

LGBT Youth Commission on Housing and Homelessness



Youth Commissioners &
Janice Stevenson - Development Officer
@Janice_LGBTYS

LGBT Youth Commission on Housing & Homelessness

Formed in 2016, the youth commission are a group of young people aged 16-25 from across Scotland. The purpose of this youth commission is:

- To research the experiences of LGBT+ homeless youth in order to better understand the relationship between homelessness and abuse (both domestic and familial)
- To work with services within the domestic abuse, housing and young people sectors to raise awareness and support them to be more accessible to LGBT young people and better able to respond to their needs.
- To promote the need for a National Homelessness Strategy for Scotland that recognises the role discrimination plays in increasing the risk of LGBT people becoming homeless

Key Achievements 2016 - 2020

- Developed and facilitated peer and professional consultations
- Engaged with Minister for Local Government and Housing
- Created an art exhibition to highlight key findings and recommendations
- Direct influencing of Scottish Housing Regulator
- Various inputs, workshops and presentations for homelessness conferences, forums and events
- Developed and delivered bespoke training on links between LGBT Homelessness and Experiences of Abuse
- Members of **A Way Home Scotland** coalition to End Youth Homelessness
- Represented at Scottish Government's **Homelessness Prevention Strategy Group**
- Supporting development of National Youth Homelessness Pathways


LGBT Youth Commission on Housing & Homelessness

- Review of existing Research
 - Albert Kennedy Trust
 - Homeless Action Scotland
 - Housing and Homelessness policies
- Consultations
 - Successfully engaged over 100 young people in the consultation, which was delivered in 8 groups across 7 Local Authorities as well as a paper based consultation at the LGBT National Youth Summit
 - Direct engagement with professionals from across the housing and homelessness sector through a consultation workshop, meetings and through staff interactions



LGBT Experiences of Homelessness and Abuse

Quiz Time!



Causes of LGBT Youth Homelessness

LGBT Homelessness

In 2015, Albert Kennedy Trust conducted a UK wide National Scoping Exercise. They found that;

- LGBT young people are at a higher risk of homelessness than their non-LGBT peers. 24% of the young homeless population in the UK identify as LGBT
- 69% of LGBT young homeless people experience abuse, violence or rejection from family
- 77% of LGBT young homeless people state that their LGBT identity was a causal factor in them becoming homeless

LGBT Homelessness

“I knew if I were to come out as trans then I'd have to leave as soon as I could. My mum might be prepared to turn a blind eye to me being gay, but she was transphobic as hell. I was never going to be me at home, so I had to leave as soon as I could.”

LGBT Homelessness

Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People 2017 (research with 684 LGBT young people in Scotland) found that:

- Approx. 30% of LGBT young people reported that they had some experience of homelessness, (including rough sleeping, sofa surfing, temporary accommodation etc.)



Intersectionality Increases Risk

Homelessness: Risk Factors

Albert Kennedy Trust (2015) found that LGBT young homeless people were at greater risk of

- Targeted violence and discrimination
- substance abuse problems
- sexual exploitation
- higher levels of risky sexual behaviour

than their non-LGBT peers.

LGBT Youth Homelessness

LGBT Youth Scotland recently conducted research and found that;

- 100% of respondents who had sold or exchanged sex experienced homelessness

National Needs Assessment conducted on behalf of FearFree found that:

- LGBT people who experience domestic abuse are more likely to seek support through housing services than GBV services



Scenario

Scenario

What is going on for Alex?

How will Alex be feeling?

What did the service do well?

What did the service do poorly?

What changes or actions could the service take to improve the experiences of LGBT young people?



Our Findings and Recommendations

Youth Commission Consultation- Professionals

- Services are not consistently recording sexual orientation/ trans identity, and therefore are unaware of how many LGBT YPs they support
- Inconsistent levels of LGBT awareness training – lack of understanding of LGBT issues
- LGBT domestic abuse awareness is low
- Majority of professionals we consulted rated their confidence to support LGBT homeless young people as low

Youth Commission Findings – Young People

- Reluctance to present as homeless to the local council – “It’s too scary”
- Very little awareness about intentional homelessness Vs legitimate homelessness, or available supports
- Fear of accessing support from religious organisations
- Trans and non-binary young people face additional barriers to accessing shelters/ group accommodation
- Fearful of disclosing their LGBT identity, ‘coming out’
- Mediation, which is used to enable YPs to return to the family home, is dangerous where YPs have been rejected/ abused due to LGBT identity

How can we improve services?

- Young people should be Informed
- Housing and Homelessness services must record and monitor equalities data including sexual orientation and gender identity
- Services should endeavour to provide LGBT Awareness Training for key staff
- Increase the number of support services available for young people who experience abuse, including rural areas
- Services should endeavour to increase visibility of LGBT identities and make a clear declaration of inclusivity
- Consult LGBT young people when developing services
- Increased awareness of trans and non-binary identities within youth homelessness services.
- Mediation and homelessness services should accurately record and monitor sexual orientation and gender identity of service users to avoid returning LGBT young people to abusive households



What Can You Do?

Action Planning

Discuss two key practice points you will take from this session to implement in your own organisation/ service.

- What will you do and when?
- What challenges may you face?
- Who can help?



Questions???



lgbtyouth.org.uk

Janice.Stevenson@lgbtyouth.org.uk