have slept in a squat (11 percent compared with five percent).

A quarter (25 percent) of our sample said they had stayed somewhere that made them feel unsafe or vulnerable while out of stable accommodation. LGBT young people were more likely to have done so than others (36 percent compared with 23 percent), which implies that these young people have greater concerns for their safety when staying in temporary living arrangements, or that they end up staying in less safe places and/or have fewer options available to them.

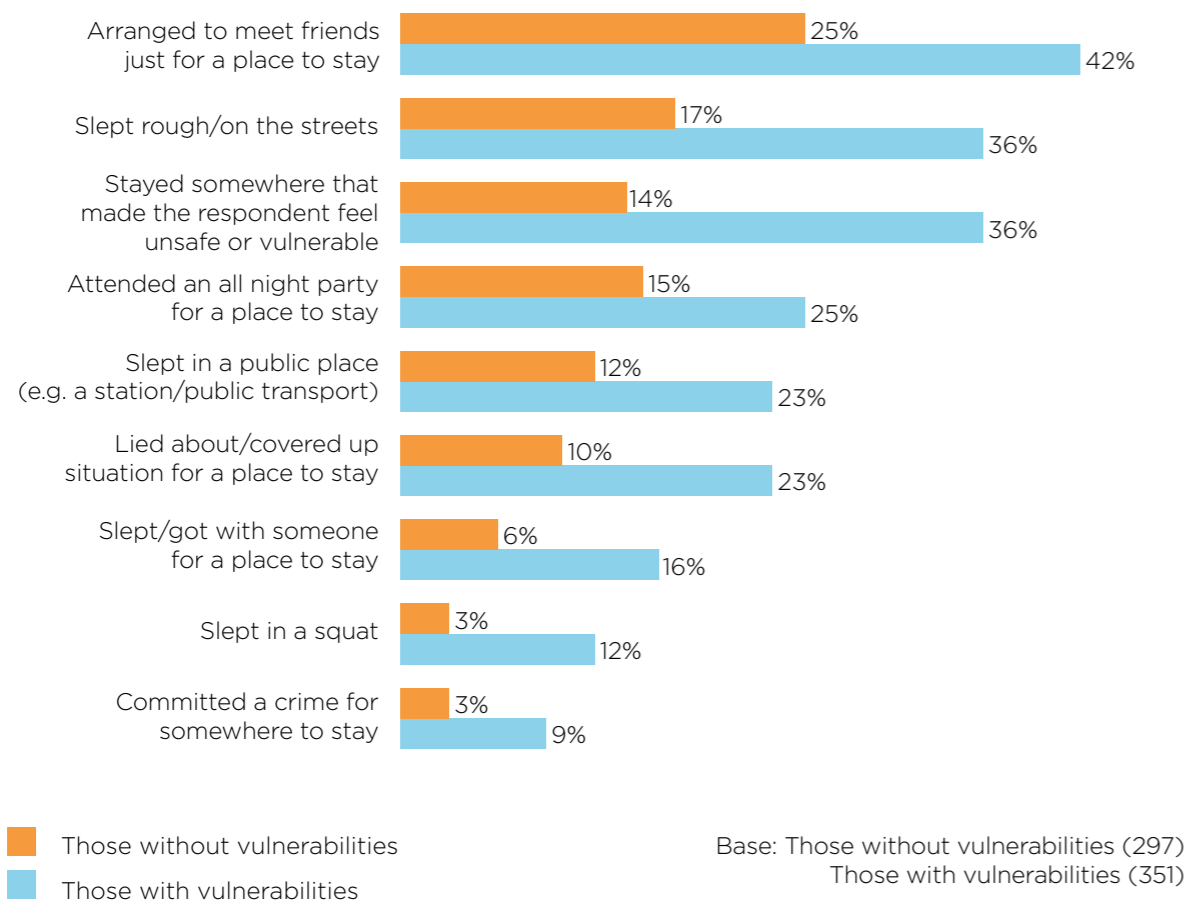


Chart 7: Engagement in “risky” means of finding a place to stay – those with vulnerabilities compared with those without

### Moving on for fear of being a ‘burden’

Our findings from the first stage of the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones research indicated that it is common for young people to leave temporary living arrangements because they feel they are a burden on the person or people they are staying with. This can be problematic if they are moving away from relatively safe and/or supportive circumstances into arrangements that make them vulnerable.

More than half (53 percent) of our sample had left somewhere they were staying because they felt they were making life difficult for the person or people they were staying with – 21 percent said they had done this several times.

Overall, 12 percent of our sample said they had engaged in sexual activities in exchange for a place to stay. The difference between non-LGBT and LGBT young people in this regard was stark. One in 10 (nine percent) of the non-LGBT young people who completed the survey had engaged in sexual activity in exchange for a place to stay, but this rose to nearly a quarter (23 percent) of those identifying as LGBT. While important, this finding must be treated with caution as the data does not tell us whether this group of young people being more likely to engage in sexual activity for a place to stay than others is at all related to their sexual identity. As mentioned above, it may be that these young people face a number of complex, interrelated issues that also have an impact on their options and choices while out of stable accommodation.

Six percent of the young people who completed the survey had committed a crime for a place to stay. Young men were more likely to have done so than young women (10 percent compared with three percent) and “looked-after children” were more likely to have done so than others (12 percent compared with three percent).

Chart 7 shows that young people with a disability or long-term mental health condition (including dependencies on drugs and alcohol) were more likely than others to engage in each of the “risky” behaviours we asked about.

Those with disabilities or long-term mental health conditions (including dependencies on drugs and alcohol) were more than twice as likely as other respondents to have: slept rough on the streets (36 percent compared with 17 percent), stayed somewhere that made them feel unsafe or vulnerable (36 percent compared with 14 percent); lied about or covered up their situation for a place to stay (23 percent compared with 10 percent); engaged in sexual activity for a place to stay (16 percent compared with six percent); slept in a squat (12 percent compared with three percent), or committed a crime for a place to stay (nine percent compared with three percent).

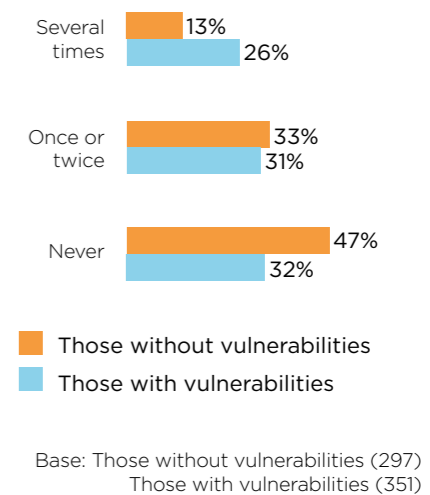


Chart 8: Moving on for fear of being a burden - those with vulnerabilities compared with those without

As shown in Chart 8, respondents with disabilities or long-term mental health conditions (including dependencies on drugs and alcohol) were more likely to say they had consistently left places they were staying as they felt they were making life difficult for the person or people they were staying with.

It may be that vulnerable young people require more support and are, therefore, more likely to feel they are inconveniencing their hosts than other young people. It could also be that vulnerable young people are more sensitive to feelings of “putting out” their hosts than others. Either way, this finding indicates that those most in need of support may be more likely than other young people to move away from potentially beneficial situations for fear of being a burden.

### Experience of harm or risk in temporary living arrangements

Our qualitative research indicated that young people in temporary living arrangements are at risk of several forms of harm from mental and/or physical abuse to theft and damage of their belongings. To estimate the scale of this issue, survey respondents were asked if they had experienced the forms of harm/risk shown in Chart 9.

More than half (55 percent) of respondents had experienced at least one of the forms of harm considered in the survey.

Theft or damage to property was the most commonly experienced form of harm, with more than a third (36 percent) of survey respondents having had their belongings stolen or damaged at some point while living in temporary living arrangements.

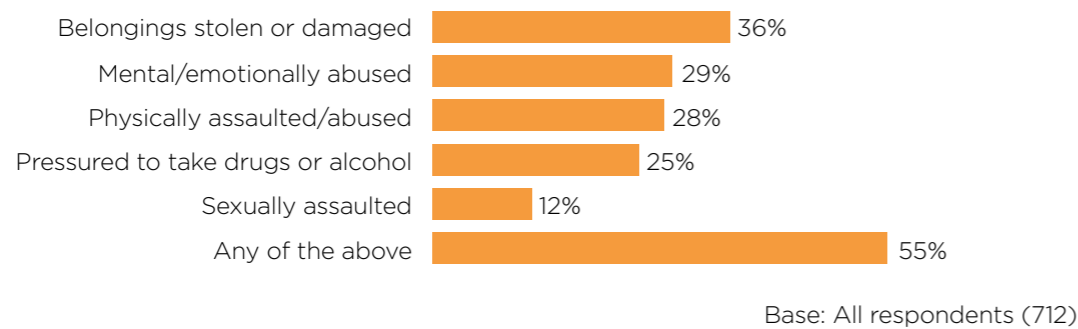


Chart 9: Experience of harm/risk while in temporary living arrangements

Mental and physical abuse was also common, with three in 10 young people stating they had been mentally or emotionally abused (29 percent) or physically assaulted (28 percent) while living somewhere temporarily.

Sexual abuse or exploitation had been experienced in temporary living arrangements by slightly more than a tenth (12 percent) of survey respondents. Young women were more than three times likely to say they had experienced sexual abuse than young men (19 percent compared with five percent).

Our qualitative research indicated that drug and alcohol use was prevalent among young people without stable accommodation, and that some living arrangements led to increased substance use for some young people. In line with this, a quarter (25 percent) of survey respondents said that they had been pressured to take drugs or consume alcohol while in temporary living arrangements.

Charts 10 to 12 show that LGBT young people, those who had previously been “looked-after children”, and those with disabilities or long-term mental health issues (including dependencies on drugs and alcohol) were particularly likely to experience harm while in temporary living arrangements.

LGBT young people were more likely than non-LGBT young people to have experienced at least one of the forms of harm considered in the survey (66 percent compared with 53 percent). They were also more likely to have experienced each form of harm. In particular, LGBT young people were twice as likely to have experienced mental or emotional abuse (49 percent compared with 26 percent), and more than

twice as likely to have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation (23 percent compared with 10 percent). This may be related to finding that LGBT young people are more likely to engage in sexual activity for a place to stay.

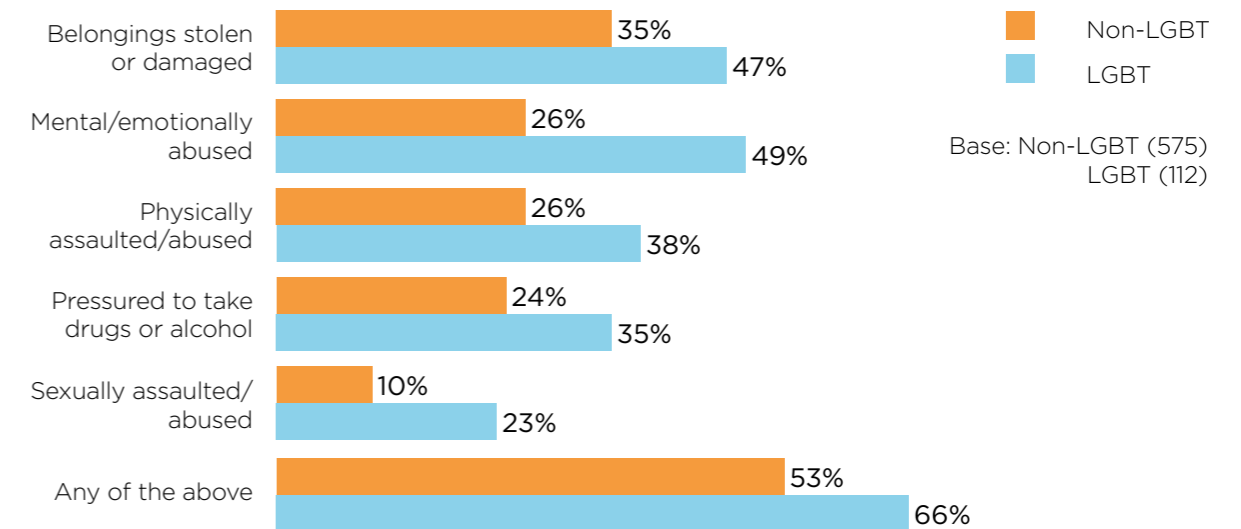


Chart 10: Experience of harm/risk while in temporary living arrangements - non-LGBT young people compared with LGBT young people

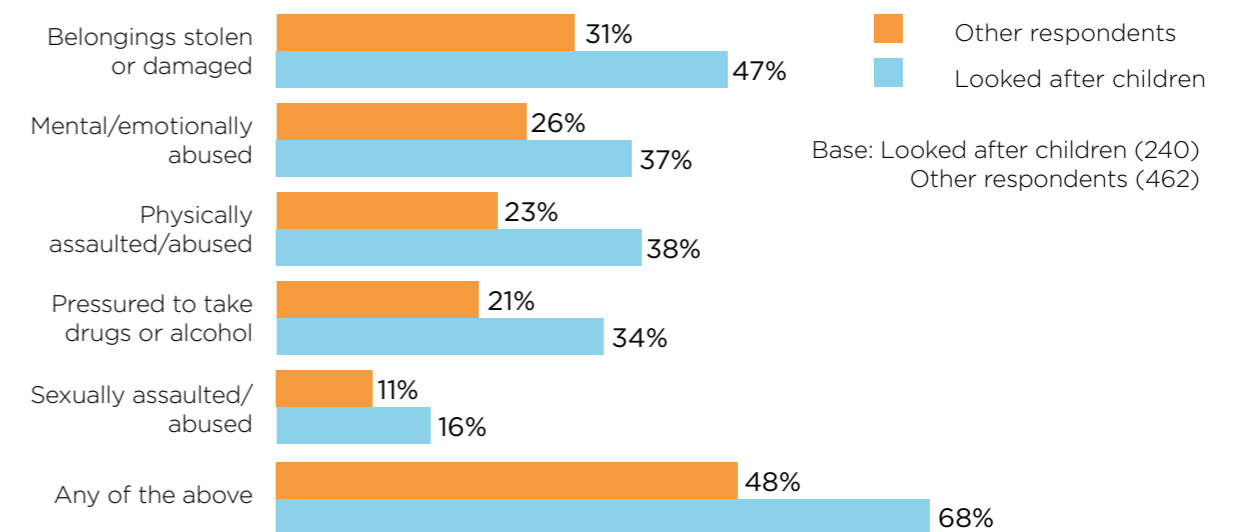
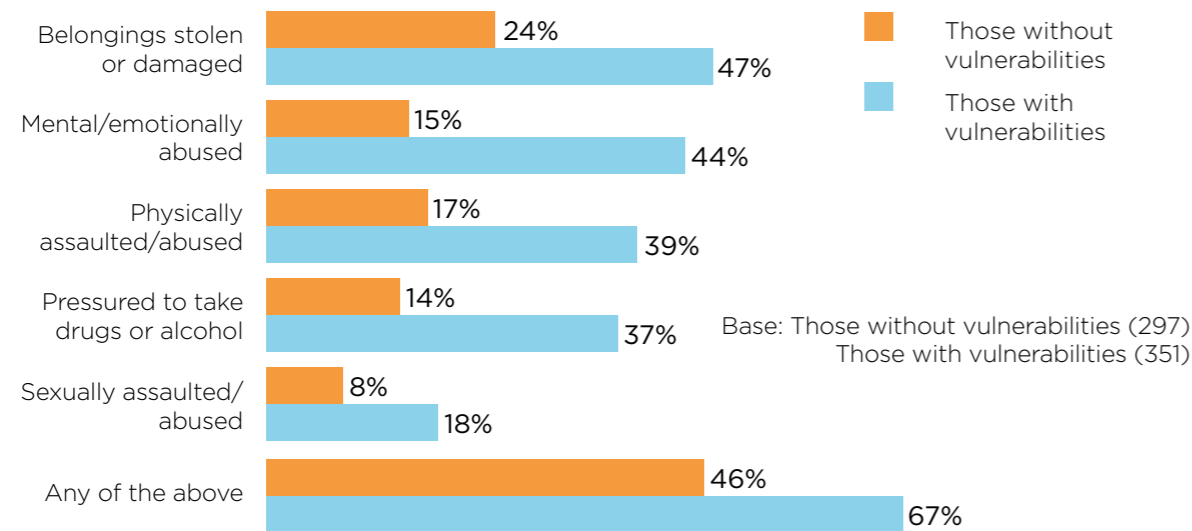


Chart 11: Experience of harm/risk while in temporary living arrangements - “looked-after children” compared with others



**Chart 12: Experience of harm/risk while in temporary living arrangements – those with vulnerabilities compared with those without vulnerabilities**

Respondents who had previously been “looked-after children” were also more likely than others to have experienced all forms of harm considered in the survey. The difference between the groups was most pronounced in relation to the theft and damage of respondents’ belongings and physical abuse. Almost half (47 percent) of those who had been “looked-after children” had had their belongings stolen or damaged while in temporary living arrangements. This compares with three in 10 (31 percent) of other respondents. Almost four in 10 (38 percent) “looked-after children” had experienced physical abuse or bullying compared with under a quarter (23 percent) of those who had never been in care.

Respondents with a disability or a long-term mental health condition (including dependencies on drugs or alcohol) were more than twice as likely as those with no stated vulnerabilities to have experienced each of the forms of harm considered in

the survey. The difference between the groups was most pronounced in relation to mental or emotional abuse. Those with vulnerabilities were more than three times as likely as other respondents to have experienced mental or emotional abuse while in temporary living arrangements (44 percent compared with 15 percent).

There was also a striking difference between those with and those without vulnerabilities in terms of their experience of pressure to take drugs or drink alcohol. Almost four in 10 (37 percent) of those with disabilities or a long-term mental health condition (including dependencies on drugs and alcohol) had felt pressured to take drugs or drink alcohol while in temporary accommodation. This compares with 14 percent of other respondents. If we consider only those with a long-term dependency on drugs or alcohol, the proportion who had felt pressured to take drugs or drink alcohol while in temporary accommodation rises to 58 percent<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Note that only 55 respondents said they had a long-term dependency on drugs or alcohol. This low base size means this finding should be treated with caution.

Regardless of whether or not they had vulnerabilities other than their young age, those who were younger when they were first without stable accommodation were more likely to say they had been sexually assaulted, abused or exploited than those who were older. Almost one in five (18 percent) of those who fell out of stable accommodation when they were younger than 16 had experienced sexual abuse in temporary accommodation. This compares with just four percent of those who were aged 22 to 25<sup>5</sup>.

Our qualitative exploration of young people’s experiences of temporary living found that young people were exposed to different levels and types of risk in different temporary living arrangements. To investigate this further, survey respondents who said they had experienced each type of harm were asked in which type of accommodation they were living at the time.

Table 2 shows the proportion of respondents who had stayed in each type of living arrangement who had experienced harm in that type of living arrangement. For example, it shows that 21 percent of those who stayed with strangers had been “physically assaulted or bullied while staying with strangers”.

The data shown in Table 2 indicates that young people are most at risk of harm while staying in “informal” living arrangements with people they do not know well or at all. This was true in relation to most types of harm considered in the survey, with the effect being most pronounced in relation to sexual assault or abuse and pressure to consume drugs and alcohol. Around half of those who had stayed with friends of friends or strangers (53 percent and 51 percent, respectively) had experienced at least one of the forms of harm considered in the survey while there. This compares to around a third of those who had stayed in service-provided accommodation.

Percentage of those staying in each type of living arrangement that had experienced harm/risk in that type of living arrangement										
	With family members	With good/close friends	With friends of friends	With strangers	With a community member (Nightstop)	In a B&B	In a small project (all ages)	In a small project (YP)	In a large project (all ages)	In a large project (YP)
BASE	408	425	167	81	75	92	129	170	136	286
Physically assaulted/bullied	14%	9%	22%	21%	3%	4%	12%	15%	19%	16%
Sexually assaulted/abused	5%	4%	11%	15%	-	2%	4%	4%	4%	2%
Mentally/emotionally abused/bullied	22%	14%	23%	19%	3%	3%	9%	12%	14%	12%
Belongings stolen/damaged	13%	17%	23%	23%	5%	11%	19%	19%	19%	21%
Pressured to drink alcohol/take drugs	6%	15%	29%	27%	5%	7%	8%	18%	11%	19%
Any of above	31%	32%	53%	51%	13%	16%	29%	35%	35%	34%

**Table 2: Proportion of respondents staying in each type of living arrangement who had experienced harm in that type of living arrangement**

<sup>5</sup> Note that only 50 respondents said they were aged 22 to 25 when they first left stable accommodation. This low base size means this finding should be treated with caution.

Fifteen percent of those who had stayed with strangers while out of stable accommodation had been sexually assaulted or abused while doing so. The proportion of those who had stayed with friends of friends who had experienced sexual assault or abuse while doing so was also relatively high at 11 percent. In contrast, sexual abuse in service-provided accommodation was much less common, with less than five percent of those who had stayed in any form of housing project or hostel reporting they had been sexually abused while there.

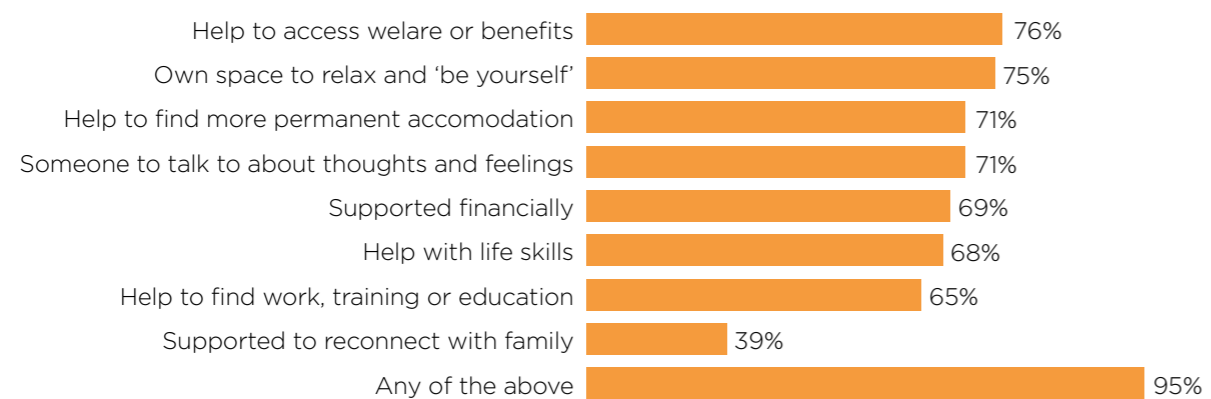
Of those who had stayed with friends of friends or strangers while out of stable accommodation, three in 10 (29 percent and 27 percent, respectively) had felt pressured to take drugs or drink alcohol while doing so. Those who had stayed with people they knew (family or close friends) and those who had stayed in service-provided accommodation were far less likely to report such pressure. That said, of the service-provided accommodation types considered, pressure to use drugs or drink alcohol appears most prevalent among services for young people. This finding appears to contradict our qualitative research which suggested that young people are more likely to be surrounded by substance use in services for people of all ages. It may be that drugs and alcohol are indeed more prevalent in all-age services, but that young people are

more sensitive to pressure from people in their own age group. It is also worth noting that the research does not tell us what form of substance young people feel pressured to consume in service-provided accommodation. It is possible that pressure to drink alcohol or take lower-class drugs is more common in services for young people, but that in services for all age groups, higher-class drugs are more prevalent.

### Support received while in temporary living arrangements

Young people in temporary living arrangements are supported to varying degrees by the people who house them. Survey respondents were asked whether they had been supported in any of the ways listed in Chart 13 while they had been without a stable place to live.

Almost all (95 percent) survey respondents had received some support while out of stable accommodation. Between six and seven in 10 had been supported in each of the ways considered in the survey. The only exception to this was in relation to support to rebuild family relationships, with far fewer young people having received this form of help. This is likely to be because reconnection with family is not relevant to all young people. For some, it is unnecessary as family relationships are already strong, and, for others, it is inappropriate.



Base: All respondents (712)

Chart 13: Support received while in temporary living arrangements



Percentage of those staying in each form of living arrangement who had received support in that form of living arrangement										
	With family members	With good/close friends	With friends of friends	With strangers	With a community member (Nightstop)	In a B&B	In a small project (all ages)	In a small project (YP)	In a large project (all ages)	In a large project (YP)
Base	408	425	167	81	75	92	129	170	136	286
Supported financially	36%	30%	16%	16%	37%	14%	21%	35%	34%	45%
Someone to talk to	29%	29%	12%	2%	33%	8%	18%	47%	31%	59%
Support to find permanent accommodation	19%	14%	10%	9%	36%	14%	21%	49%	34%	56%
Support to find EET	18%	11%	5%	5%	23%	9%	24%	48%	30%	56%
Support to access benefits	18%	11%	8%	6%	28%	13%	29%	56%	41%	70%
Support to reconnect with family	12%	9%	9%	6%	16%	7%	9%	32%	19%	29%
Space to relax and be yourself	18%	14%	4%	7%	37%	18%	29%	55%	40%	70%
Support with life skills	16%	12%	7%	4%	25%	5%	28%	58%	28%	63%
Any of above	57%	49%	30%	26%	64%	40%	60%	82%	74%	89%

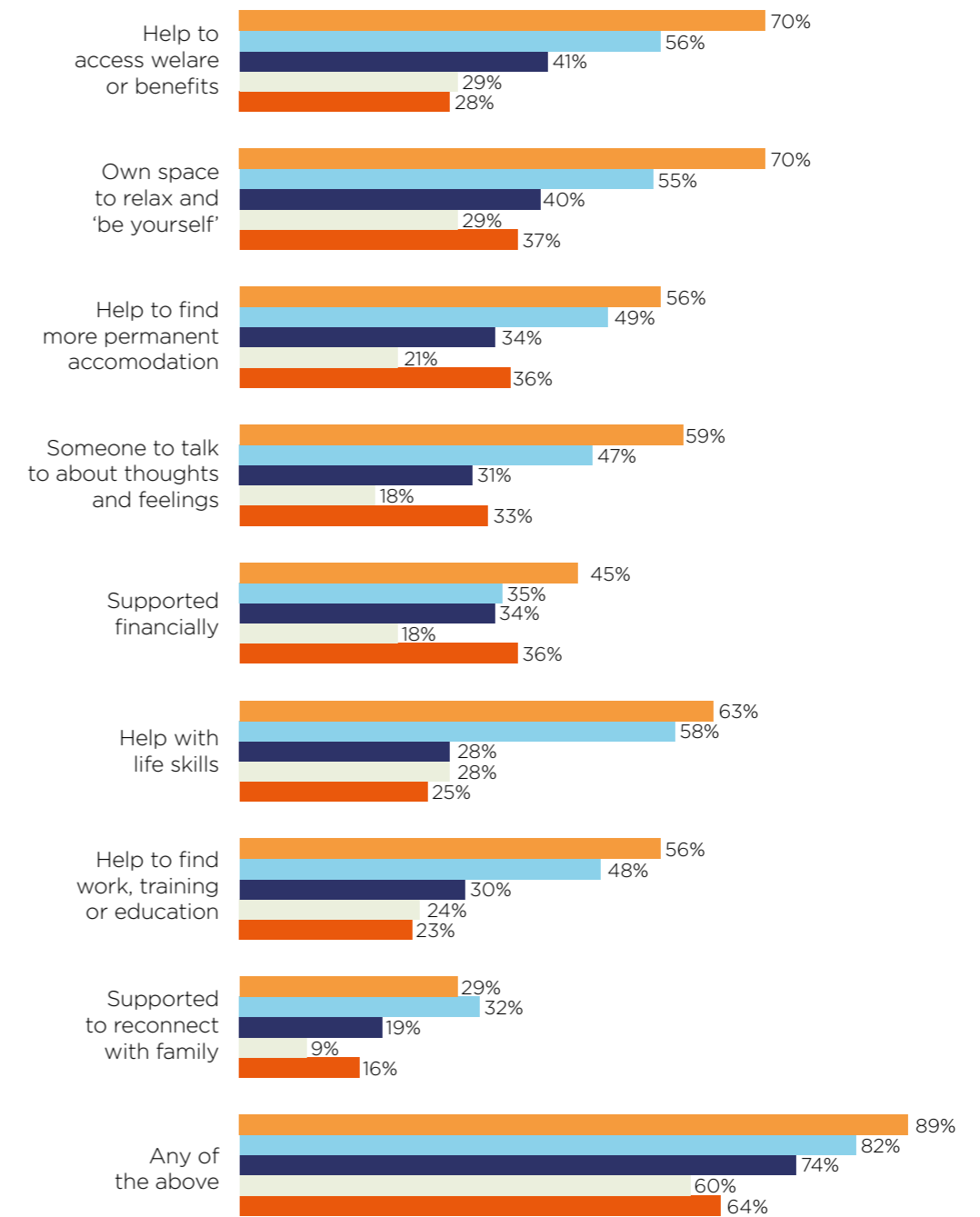
Table 3: Proportion of respondents staying in each type of living arrangement who had received support in that type of living arrangement

There were very few notable differences between subgroups in relation to their experience of support while in temporary living arrangements.

Those who had once been in the care of the authorities were more likely to say they had received financial support while in temporary living arrangements than others (75 percent compared with 66 percent). This group was also more likely to have been supported into work, training or education (73 percent compared with 61 percent) and to have had help with life skills, such as cooking or budgeting (76 percent compared with 65 percent). Young men were more likely than young women to say they had been supported into work, education or training (70 percent compared with 60 percent).

The Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model is based on the understanding that young people receive differing levels of support in different types of temporary living arrangement. Table 3 shows the proportion of respondents who had stayed in each type of living arrangement who had received support while in that type of living arrangement. For example, it shows that 36 percent of those who had stayed with family members had been supported financially while staying with them.

The data in Table 3 shows that young people are much more likely to receive support in service-provided accommodation than they are when staying in less formal living arrangements, such as with family, friends or strangers. This is true in relation to all types of support considered in the survey with the exception of financial and emotional support, which were also likely to be provided by family members or close friends.



Base: Those who stayed in: Large housing project for YP (286); Small housing project for YP (170); Large housing project for all ages (136); Small housing project for all ages (129); B&B (92); Community member (75)

- Large housing project (young people)
- Small housing project (young people)
- Large housing project (all ages)
- Small housing project (all ages)
- Community member (e.g. Nightstop)

Chart 14: Support received while in temporary living arrangements - service-provided accommodation

Perhaps unsurprisingly, young people were least likely to have received support while staying with strangers. Although in some cases, it appears that strangers supported young people financially.

Young people who had lived in a bed and breakfast were relatively unlikely to receive support while there. However, a fairly significant proportion had received support to, for example, find more permanent accommodation (14 percent) or access benefits (13 percent). It should be noted, however, that this support is unlikely to have been provided by bed and breakfast staff, but rather the service or local authority responsible for placing them there.

Chart 14 shows that survey respondents were more likely to receive support when housed in services for young people than when housed in services for people of all ages. The difference between services for young people and those for all ages appears particularly pronounced in relation to support with lifeskills and least pronounced in relation to the provision of financial support. Young people's services were much more likely than services for people of all ages to provide survey respondents with: support to access benefits, support to find work, education or training, emotional support, and support to reconnect with their family. Such services were also more likely to provide survey respondents with a place they could relax and be themselves. This is something our qualitative research found to be very important for young people, particularly those who had had limited privacy in other places they had stayed.

With regard to the size of accommodation services, the data indicates that young people are more likely to receive support when staying in large housing projects/hostels than when staying in small housing projects/hostels. It has been argued that smaller accommodation services are more supportive than larger ones because the staff/resident ratio tends to be higher. This finding appears to provide evidence to the contrary. It should be noted, however, that survey respondents were not asked about the quality of the support they had received - just about whether they had received any. It is possible that support in small accommodation projects is more scarce than in larger projects, but that the support provided is of a superior quality and, therefore, more likely to help young people out of homelessness. This is a matter for further research.

The data suggests that less support is available in community solutions than in other forms of service-provided accommodation. It should be noted, however, that no distinction has been made between emergency and longer-term community solutions (e.g. supported lodgings). Further research is required to understand the difference in support provision between these service types.

### Impact of temporary living

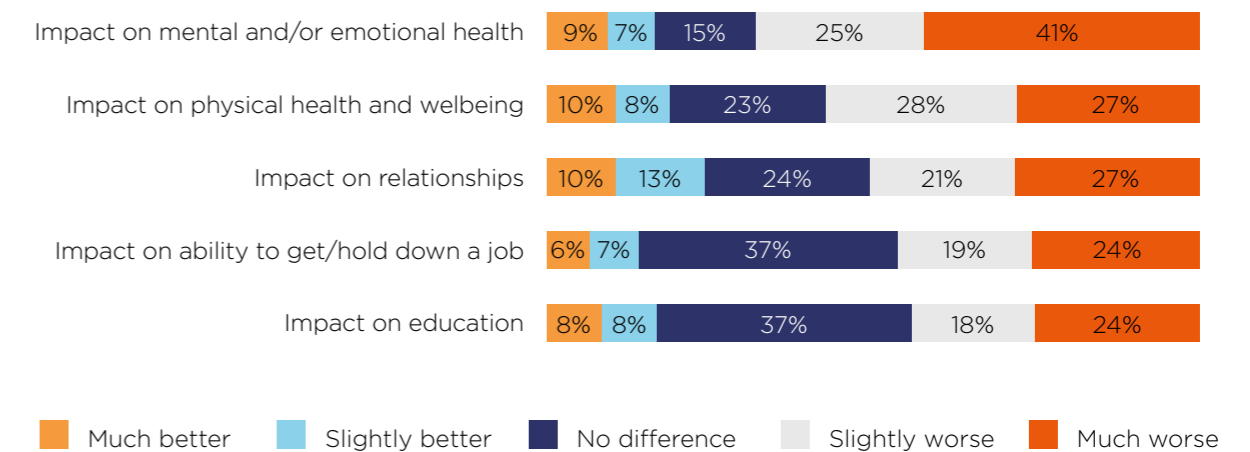
Our qualitative research found that temporary living has a negative impact on young people's lives. To test the prevalence of this finding, survey respondents were asked about the impact of their experience on the aspects of their lives shown in Chart 15.

The aspect of respondents' lives most likely to be negatively affected by temporary living was their mental and/or emotional health. Two-thirds (66 percent) of our sample said that temporary living had damaged their mental or emotional health, with four in 10 (41 percent) saying it had made it much worse. The fact that more than one third (36 percent) of respondents had long-term mental health issues implies that the damage temporary living causes to mental health may be significant and lasting.

The majority of survey respondents (55 percent) said that their physical health or wellbeing had been negatively affected by temporary living, with more than a quarter (27 percent) saying that this element of their lives had been made much worse by not having a stable place to live.

Temporary living was less likely to have had a negative effect on young people's ability to get and hold down a job or on their education. In both cases, almost four in 10 (37 percent) of respondents said that not having a stable place to live made no difference. Rather than this being an indication that young people can manage work or education without it being affected by temporary living, this finding is likely to be because not all of the young people in the sample would have been interested in or ready for employment or education. As such, temporary living would have had little impact.

In relation to all the aspects of young people's lives that were considered in the survey, a significant minority of respondents said that not having a stable place to live had made things better. For example, a quarter (23 percent) said that temporary living had improved their relationships and one in five (18 percent) said it had improved their physical wellbeing. It is likely that those who said temporary living had had a positive impact on their lives were those who had left stable accommodation because they were living in particularly volatile or dangerous circumstances.



Base: All respondents (712)

Chart 15: Impact of temporary living on aspects of young people's lives



Young women, LGBT young people and those with stated vulnerabilities were particularly likely to say temporary living had had a negative impact on their lives.

As shown in Chart 16, young women were more likely than young men to say that being out of stable accommodation had had a negative effect on: their mental and emotional health (72 percent compared with 59 percent); their physical health and wellbeing (59 percent compared with 51 percent); their relationships (55 percent compared with 41 percent), and their education (46 percent compared with 37 percent). There was no difference between the genders in terms of the impact of temporary living on their education.

Chart 17 shows that LGBT young people were significantly more likely than non-LGBT young people to say temporary living had had a negative effect on: their mental and emotional health (80 percent compared with 64 percent); their physical health and wellbeing (71 percent compared with 53 percent); their relationships (63 percent compared with 46 percent), and their education (54 percent compared with 41 percent). The difference between the groups in relation to the impact of temporary living on employment was not significant.

Finally, Chart 18 shows that those with stated vulnerabilities were significantly more likely than others to say that temporary living had negatively affected each of the areas of their lives considered in the survey.

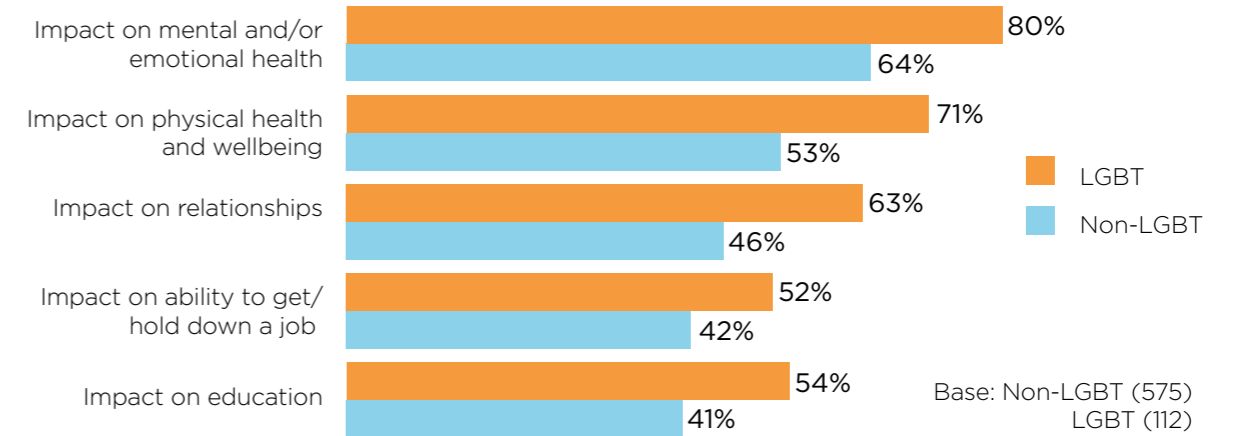


Chart 17: Proportion of young people who said temporary living had had a negative impact on aspects of their lives - non-LGBT young people compared with LGBT young people

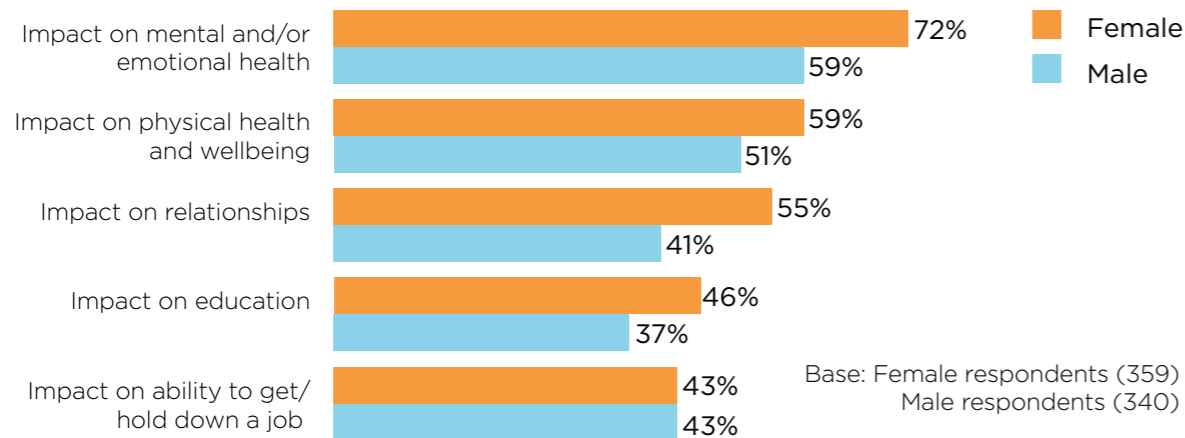


Chart 16: Proportion of young people who said temporary living had had a negative impact on aspects of their lives - gender comparison

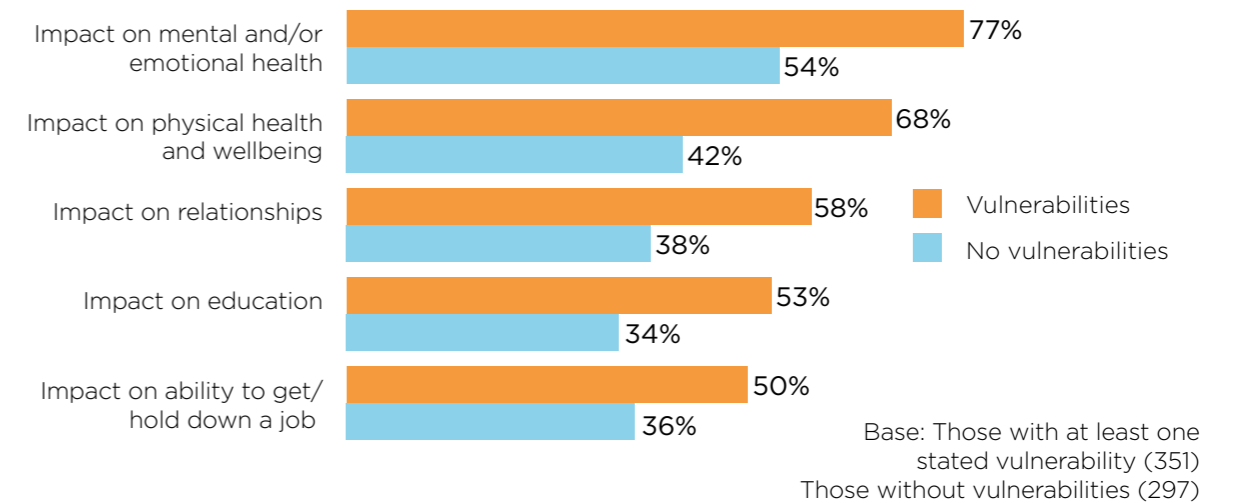


Chart 18: Proportion of young people who said temporary living had had a negative impact on aspects of their lives - those with stated vulnerabilities compared with those without

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **Harm in temporary living arrangements**

This research suggests that young people in temporary living arrangements may be at considerable risk of harm. More than half (55 percent) of the young people involved in our research had experienced at least one of the forms of harm considered in our survey while not in stable accommodation. The likelihood that young people will experience harm was found to be dependent on where they are staying, and whether they possess characteristics that place them in an “at risk” category.

While out of stable accommodation, between one quarter and one third of the young people involved in the research had experienced: their belongings being stolen or damaged; mental or emotional abuse; physical assault/abuse, or pressure to consume drugs or alcohol. One in 10 had been sexually assaulted or abused while in temporary living arrangements.

We found that the likelihood of harm was particularly high in “informal” living arrangements that involved young people staying with strangers or “friends of friends”. The risk of harm was much lower in service-provided accommodation.

There was no evidence to suggest that large hostels, or those for people of all ages, were more dangerous for young people than smaller housing projects, or those specifically for young people. With regards to pressure to take drugs or drink alcohol,

this appeared more prevalent in young people’s services than in others, although we have no information on the types of substance involved.

### **Support for young people in temporary living arrangements**

This research suggests that young people who are out of stable accommodation are most likely to receive support while in service-provided accommodation specifically for young people. This includes both small and large accommodation projects and, to a lesser extent, community solutions such as Nightstop. It should be noted that we did not ask respondents about the quality of the support they had received – just about whether they had received any. So we cannot make judgments about the effectiveness of the support provided by each service type.

The young people involved in the research were least likely to have received support while staying with strangers or in a bed and breakfast. While family and close friends frequently provided financial and/or emotional support, they were less likely than all forms of service-provided accommodation to provide: support to find more permanent accommodation; support to find work or education; support with life skills, or support to access benefits. As such, “informal” arrangements with friends and family appear to be less likely to support young people in ways that might help them out of homelessness.

### Young women in temporary living arrangements

This research has highlighted that young women may be particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of temporary living.

The young women who participated in the research tended to have left stable accommodation earlier than their male counterparts, meaning that they were more likely to have been in temporary living arrangements as children (under 18). This could make them more vulnerable to harm, especially if staying with people they do not know well.

Our findings show that young women are significantly more likely to experience mental or emotional abuse in temporary living arrangements than young men, and more than three times more likely to suffer sexual abuse or exploitation. The young women who completed our survey were also significantly more likely than young men to report that temporary living has had a negative effect on their lives, particularly in the areas of mental and emotional health and relationships.

### LGBT young people in temporary living arrangements

This research suggests that LGBT young people are significantly more likely to experience harm in temporary living arrangements than their non-LGBT counterparts.

LGBT respondents were significantly more likely to report that they had stayed somewhere that made them feel unsafe than non-LGBT respondents. While in temporary living arrangements, they were also more likely to have experienced all the forms of harm considered in the survey: mental and emotional abuse; theft or damage to belongings; physical assault or abuse; pressure to consume drugs or alcohol, and sexual abuse or exploitation.

The increased likelihood that LGBT young people may experience sexual abuse in temporary living arrangements may be related to our finding that they are more likely than non-LGBT young people to engage in sexual activity in exchange for a place to stay.

Unsurprisingly given the increased likelihood that they will experience harm, the LGBT young people involved in our research were more likely than non-LGBT respondents to report that temporary living had had a negative effect on their lives.

It should be noted that while LGBT respondents were found to be particularly likely to experience harm in temporary living arrangements, we cannot assume from our findings that this harm is because of, or connected to, their sexual or gender identities. It may be that this group are vulnerable due to a range of complex issues which require exploration through further research.

### Previously ‘looked-after children’ in temporary living arrangements

This research has highlighted that temporary living may be particularly risky for young people who have once been in the care of the authorities – “looked-after children”.

The young people in our sample who had been “looked-after children” were more likely than those who had never been in care to have experienced all the forms of harm considered in our survey while in temporary living arrangements: mental and emotional abuse; theft or damage to belongings; physical assault or abuse; pressure to consume drugs or alcohol, and sexual abuse or exploitation. “Looked-after children” were also four times as likely as other respondents to have committed a crime for a place to stay, leaving them vulnerable to gaining a criminal record that could have a negative impact on their future.

While without stable accommodation, “looked-after children” were more likely than others to have been placed in a bed and breakfast by a local authority. Our findings suggest that the risk of harm is no more prevalent in this type of accommodation than others, but that support available to young people is considerably more scarce.

### Young people with disabilities or long-term mental health conditions in temporary living arrangements

This research suggests that young people with disabilities and/or long-term mental health conditions (including dependencies on drugs or alcohol) are more vulnerable in temporary living arrangements than others.

When out of stable accommodation, those with disabilities and/or mental health conditions were found to be more likely than others to stay with strangers and/or people they did not know well. Such living arrangements were shown to be most likely to lead to harm for young people. In addition, those with disabilities and/or mental health conditions were more likely than others to engage in “risky behaviours”, such as: staying somewhere they feel unsafe or vulnerable; sleeping rough on the streets; sleeping in a squat, or engaging in sexual activity in exchange for a place to stay.

Correspondingly, those with disabilities and/or mental health conditions were more than twice as likely as others to experience all the forms of harm considered in the survey while in temporary living arrangements (mental and emotional abuse; theft or damage to belongings; physical assault or abuse; pressure to consume drugs or alcohol; and sexual abuse or exploitation). They were also significantly more likely to say that temporary living had had a negative effect on their lives.

Despite their additional needs, there was no evidence that young people with disabilities/mental health conditions receive more support in temporary living arrangements than other young people.

## REVISITING THE DANGER ZONES AND STEPPING STONES MODEL

The Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model categorises temporary living arrangements according to:

- the level of risk that the environment young people are staying in will lead to them experiencing harm (the y axis on Figure 2)
- the capacity of the host (accommodating person or people) to help young people out of temporary living and into stable accommodation (the x axis on Figure 2)

As shown in Figure 2, there are four possible categories:

- **Danger Zone:** Arrangements in this category pose a high degree of risk to young people's safety and/or wellbeing and hosts have very little capacity (or willingness) to support young people out of homelessness.
- **Minefield:** While hosts of arrangements in this category have the skills, knowledge and willingness to support young people, the level of risk is so high that young people will usually experience harm and/or fail to escape temporary living through these routes.
- **Storm Shelters:** Young people staying in arrangements in this category are relatively safe from harm, but the capacity of their hosts to support them out of temporary living is limited.

- **Stepping Stones:** In temporary living arrangements in this category, young people are kept safe from harm, and are also supported out of temporary living and towards more stable accommodation.

The current research provides further evidence that temporary living arrangements differ in terms of both the risk they pose to young people's wellbeing, and the level of support they offer to young people to improve their circumstances. It also allows for accommodation types to be more accurately assessed and positioned on the matrix than was possible with the qualitative research alone.

### Staying with friends

Our initial research suggested that "Staying with friends" was a diverse accommodation category that spanned across the Danger Zone and Storm Shelter categories of the matrix. While some living arrangements that were described as "staying with friends" were relatively safe (e.g. staying in the family homes of school friends), others posed a much greater risk to the wellbeing of young people. Most arrangements described as "staying with friends" were considered to offer relatively low levels of support to young people.

The current research has enabled this category to be broken down into: "Staying with good/close friends", "Staying with acquaintances/friends of friends", and "Staying with strangers". As shown in Figure 2, each of these new categories occupies a different position on the matrix.

- **Staying with good/close friends:** This research has shown that risk to young people's wellbeing is relatively low in this category (although there is some evidence that young people may experience some mental or emotional abuse or be pressured to take drugs and alcohol). While good/close friends were likely to support young people financially and/or provide emotional support, they were shown to be unlikely to support young people out of homelessness by, for example, helping them into work or to find more permanent accommodation. This places accommodation with good/close friends into the Storm Shelter category.
- **Staying with strangers:** Young people were shown to be most vulnerable to harm while staying with people they did not know well. Of all the living arrangements considered in the research, accommodation with strangers (or acquaintances/friends of friends) was most likely to lead to young people experiencing: sexual abuse or exploitation; physical abuse or bullying; theft or damage to their belongings, or pressure to take drugs or drink alcohol. Strangers were also least likely to provide support to young people experiencing homelessness. As risk to young people's wellbeing is likely to be high and they are likely to receive very low levels of support, accommodation with strangers has been placed in the Danger Zone.

- **Staying with acquaintances/friends of friends:** The risk of young people experiencing harm while staying with acquaintances/friends of friends was shown to be comparable to the risk they would experience harm while staying with strangers. Support provided to young people by acquaintances/friends of friends was also shown to be low. However, there was some evidence that emotional support may be available. Accommodation with acquaintances/friends of friends occupies a very similar position on the matrix to accommodation with strangers.

### Staying with family

Our initial research suggested that "Staying with family" was another complex category that included a diverse range of living arrangements. The level of risk that young people would experience harm while living with family members was generally considered to be low. Family members were deemed to provide young people with slightly more support than friends, and, in some cases, support young people out of homelessness. As such, "Staying with family" was positioned so that it spanned across the Storm Shelter and Stepping Stones categories.

The current research indicates that the risk that young people will experience harm while staying with family may be slightly higher than initially thought, especially in relation to risk of mental or emotional abuse. Furthermore, family members' propensity to provide support appears to be lower than the initial research suggested. Like good/close friends, family members were shown to provide financial and/or emotional support frequently, but be less likely to provide the type of support that might help them out of homelessness (e.g. help to find work or more permanent accommodation). On the revised matrix (Figure 2), "Staying with family" has been repositioned so that it spans the Storm Shelter and Danger Zone categories.

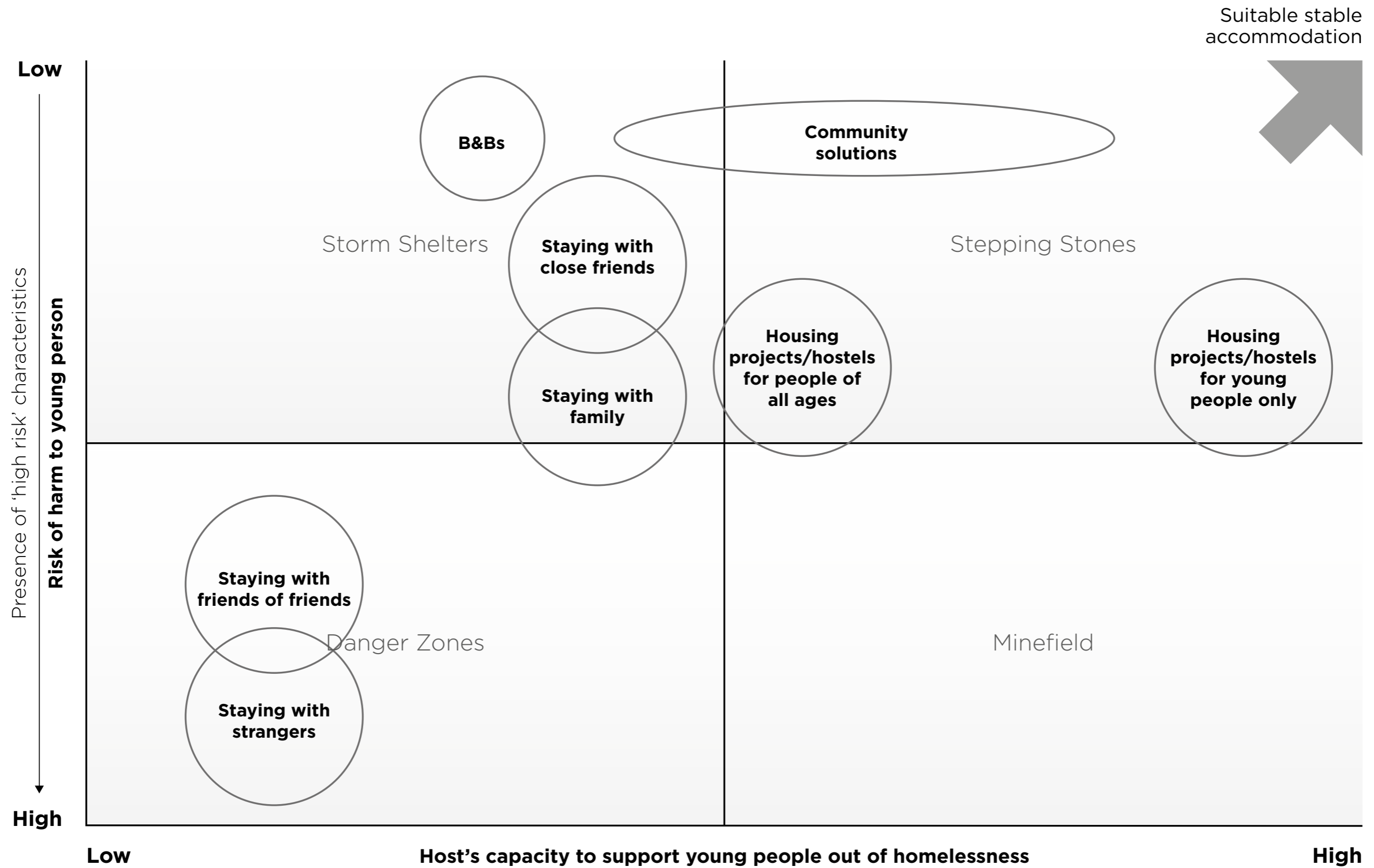


Figure 2

## Large/small hostels/ accommodation projects

Our initial research suggested that young people were more likely to experience harm in a large hostel than in a small accommodation project. In addition, support was considered more readily available in smaller accommodation projects, partly because resources were spread less thinly. As such, large hostels were placed in the Minefield category (while support was available, it was thought that young people would be unlikely to succeed due to the high levels of risk they would experience harm) and smaller accommodation projects were placed in the Stepping Stones category.

The current research does not support this thinking, but instead suggests that there is no discernible difference between large and small accommodation projects in terms of the level of risk they pose to young people's wellbeing. Moreover, larger projects were found to be slightly more likely than smaller ones to provide young people with support (although we did not ask about the quality of this support so cannot judge its effectiveness).

Our findings indicate that the size of accommodation projects has less of a bearing on risk and support levels than the type of person accommodated in them. As such, the categories have been revised to "Housing projects/hostels for people of all ages" and "Housing projects/hostels for young people".

- **Housing projects/hostels for people of all ages:** Our findings suggest that the risk to young people's wellbeing while they are staying in service-provided accommodation for people of all ages is slightly higher than the risk of staying with close friends. In particular, young people appear to be more likely to fall victim to physical abuse or bullying and more likely to have their belongings stolen or damaged. The risk that young people will come to harm in all-age accommodation was, however, shown to be much lower than the risk that

they would come to harm while staying with strangers. In terms of support provided, young people appear to be much more likely to receive support in service-provided accommodation than they are in less formal arrangements with family or friends. Provision of financial and emotional support was on a par with that provided by family or close friends. But young people were significantly more likely to receive the kind of support that would be likely to help them out of homelessness (e.g. help to access benefits, find work or find more permanent accommodation). Our findings place "Housing projects/accommodation for people of all ages" predominantly in the Stepping Stones category with some overlap into the Minefield category.

- **Housing projects/hostels for young people:** The risk that young people would experience harm while housed in a service-provided accommodation project for young people only was shown to be comparable to the risk they would experience harm in accommodation for people of all ages. Young people did, however, appear more likely to feel pressured to consume drugs or alcohol in a service for people only in their age group. In terms of support provided, young people were shown to be significantly more likely to receive support in a service for young people than in any other accommodation type considered in the research. In light of these findings "Housing projects/hostels for young people" have also been placed predominantly in Stepping Stones with some overlap into the Minefield category. They have, however, been placed considerably further along the "capacity to support" axis than all-age accommodation.

## Community homelessness solutions, such as Nightstop

Our initial research suggested that community homelessness solutions, such as Nightstop, were a low risk and relatively high support option for young people in need of a place to stay. The current research has provided evidence to support this line of thinking. Of all the accommodation types considered in the research, young people were least likely to experience harm while staying with a member of the community through a service such as Nightstop.

Young people were likely to receive considerably more support from such services than they would from family or friends, but less support than they might do from hostel-based services. "Community homelessness solutions, such as Nightstop" have been placed at the top centre of the matrix, spanning Storm Shelter and Stepping Stone categories equally. It should be noted that no distinction has been made between emergency and longer-term community solutions (e.g. supported lodgings), between which there could be much variation in support provision. This possible variation has been shown in Figure 2 by a flat-but-wide shape to represent community solutions.

## Bed and breakfast accommodation

Our initial research provided insufficient insight into young people's experience of staying in bed and breakfast accommodation to allow us to position them on the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones matrix. The current research, however, suggests that young people are relatively unlikely to experience harm while in a bed and breakfast, but also unlikely to receive support. This places them in the Storm Shelter category.

## Other factors that increase the risk that young people will experience harm in temporary living arrangements

The current research has shown that young people with particular characteristics are more likely to experience harm than others. In the context of the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model, this suggests that the placement of living arrangements on the matrix will differ for different young people. For young people in high risk groups (namely young women, LGBT young people, those who have previously been in the care of the authorities, and those with disabilities or long-term mental health conditions), all accommodation types will shift slightly towards the high end of the "risk" axis. As such, accommodation types that are classified as Storm Shelters for some young people may be in the Danger Zone for others, and those that are Stepping Stones for some young people may be in the Minefield category for others. To accurately assess an individual's circumstances using the Model, information about both the young person in question and their living arrangements would need to be obtained.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has improved our understanding of young people’s experience of temporary living and enhanced our thinking behind the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model. It has provided additional evidence to suggest that young people are at considerable risk of harm while in temporary living arrangements, and shown that to secure a place to stay young people often adopt strategies that pose considerable risk to their wellbeing, such as attending all-night parties or engaging in sexual activity in exchange for accommodation.

Our research has shown that young people are less likely to come to harm while living in service-provided accommodation than in “informal” arrangements, such as staying with friends, and that harm is particularly likely when young people are forced to stay with people they do not know. In addition, young people are more likely to receive the support they need to escape homelessness from homelessness services than from friends or family.

Most young people who find themselves without stable accommodation are at risk of some form of harm. This risk varies depending on where they stay. Our research indicates, however, that young women, LGBT young people, those who have previously been in the care of the authorities and those with disabilities and/or long-term mental health issues are particularly likely to experience harm when they are without somewhere stable to live.

Following this research, Depaul UK is making several recommendations for Central Government, commissioners of homelessness services and service providers. If implemented, the recommendations could help to reduce the number of young people who become homeless. Implementing them would also help to ensure that young people who do become homeless are at reduced risk of harm and more likely to get the support they need to find stable accommodation. The recommendations could be of use to local authorities with regards to prevention and relief duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. They also have implications for Central Government’s proposals to reform the supported accommodation funding system.

In light of the findings of this research, Depaul UK recommends that:

- 1 **Central Government and commissioners increase the provision of preventative services, such as family mediation and short respite accommodation, particularly for under-18s.** This would reduce the number of homeless young people in potentially dangerous temporary living arrangements.

In line with other studies, including the first phase of Danger Zones and Stepping Stones, this research found relationship breakdown to be the most common reason for young people losing access to stable accommodation. Every young person’s situation is different. However,

our research so far suggests that there are cases where homelessness could be prevented if families are supported to work through tension and conflict through the provision of preventative services.

Our findings also suggest that young people tend to leave stable accommodation at a young age (more than two-thirds of our sample first did so when they were under 18). As such, it is recommended that special attention is given to preventative services for those aged under 18 and their families.

- 2 **Central Government ensures sufficient and secure funding is made available for supported accommodation projects.** This would prevent young people staying in “informal” arrangements where the risk of harm is higher.

This research suggests that young people in housing projects are more likely than those staying with friends, friends of friends or strangers, or in bed and breakfasts to access the help they need to escape homelessness. It has also shown that young people are less likely to experience harm in housing projects than those staying in “informal” living arrangements, e.g. with family, friends, or people they do not know.

Supported accommodation housing projects combine housing with commissioned support services. There is currently an insufficient supply of supported accommodation bed spaces. In 2016, two-thirds of supported accommodation projects reported turning people away because they were full<sup>6</sup>. The Government has proposed funding reforms which could make the future funding of supported accommodation less secure. Depaul UK calls on Central Government to use

the welfare system where possible to provide secure funding for homelessness supported accommodation<sup>7</sup>. We also call on the Government to ensure supported accommodation commissioners have sufficient funding available to meet the need for this type of accommodation.

- 3 **Commissioners and service providers ensure young people are placed in accommodation specifically designed for them.** In these projects, young people are more likely to receive the support they need to escape homelessness than in all-age projects.

This research suggests that young people are considerably more likely to receive the support they need to escape homelessness from services specifically designed for young people (as opposed to services for homeless people of all ages). Depaul UK calls for those in need of accommodation to be placed in young people’s services rather than in generic accommodation, where possible.

- 4 **Further research is undertaken into the experience of particular groups of young people in temporary living arrangements, including young women, LGBT young people, those who had previously been looked-after children, and those with disabilities or long-term mental health issues.** This should help determine how they can be better supported and protected from harm.

This research suggests that young women, LGBT young people, those who have previously been in the care of the authorities, and those with disabilities and/or long-term mental health issues, are particularly likely to experience harm when they are without somewhere stable to live. Depaul UK calls for further research into the experience of these vulnerable groups in temporary living

6 Homeless Link (2017) Support for single homeless people in England: Annual Review 2016 <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Full%20report%20-%20Support%20for%20single%20people%202016.pdf>

7 Depaul UK’s Submission to the Government’s Consultation on Housing Costs for Short-term Supported Accommodation can be downloaded at: <https://uk.depaulcharity.org/short-term-supported-housing-submission>

arrangements. Furthermore, Depaul UK suggests that a detailed review of service provision for young people in these categories is undertaken, and that measures to protect them are increased.

- 5 **Central government, commissioners and service providers increase the provision of community-based accommodation, such as Nightstop and supported lodgings.** This would help ensure that, where appropriate, this type of safe accommodation is made available for more young people.

This research suggests that community-based schemes, such as Nightstop, provide safe temporary accommodation for young people. As such, Central Government should create conditions that allow for provision of such services to be increased. For example, it may consider making seed funding available for commissioners and providers to use to set up emergency hosting schemes, such as Nightstop, in areas that are currently not covered by such schemes.

We did not distinguish between short-term emergency schemes and longer-term community-based accommodation in this study. However, research published by the Government in 2008 showed that longer-term community-based solutions, such as supported lodgings, secure better outcomes for young people than other types of accommodation. Our recommendation therefore extends to all types of community-based provision. Central Government should ensure that any new supported accommodation funding system enables commissioners and service providers to deliver supported lodgings.

- 6 **Schools and colleges should ensure more young people are made aware of the dangers of staying with people they don't know.** Young people should also be told of available alternatives.

This research has shown that young people are much more likely to come to harm while staying with people they

don't know. In these arrangements, they are also least likely to get the support they need to find their way out of homelessness. Depaul UK calls for an increase in awareness-raising activities that highlight the risks of staying with strangers and the availability of alternative emergency accommodation, such as Nightstop.

- 7 **Service providers increase measures to control drug and alcohol use in young people's services.** This could help protect young people from the harms of substance use while they receive the support they need to escape homelessness.

While young people's services were shown to be more supportive than those for people of all ages, this research has highlighted a possible issue around young people feeling pressured to take drugs or drink alcohol in such services. So that young people can be safely housed in accommodation services for young people, Depaul UK calls for increased measures to control substance use within them.

- 8 **Commissioners and service providers use the revised Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model.** This is to identify young people in urgent need of support and prioritise them for crisis accommodation.

Following this research, we have been able to refine our Model for assessing young people's living arrangements. Depaul UK calls for service providers to use this revised Model to identify young people who should be a priority for crisis accommodation.

## The next phase of Danger Zones and Stepping Stones

Depaul UK is due to undertake the third and final phase of Danger Zones and Stepping Stones in late 2018 and early 2019. This will involve further qualitative research to inform the development of three diagnostic tools that will help service providers and young people to assess temporary living arrangements in line with the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model. At this stage, we envisage the development of the following:

- 1 A Risk Assessment/Prioritisation tool for homelessness (and other) services:

This will be a questionnaire-based tool to that enables service providers to assess young people's living arrangements in line with the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones model to:

- Identify young people who are in greatest need of support so they can either prioritise them for their own services or refer them to/alert others as a matter of urgency
- Assess potential move-on accommodation for suitability

- 2 A Self-Assessment tool for homelessness (and other) services:

This will enable services to assess the accommodation they provide in line with the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model. Guidance for how risk can be reduced and support increased will accompany the tool.

- 3 A tool for young people to assess their own living arrangements:

A simplified tool will enable young people to assess their own living arrangements according to the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model. This will help them to identify when they are at risk or are likely to need further support out of homelessness.





## WE HELP YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY HOMELESSNESS IN THE UK

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