

WISERD Conference 2020

Out on the Streets: LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness in Wales

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Methodology

- Semi-structured interviews with LGBTQ+ young people in receipt of support;
- Longer, semi-structured interviews with young trans people, including both those who had received help and support from homelessness services, and those who had not (Shelter Cymru);
- A survey of local authority and third sector homelessness staff;
- Several meetings of a working group of experts in the fields of LGBTQ+ issues and youth homelessness;
- A desk-based literature review



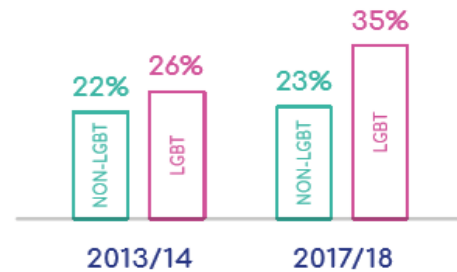
Prevalence of LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness



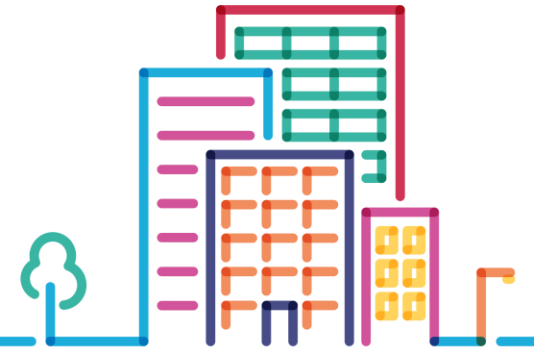
of the youth homelessness population across the UK
IDENTIFIED AS LGBT²

FAMILY BREAKDOWN

as a reason given for LGBT homelessness is increasing:³



72% of young homeless LGBT people accessing supported housing experience mental ill health³



Increased Risk of Harm

“I was staying with a heroin addict whilst sofa surfing. I walked into her room one night and caught her with foil and I caught her smoking it. I would rather sleep on a bench, so I did. I slept on a bench for 2 weeks. I’ve had my fair share of drugs so I just left that, it wasn’t for me.”

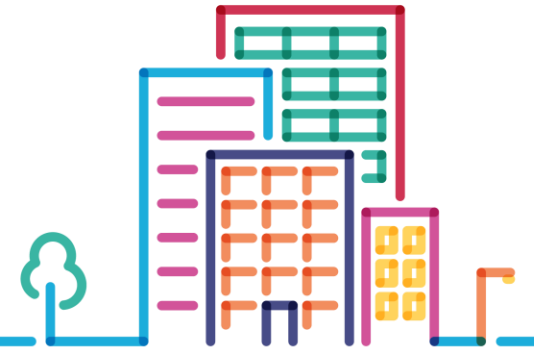
“I have used Grindr lots. I used to start going on it when I was 14, I would go out to meet someone anyway but if they offered the opportunity to stay over I would definitely. If it was a night away from my parents then I would... Since I’ve been 14 I’ve used it to stay over guys houses or since I’ve been homeless I’ve used it to get a meal”



Pathways into Youth Homelessness

“In April in 2018 I had a breakdown in the relationship with my mum, big time, and it turned into constant arguing and she made me homeless overnight and when she was away on holiday and I was at army camp, I rung up (third sector agency) and got emergency accommodation in the hostel.”

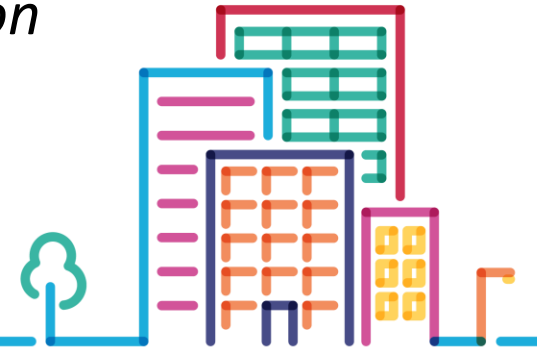
“My Dad used to beat me because I was bi-sexual and I have had a lot more female partners than male partners and my Dad didn’t accept that”.



Access to Support

“At 16 I was sofa surfing for nine months before I got accommodation...A social worker who does conference meetings flipped her lid with my social worker and then contacted (third-sector homelessness provider)”.

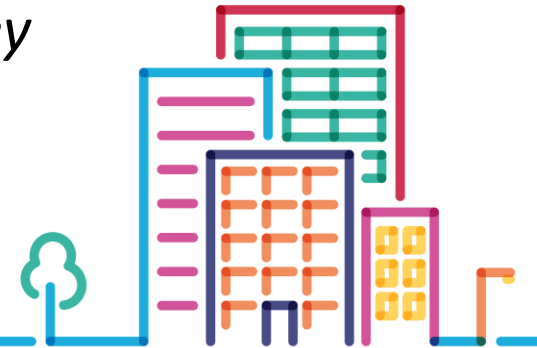
“You’ve got the mental health (support) for all the different disorders but then they should have one for the LGBTQ people so that they could all get together and understand that they are not on their own at the end of the day”



Solutions to LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness

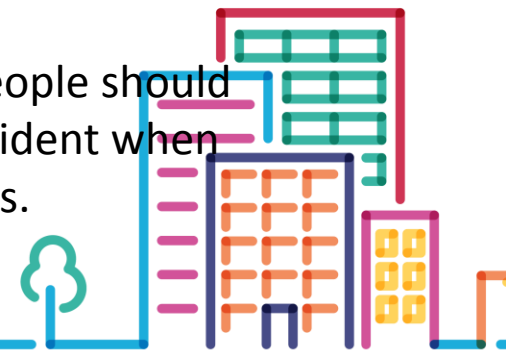
“Sometimes I thought I don’t want to go into a hostel, cos I’m different and people will pick on me and that, so putting more protective housing in for (young LGBTQ+ people) maybe that would work. I don’t know, just to stop people from picking on what you are”

“There should be more groups and youth clubs for people to be able to get together and understand each other and make sure that they know they are not on their own. I have had a lot of people come into my hostel and think they are on their own”.



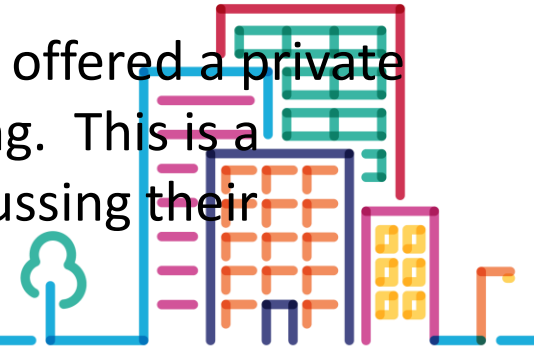
Key Recommendations 1

- Welsh Government's next homelessness strategy should address LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness and request data from Local Authorities on numbers of LGBTQ+ people presenting.
- Local Authorities should revisit their Statutory Homelessness Reviews and 5 Year Homelessness Strategies in light of these findings. They should consult with local LGBTQ+ groups, and ensure that there is a strategic commitment and agreed approach to reducing LGBTQ+ youth homelessness in their areas
- LGBTQ+ specific supported housing services, where young LGBTQ+ people who have been made homeless can feel comfortable and safe should be developed.
- Local authorities, third sector providers and health practitioners working with young people should commission training from LGBTQ+ organisations to ensure that their staff feel fully confident when working with young LGBTQ+ people and know where to refer for specialist interventions.



Key Recommendations 2

- Local authorities, third sector providers and health practitioners working with young people should commission training from LGBTQ+ organisations to ensure that their staff feel fully confident when working with young LGBTQ+ people and know where to refer for specialist interventions.
- Organisations working with young people should provide gender-neutral toilets. This is a simple way to ensure that no LGBTQ+ young person feels uncomfortable accessing any element of the service provided.
- Young people presenting to homelessness services should be proactively offered a private space in which to talk to staff members about their reasons for presenting. This is a straightforward way to help young people to feel more comfortable discussing their experiences.



Response to the Report

- Welsh Government:
 - Positive response from Housing Minister
 - HAG
 - Innovation Funded Project (see below)
- Local Authorities:
 - Vale of Glamorgan Strategy
 - Denbighshire partnership with Llamau and Viva on Rhyl LGBTQ+ Supported Housing Project
- Llamau:
 - LGBTQ+ Youth Group
 - Developing Training
 - Toilet Signs
 - Involvement and Engagement



Thanks for Listening

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