

Young people are faced with a wide range of housing challenges in today's society and there is evidence to suggest that they are three times more likely to experience rented housing and homelessness problems than other age groups¹. Based on published research and evidence, below are some key housing issues facing young people today:

- **Background and circumstances:** Between 6% and 10% of young adults can be expected to experience rented housing problems over a three year period, whilst around 3% will experience homelessness – however these figures will be significantly higher in deprived areas and amongst disadvantaged groups of young people¹. There are some groups of young people who are particularly vulnerable to housing problems. These include NEETS (not in education, employment or training), care leavers, unaccompanied asylum seekers, young prisoners and ex-offenders, young parents, and young people with disabilities. Some young people have had a chaotic housing pathway, including homelessness, and this is predicted to increase.

The family and community contexts in which young people live can significantly affect their ability to secure suitable housing. For example, the extent to which parents are willing to support housing depends on their beliefs, their resources and the quality of their relationship with their children. NYA research also highlights that young people who would once have been self-sufficient through work now have to be dependent on their parents, but not all parents are willing to support them².

- **Independence and the transition to adulthood:** Securing suitable housing away from the parental home is essential for many young peoples' transition to adulthood and independent living. Having a job and having left the parental home are the most important requirements "to be considered an adult", according to young respondents in a Europe-wide survey.³ **Financial confidence and money management** are also important factors for young people and housing. Research led by the National Housing Federation shows that those aged 16 to 24 and living in social housing often face specific difficulties in managing their finances.⁴ Young people on benefits often receive less money and are also at a greater risk of financial hardship, a problem which can increase without the skills and confidence necessary to engage with the financial products and services that are available to them.
- **Affordability:** Affordability is a major challenge for young people in the current economic climate, whether they are renting or buying property. It is also important to recognise that many young people's living arrangement vary considerably, often due to economic circumstances. Whilst more young people are remaining within the family home for longer, others are sharing accommodation space - their housing experiences and subsequent issues will therefore differ from others.

¹ Understanding young people's needs for advice, information and education on housing and related issues – an overview: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/youthhomelessness/prevention/preventionadvice/>

² Economic Wellbeing: The implications for youth work of Every Child Matters: http://nya.org.uk/dynamic_files/research/Economic%20Wellbeing.pdf

³ Transition to adulthood in Europe: Is there convergence between countries and between men and women? Author: Laurent Toulemon

⁴ http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_improving_financial_confidence_scoping_document.pdf

Getting money for rent deposits; benefits and finances, including Housing Benefit, rent arrears and problems are amongst the most common rented housing problems reported by agencies advising young people.¹ Although renting in the private sector offers benefits to young people, for example flexibility in tenure periods and location, recent research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that the private rented sector was viewed by some young people as unaffordable, unavailable and offering poor conditions.⁵

- **Energy and sustainability:** Young people are more likely to feel the impact of increases in related costs such as food and energy. For example, while fuel poverty is normally associated with older people, new research has shown that it also impacts on young people, particularly students. According to research presented to the Royal Geographical Society conference in Edinburgh earlier this month, there is “significant evidence that a large proportion of flat-sharing young people, particularly students, are also living in fuel poverty in poor quality and inefficient housing.”⁶

In addition to the impact on affordability, energy efficiency and sustainability merit further consideration in the context of young people and housing. Global research indicates that whilst young people across the world are willing to participate and improve the world they live in, and are confident that they can do so, they need guidance and opportunities to take concrete action.⁷

- **Safety:** Safety and security are important to young people, whether buying or renting their homes. The English Housing Survey reports that social and private renters were more likely than owner occupiers to say they felt unsafe at night in their neighbourhoods. Also, young people were more likely than older people to say they felt unsafe in their neighbourhoods at night.⁸

⁵ Housing options and solutions for young people in 2020: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/housing-options-solutions-young-people?gclid=CMaskt-Yu71CFaTKtAodJkoAPg>

⁶ http://services.herts24.co.uk/FORUMS/HERTS24/CS/blogs/green_awards/archive/2012/07/13/2758246.aspx

⁷ Global Survey for Sustainable Lifestyles, United Nations Environment Survey: <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=2641&ArticleID=8736&l=en>

⁸ English Housing Survey: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/ehs201011householdreport>

The future for young people's housing options

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁹ has recently published the results of some interesting research into the future housing situation for young people. The research found that:

- The number of young people owning their own properties in 2020 is expected to decrease by approximately 1.1 million to 1.3 million in 2020. The number of young people living with parents in owner-occupied accommodation will increase by approximately 550,000 to 3.7 million in 2020.
- The number of young people living in their own private rented sector (PRS) tenancies in 2020 is predicted to increase by approximately 1.3 million to 3.7 million. It is likely that a three-tier model of demand will emerge based upon the median incomes of young households. The number of young people living with parents in private rented accommodation will increase by approximately 170,000 to 400,000 in 2020.
- The number of young people living in their own social rented tenancies in 2020 is predicted to decrease by approximately 360,000 to 780,000. The number of young people living with parents in social rented accommodation will increase by approximately 170,000 to 870,000.
- The number of young people aged 18–24 following a chaotic housing pathway (including homelessness) will increase from 75,000 to 81,000 between 2008 and 2020.
- The number of young people living with parents, or sharing tenancies is likely to increase. Home ownership is expected to decrease.

⁹ Housing options and solutions for young people in 2020: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/housing-options-solutions-young-people?gclid=CMaskt-Yu71CFaTKtAodJkoAPg>