

**rock
trust**

ending
youth
homelessness



***“THEY DO NOT
CARE WHERE
YOU END UP”***

**Young LGBTQ+ People’s
Housing Rights in Scotland**



“In temporary accommodation I received absolutely no support, with the council even failing to advise on my pathways out of homelessness.”



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INTRODUCTION



Scotland is facing a housing crisis. The Scottish Government officially declared a national housing emergency in May 2024.¹ Levels of homelessness have reached a critical level across the country, and some groups of people have been disproportionately impacted.

- **Young people aged 16-24** make up 22% of homeless applications in Scotland but only represent 13% of the wider population²
- **LGBTQ+ young people** are twice as likely to experience hidden homelessness as non-LGBTQ+ peers³
- **Trans and non-binary young people** are overrepresented, with statistics showing that one in three have experienced homelessness⁴
- **LGBTQ+ young people from racialised minorities** who are 50% more likely to experience hidden homelessness than white LGBTQ+ young people⁵

The Pride & Places project was developed because LGBT Youth Scotland and Rock Trust noticed an increase in the amount of LGBTQ+ young people who were becoming homeless due to their families not accepting their sexual orientation or gender identity. We wanted to do something about this, and so in 2024 we secured funding through the Independent Human Rights Fund for Scotland to do so.

Pride and Places is now a group of LGBTQ+ people aged 16-25 leading on this peer-led LGBTQ+ housing and homelessness work. Pride and Places will use the findings from this research project to influence housing providers and policy makers, and deliver educational workshops.

1. Scottish Government (2025) *Homelessness in Scotland: 2024-25*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available at: [Homelessness in Scotland: 2024-25 – gov.scot](#) (Accessed: 18 December 2025).
2. National Records of Scotland (2025) *Scotland's Population 2024: The Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends*. Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland. Available at: [Population estimates time series data – National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#) (Accessed: 18 December 2025).
3. Tunåker, C., Sundberg, T., Yuan, S., Renz, F., Kirton-Darling, E. and Carr, H. (2025) *No Place Like Home: Uncovering LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness in the UK*. London: AKT.
4. Tunåker et al. (2025) *No Place Like Home*.
5. Tunåker et al. (2025) *No Place Like Home*.

Aims

The Pride and Places project is working to combat the housing crisis by:

**1**

Understanding the current knowledge gaps experienced by LGBTQ+ young people in relation to housing rights

Understanding barriers LGBTQ+ young people face towards realising their housing rights

2**3**

Helping LGBTQ+ young people understand and access their housing rights

4

Helping housing providers and policy makers understand the needs of LGBTQ+ young people so they can build inclusive services

LGBT Youth Scotland

LGBT Youth Scotland (LGBTYS) is Scotland's national charity for LGBTQ+ young people, with a vision to make Scotland a place where all young people can flourish and thrive. They deliver life changing youth work across the country, create opportunities for young people's voices to be heard and help build a more inclusive society through the LGBT Charter programme.

Rock Trust

For over 30 years, Rock Trust have been challenging traditional responses to homelessness by delivering bold solutions, built around young people's experiences. Their teams support young people to avoid, resolve and move on from homelessness as well as working to improve policy and practice to create a Scotland where no young person is left behind.

LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

LGBTQ+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and all those who do not identify as straight or cisgender.

Young person

A person who is aged between 16 and 25 years old. The Scottish Government statistics cited are for those aged between 16 and 24 years old.

Transgender /Trans

Somebody whose gender identity doesn't match the gender they were registered as at birth.

Non-binary

Somebody whose gender identity doesn't fit into the binary of man/woman. This includes genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, and bigender.

Homeless

A person who is insecurely housed. This includes those who sofa surf, sleep rough, reside in their vehicles or live in temporary or inaccessible accommodation.

Hidden homelessness

Homeless people who do not appear in government statistics due to lack of contact with services.

Cisgender/Cis

Somebody whose gender identity matches the gender they were registered as at birth.

Homeless application

The process of presenting to and being assessed as homeless by a local authority.



KEY FINDINGS

Participants in the research generally had high levels of awareness about the right to make a homeless application. However, there was very low awareness of:

- The right to apply as homeless to any local authority in Scotland
- The right to contact a local authority in an emergency out of hours
- The right to be moved from unsuitable accommodation after 7 days

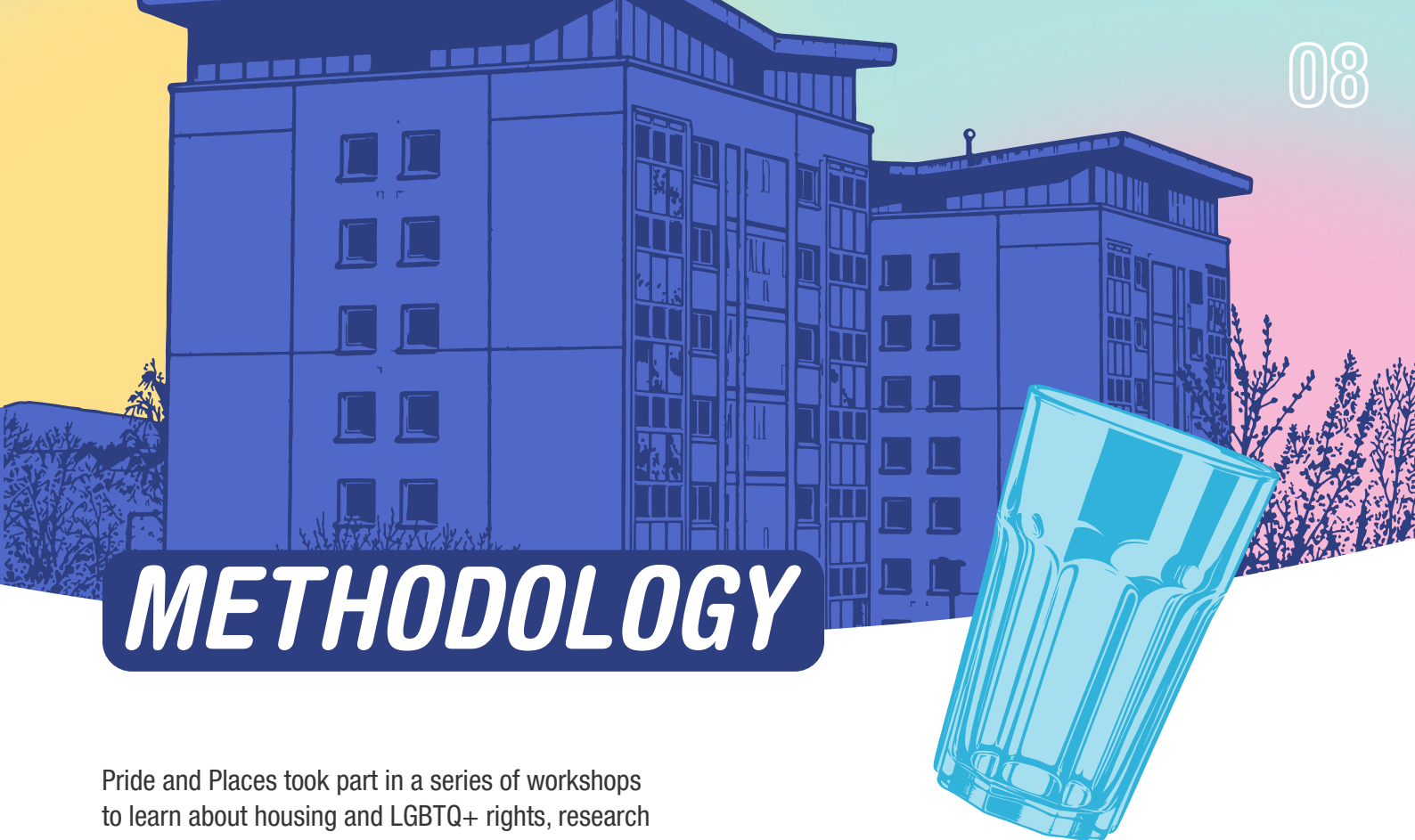
Participants were often not given information about their rights and were even given inaccurate information by council officers and other housing professionals such as landlords – preventing them from challenging unlawful practices.

Independent support and advocacy were found to be helpful in supporting participants to access their rights.

Council officers often lack understanding of the needs of LGBTQ+ young people, resulting in a lack of trust, young people facing discrimination, and situations where young people are encouraged to return to dangerous situations.

Participants were often unaware of the services that were available to them because of a lack of accessible, effective promotion and information sharing.





METHODOLOGY

Pride and Places took part in a series of workshops to learn about housing and LGBTQ+ rights, research ethics and methods, and data analysis. Sessions were held online with occasional in-person meetings. They developed a consultation survey using Microsoft Forms with the aim of understanding how much LGBTQ+ young people knew about their housing rights.

The consultation was shared across LGBT Youth Scotland, Rock Trust and participants' networks. They analysed the survey data as a group over three sessions to understand the findings.

Survey design

A participant information sheet was provided at the start of the survey so that participants knew what the survey was about, who was conducting it, and what would happen to their information. Participants were made aware that their participation was voluntary and that they could get in touch with the project team if needed. We acknowledged that this topic could bring up distress for participants, and so we provided a link to a list of support services at the end of the survey.

The group designed the survey to ensure that the language was easy to understand. A mixture of question styles including single-select, multi-select and open text boxes were used to give participants the most accessible experience whilst ensuring they could add as much information as they wanted to share. All questions were voluntary.

Participants were first asked to select which rights they were aware of from a list. They were then asked about experiences where they had and had not had their rights respected. Finally, they were asked what they would like to change in the housing and homelessness system.

The survey was split into the following sections:

- Rights when at risk of homelessness
- Rights when making a homeless application
- Rights when living in homeless accommodation
- Accessibility of services
- Changes young people would like to see
- Demographics

Limitations

We had very limited numbers of respondents who had previously been homeless, which limited our knowledge of rights awareness in this population, and the extent to which their rights are upheld while navigating homelessness processes. Future studies would benefit from sharing the research more widely in places where homeless people may gather, including sharing it more widely with services working directly with homeless young people. The survey was only promoted online, which may have created a barrier for homeless young people without easy access to the internet. Many LGBTQ+ young people with lived experience of homelessness are experiencing mental health challenges and may not wish to engage with a potentially distressing topic. We had low responses from disabled people, people of colour and religious people, limiting the ability to translate our findings across intersectional categories.

An error was made in the phrasing of three questions, asking:

*'Have you ever experienced a situation where you felt your rights **were** respected or protected?'*

Rather than

*'Have you ever experienced a situation where you felt your rights **were not** respected or protected?'*

Whilst some respondents answered based on times their rights were respected, it was clear that despite this error most respondents read the question as '**were not** respected' and shared information about those experiences. The answers to this question have only been included when it was clear how the participant was responding. This error has resulted in fewer usable responses to this question, and we have highlighted throughout this report when these are referenced.

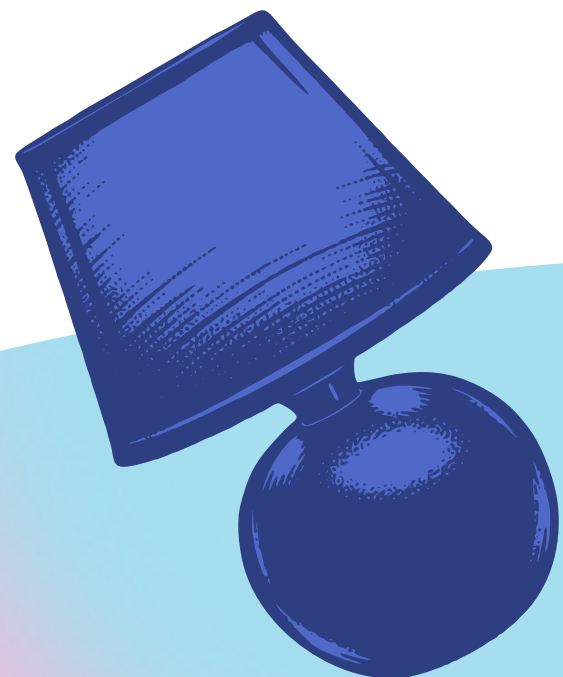
Consultation participants

The survey received 139 responses, of which 100 were useable. 39 responses were disregarded due to not fitting the participant criteria of living in Scotland and being LGBTQ+, not agreeing for their data to be retained or not providing usable answers.

The survey was promoted by staff and the members of Pride & Places. It was disseminated to LGBT youth organisations and clubs, our partners, Youth Scotland, Young Scot and shared on our social media platforms.

Demographics

Research participants had a broad spectrum of ages between the ages of 16 and 25. We received responses from 69% of local authorities in Scotland, with the highest proportion from Edinburgh and Glasgow. 46% of participants identified as transgender and had a wide range of gender identities and sexual orientations. The majority of participants were white Scottish (73%) and 67% reported having no religion. Only 4% of participants reported having a disability. Full demographic information is available in the appendix.





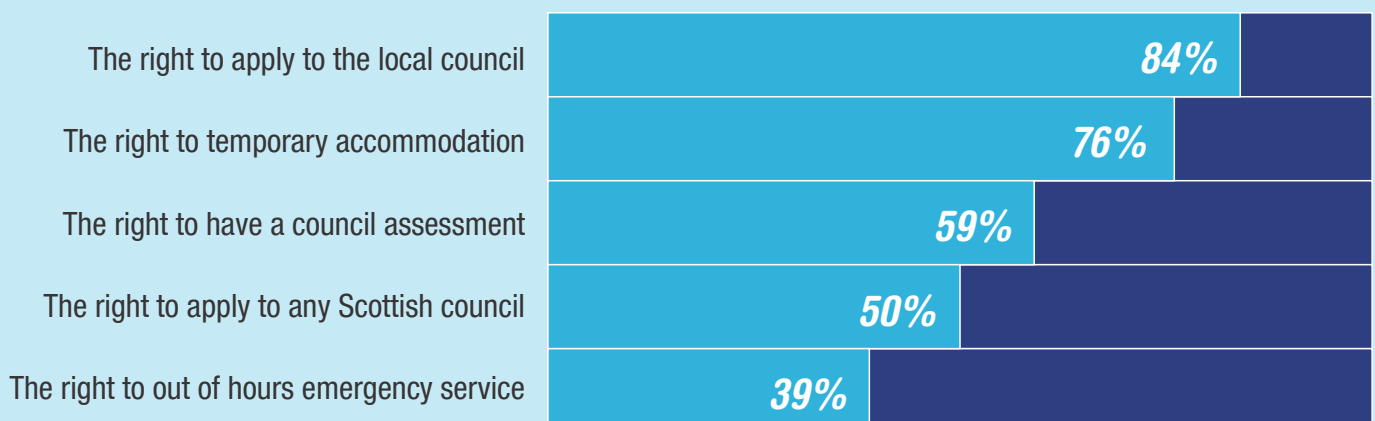
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Analysis was performed on the 5 main topics covered by the survey, as described in the Methodology.

Rights when at risk of homelessness

Participants were provided with a list of 5 rights that people have when they are at risk of homelessness and were asked to indicate whether they were aware of them. Figure 1 displays the percentage of respondents aware of each right.

Figure 1 – Are you aware that if someone is at risk of homelessness, they have these rights?



There was very high awareness of the right to apply to your local council as homeless (84%), while only half were aware they could apply for homeless accommodation in any Scottish council.

The Scottish Government got rid of the requirement for a 'local connection' in 2022. Awareness of this change is clearly low, which could prevent homeless people from leaving an unsafe area.

3 in every 4 participants knew they have the right to be offered temporary accommodation, while only 59% knew that the council must assess their needs and circumstances.

Worryingly, just over a third of participants (39%) were aware they could contact their local out of hours emergency service if they were to find themselves homeless after 5pm or at the weekend. This is particularly troubling and could result in young people staying in an unsafe environment overnight. This phone number should be widely shared and easily accessible.

Participants were then asked to give examples of any times they had or had not experienced their rights being respected. Please see the limitation section for the wording of this question. Three key topics were discussed by respondents.

ONLY 50%
knew they could
apply to **ANY**
Scottish council,
not just local

JUST 39%
knew they could
get emergency
help if they were
suddenly homeless
'after hours'



Misinformation about housing rights

Housing professionals and landlords were described as complicit in spreading misinformation about rights, resulting in young people being disenfranchised and unable to challenge unlawful practices.

“When I was a student my landlord evicted me with 28 days’ notice. I didn’t know I was entitled to 3 months (the ground he used was that he wanted to sell it) I nearly became homeless as a result.”

“I got help from Action for Children to apply for council housing and I was of the understanding that this was open to those at risk of homelessness in the next month, however upon receiving a phone call from the person to assess me for this, she refused to speak to me more and stated “she could not understand at all” why I was applying for help as at that moment in time I had a roof over my head and wasn’t living on the street.”



Unhelpful services

Several participants highlighted that services failed to help them and that communication from professionals was poor. Young people felt that services were ‘actively detrimental’ to their situation, that they provided no help, and that they didn’t seem to know the correct information or procedures.

“Police Scotland referred me to the Out of Hours line when I approached them scared and confused. I didn’t know how to contact the council – their website was unclear, and I couldn’t see how I’d contact them after 5pm.”

Lack of understanding of the needs of LGBTQ+ young people

Participants reported that council officers did not have a good understanding of the needs of LGBTQ+ young people, including putting young people at risk by asking them to communicate with discriminatory family members. One young person who described becoming homeless due to abuse from their parents ‘felt invalidated and dismissed’.

“When trying to register as homeless they wouldn’t allow me to because I didn’t give them my parents contact information after they kicked me out at 19 because they found out I liked men.”

Rights when making a homeless application

Of the 14 respondents who said they had made a homeless application, 12 of these responded in this section. Participants were again given a list of rights that people have when they are making a homeless application and were asked to indicate whether they were aware of these rights. They were also asked to detail any situations they had experienced when they felt their rights were or were not respected or protected (See Limitations).

All 12 respondents understood that they had the right to their personal information being treated confidentially, while 10 knew they had the right to request a review of their homeless decision.

Out of the 12 young people, 7 (58%) understood they had the right to:

- Suitable accommodation
- Safety in their accommodation
- Be informed in writing by the council about their decision

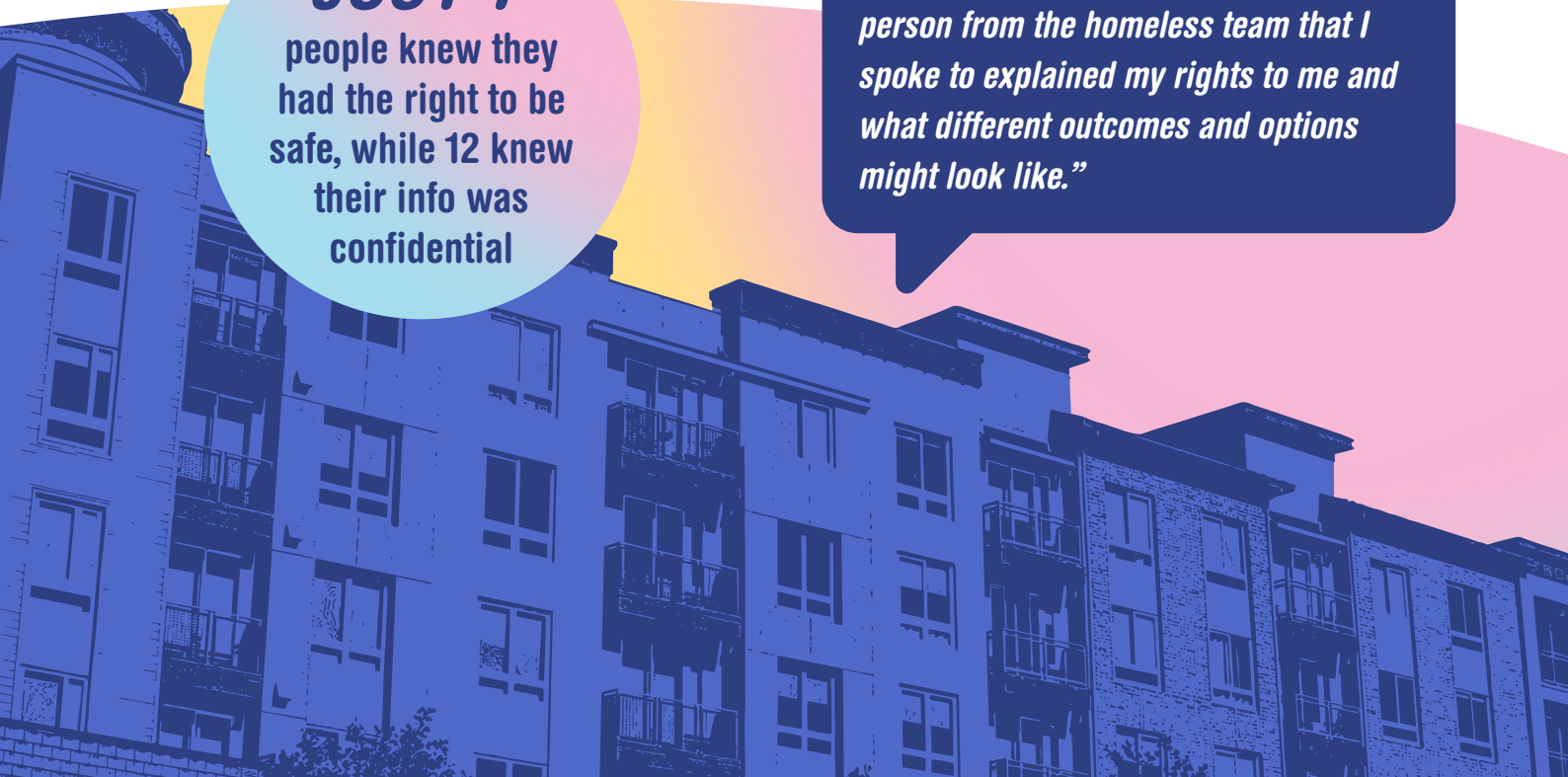
Participants described experiences where they were not informed of their housing rights, where they were denied help, and where professionals failed to uphold their rights in practice.

“The council failed to provide me with any documentation proving that I was made homeless via familial rejection and domestic abuse, despite agreeing that this was the case. They failed to provide me with any housing, and I had to move to another constituency to afford an overcrowded shared private rent.”

One participant highlighted how independent advocacy transformed their experience, ensuring their rights were explained and protected:

JUST 7
people knew they
had the right to be
safe, while 12 knew
their info was
confidential

“Once I had my advocate with me, the person from the homeless team that I spoke to explained my rights to me and what different outcomes and options might look like.”



Rights when living in homeless accommodation

10 of the 100 respondents had stayed in homeless or temporary accommodation. 9 of these responded to this section. Participants were given a list of rights that people have when living in homeless accommodation and were asked to indicate whether they were aware of them.

7 responded that they knew they had the right to not be discriminated against directly or indirectly because of the protected characteristics of sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

Nearly half of the respondents were unaware of their relevant housing rights while living in homeless accommodation where they should have been made aware of these rights.

Only 5 respondents were aware that they had the right to:

- Transfer to different temporary accommodation if the property isn't suitable
- Transfer to different temporary accommodation if they are unsafe
- Rent a private home or apply for a house from a housing association, which can help end your homelessness
- Get support from charity or third sector organisations

Those unaware that they had a right to support from third sector organisations were unlikely to have received any dedicated support during their time in homeless accommodation. This support can make a real difference in the young person's experience of navigating these systems and LGBTQ+ young people deserve to be made aware of the support that is available to them.



ONLY 2
people knew the
7 day time limit
for being kept in
unsuitable
accommodation

ONLY 3
people knew
they could apply
to a different local
authority

Only 3 respondents were aware they could apply to a different council, highlighting the lack of awareness of the removal of the requirement for a 'local connection'. Finally, only 2 respondents knew that the council can only keep you in unsuitable emergency accommodation, such as bed and breakfasts, for up to 7 days. Appropriate accommodation is vital to provide the psychological safety required for young people to emotionally recover from the trauma of homelessness and begin to rebuild their lives.



Participants were asked to detail any situations they had experienced when they felt their rights were or were not respected or protected (See Limitations).

Participants highlighted discrimination that they faced in homeless accommodation which wasn't appropriately dealt with. Council officers often provided inaccurate information about LGBTQ+ young people's rights, which discouraged them from standing up for themselves against the discrimination.

"I mentioned to the staff and council that they need to give suitable accommodation however they said that no that just needed to end your homelessness. They do not care where you end up."

"I did not feel my rights or safety or disability were respected in the slightest I was so scared of my neighbour I didn't eat because if I wanted to eat I needed to use the communal kitchen."

"I felt I was discriminated against by Glasgow City Council and placed in unsafe temporary accommodation, and that I was punished for bringing this up."

One participant evidenced the positive impact of staff members taking prompt and effective action following homophobic bullying.

"I was in a youth hostel (that service is now closed) and the staff there dealt with an incident about me being gay very quickly – that person that caused issues was moved to different provision 2 days later."

Accessing housing and homeless services

10 of the 100 respondents (10%) shared that they had accessed homeless services and support. All 10 responded to this section.

We asked participants how well they thought homeless charities promoted their services, and how well local councils promoted their homeless services. 9 out of the 10 participants thought local councils were poor or very poor at promotion, compared to only 4 who thought homeless charities were poor or very poor at promotion. In contrast, 6 participants thought homeless charities promoted their services well or very well, compared to only 1 who said this about local authority services. This demonstrates a need for local authorities to improve the promotion of their services.

Respondents described their experiences of accessing housing and homelessness support services.

Unsupported and unsafe

Young people described feeling unsupported and disrespected by services. They were encouraged to return to unaccepting environments and provided with inappropriate accommodation. There was a lack of understanding and recognition of the impact of LGBTQ+ phobia in the home.

“I called them up and they told me to go back to my parents who I don’t speak to at all they didn’t help me at all.”



“I’m trans and have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. I felt that the council treated me with disdain and refused to recognise or respect any of my support needs. The first time I experienced homelessness, they placed me in unsafe temporary accommodation. The second time, I received no help whatsoever despite them agreeing I had been made unintentionally homeless.”

Inadequate support

Support for those placed in temporary accommodation was often inadequate resulting in LGBTQ+ young people living in unsafe environments. Participants described being placed in inappropriate accommodation and not being given information about their rights.

“I had to look for all the information myself and the council would deny that the accommodation given needed to be safe and suitable.”

“Having been put back into supported accommodation... in an area I'd said I didn't feel safe because of interpersonal relationships and things having happened there.”

“In temporary accommodation I received absolutely no support, with the council even failing to advise on my pathways out of homelessness.”

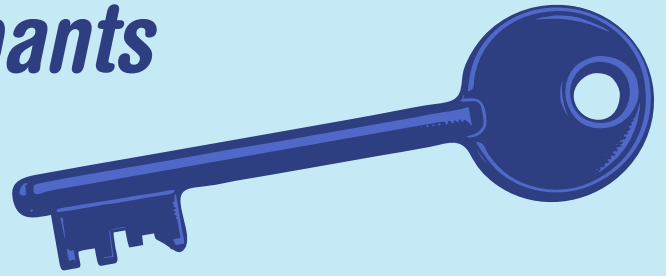
One young person described the pressure they felt, and that the lack of support contributed towards them having to return to supported accommodation because of their mental health. One participant described how much easier independent support from a charity made navigating the process:

“I was provided a support worker from the rock trust (...) who did most of what was needed, it felt good to know someone was handling my housing and benefit situation who knew how the system worked, because I certainly didn't. The council and social services weren't great.”

The lack of support for LGBTQ+ young people experiencing homelessness had a significant mental health impact.



The change participants would like to see



Increased investment in housing options

Several participants described the need for the Scottish government to increase their financial investment in this area, both through building social housing and by providing more options for high quality temporary accommodation, including accommodation designed specifically for the LGBTQ+ community. There was specific critique levied against accommodation which was overly restrictive, and that young people “deserve freedom too, not to be chained to a place that you're rarely allowed to leave without signing in and out”.

“Council homelessness services and those who work in them need to be held accountable for how they treat LGBTQIA+ and disabled people who fail to receive any help from their services.”

Transparent, accessible and accountable services

Participants called for systemic change so that homeless people have the ‘ability to direct the support you get’. This kind of person-centred service design requires local authorities to be open with homeless people about what their rights are, and what they can do if they find themselves at risk of homelessness. Services should be accessible, and include online options for disabled and rural young people. Support should be based on person-centred assessment which understands the reasons why LGBTQ+ young people have become homeless and doesn’t encourage them ‘to go back to previous places’ which may be unsafe or unsuitable.

Empowerment, education and advocacy

Participants highlighted that they need clear information from local authorities about what they should do if they find themselves homeless, as well as access to advocacy services and tenants unions which empower young people to challenge situations where their rights are not respected. As well as having their existing rights respected, they highlighted the need for the law to change to protect tenants and increase penalties for rogue landlords. Other participants highlighted the importance of anti-stigma campaigns that make clear that homeless people are not ‘just lazy or failed individuals’.

“I’d like to see young people being told their rights and be respected for their disability instead of being told to do everything on their own.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the Scottish Government

The Scottish Government must take serious action to combat the housing crisis by investing financially in affordable housing options – preventing young people from becoming homeless.

The Scottish Government should increase funding for supported accommodation for homeless young people and consider piloting a specialist project for LGBTQ+ young people. They should implement funding for advocacy services to ensure that when young people's rights are not respected, they have the means to challenge this.

The Government should commit to creating a national toolkit to educate and inform young people about their housing rights. They should prioritise the rights that currently have low awareness. For example:

- The right to present as homeless in any local authority in Scotland
- The right to access support from third sector services
- The right to be moved on from unsuitable accommodation after 7 days
- The right to contact local authority homelessness services out of hours

Recommendations for local authorities

Councils should make a serious commitment to increasing staffing of housing teams to allow officers to provide person-centred, trauma-informed support.

Homeless case workers and housing officers should receive mandatory training on the needs of LGBTQ+ people who are at risk of homelessness. This training should cover the impacts of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in the family home.

Temporary accommodation provided or commissioned by the local authority should be trauma informed and visibly welcoming to LGBTQ+ young people. Councils should consider whether specialist services for LGBTQ+ people are needed.

Council officers must take clear steps to inform homeless applicants about their rights as they go through the process. Particular attention should be paid to the rights with the lowest awareness including:

- The right to be moved from unsuitable accommodation within 7 days
- The right to apply as homeless in any local authority in Scotland

Information should be provided in a range of different formats including posters, leaflets and videos. Council emergency out of hours numbers should be clearly displayed on websites and other materials and be easy to find.

Third sector recommendations

Third sector organisations should continue to ensure that the voices of those who are affected by homelessness are heard by decision makers. Third sector organisations should work together to ensure that they are more effective at raising these voices, and delivering services.

Organisations should deliver workshops and create resources on housing rights to ensure their service users are empowered to understand what they are entitled to and advocate for themselves.

Organisations should continue to deliver important advocacy and support services – ensuring that when young people's rights are not respected, they are able to challenge this.



Thank you to the members of Pride and Places, who have helped us to provide real, and tangible insights that are going to make a difference.

Thank you to the Independent Human Rights Fund and all the different partners that contribute funding for this deeply important cause.

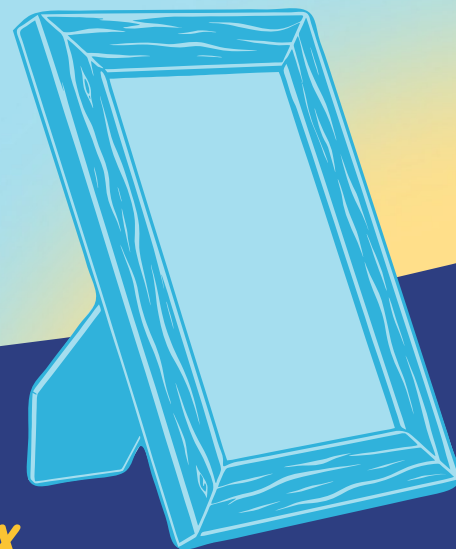
Thank you Corra for providing this funding, and for providing so much support and opportunities for networking.

Thank you to LGBT Youth Scotland and Rock Trust for all the work they do for young people in Scotland.

A huge thank you to Brian at createpod.com for the fantastic design.

APPENDIX:

DEMOGRAPHICS



Age

99 of the participants responded to this question with an even spread of ages between 16 and 25. The average age was 20.

Sexual Orientation

11% of participants identified their sexual orientation as gay, with 14% identifying as lesbian (14.1%), 35% as bisexual, and 15% as queer. 9% of respondents were asexual (9.1%) and 8% were pansexual.

A total of 4% responses included I don't know, prefer not to say, or the question was left blank.

Gender

Respondents were able to select more than one gender option. 38% of respondents were girls/women, 31% were boys/men, 23% were non-binary, 12% were genderqueer, and 6% were genderfluid. 6% of respondents shared that they have other gender identities, including agender, demiboy, demigirl, demi, and boyflux.

Trans

46 respondents (n=99) identified as transgender, 15 said they did not know, and 38 said they were not transgender.

Intersex

95% of respondents said they were not intersex and 5% did not know.

Disability

4% participants considered themselves to have a disability, 33% did not have a disability, 13% did not know and 7% preferred not to say.

Ethnicity

Young people were asked to describe their ethnicity from a list which we took from Scotland's Census 2022.⁶

72 respondents (n=99) described themselves as white Scottish (72%), 10 as white other British (10%), 2 as white Irish (2%), and 5 as mixed or multiple ethnic (5%), as well as 5 as Asian, Scottish Asian or British Asian (5%). European, Latina, White Gypsy/Traveller, White other and white Polish were each represented once (1% each).

Religion

67% of respondents described themselves as having no religion, 12% were spiritual but not religious, 4% were Christian, 3% were Muslim, 2% were Pagan. One young person each described themselves as agnostic, Hindu, Buddhist and Quaker. 7.1% of respondents selected prefer not to say.

6. [scotlands-census-2022-household-questionnaire.pdf](#) (Accessed 09/01/26)

Local authority

We received responses from 69% of local authorities across Scotland, with Glasgow City (18%) and Edinburgh (13%) submitting the highest number of responses.

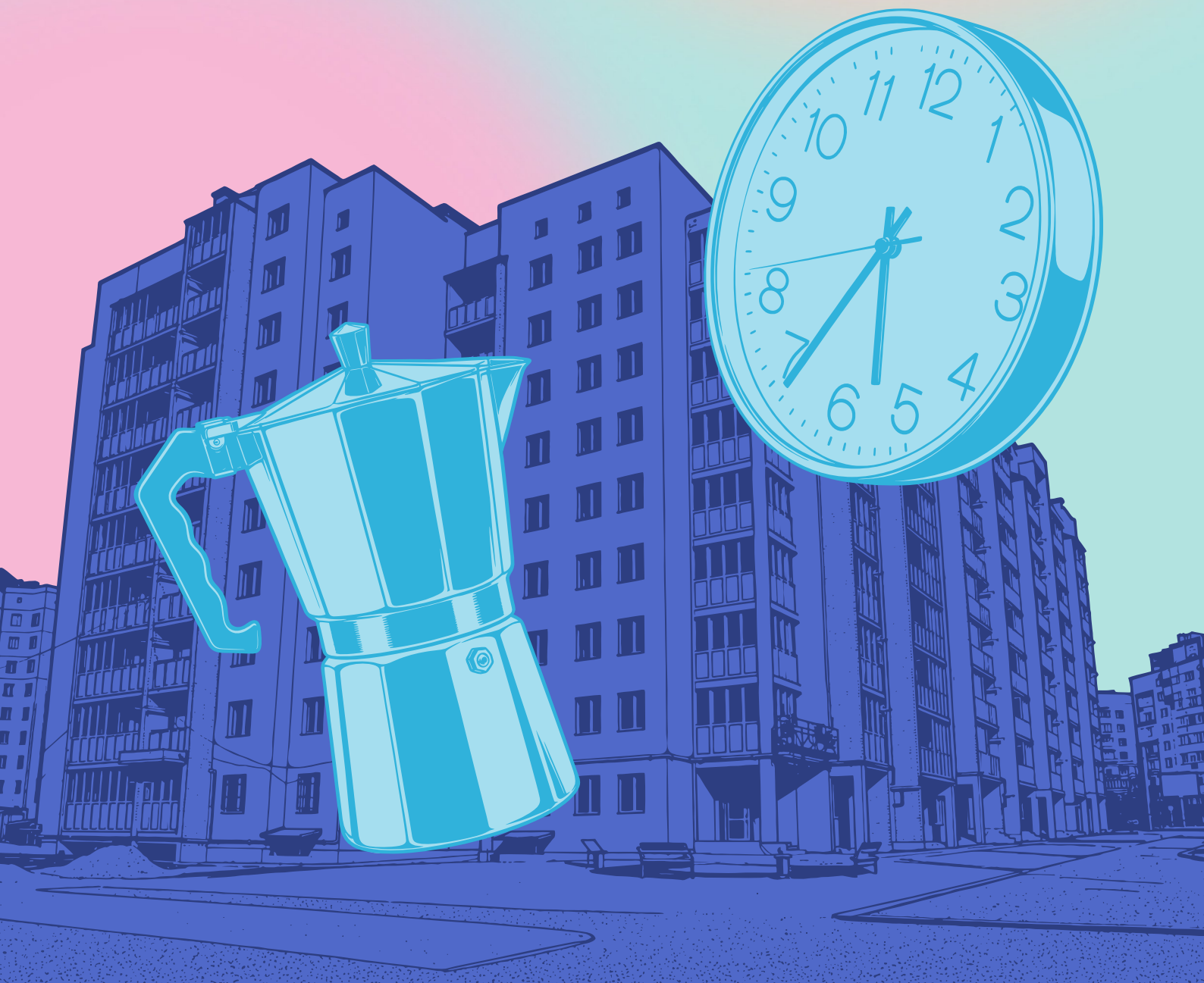
We did not receive responses from Angus, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, Moray, North Ayrshire, Orkney Islands, Perth and Kinross, and Shetland Islands.



Aberdeenshire	— 4 (4.0%)
Aberdeen	— 3 (3.0%)
Argyll and Bute	— 1 (1.0%)
Clackmannanshire	— 1 (1.0%)
Dumfries and Galloway	— 4 (4.0%)
Dundee	— 7 (7.0%)
East Lothian	— 1 (1.0%)
East Renfrewshire	— 1 (1.0%)
City of Edinburgh	— 13 (13.0%)
Falkirk	— 4 (4.0%)
Fife	— 5 (5.0%)
Glasgow City	— 18 (18.0%)
Highland	— 4 (4.0%)
Midlothian	— 7 (7.0%)
Na h-Eileanan Siar (Western Isles)	— 1 (1.0%)
North Lanarkshire	— 6 (6.0%)
Renfrewshire	— 3 (3.0%)
Scottish Borders	— 3 (3.0%)
South Ayrshire	— 4 (4.0%)
South Lanarkshire	— 4 (4.0%)
Stirling	— 2 (2.0%)
West Dunbartonshire	— 0 (0.0%)
West Lothian	— 4 (4.0%)



“I’d like to see young people being told their rights and be respected for their disability instead of being told to do everything on their own.”





lgbtyouth.org.uk

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