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Manifesto

Emergency Homes for Young People

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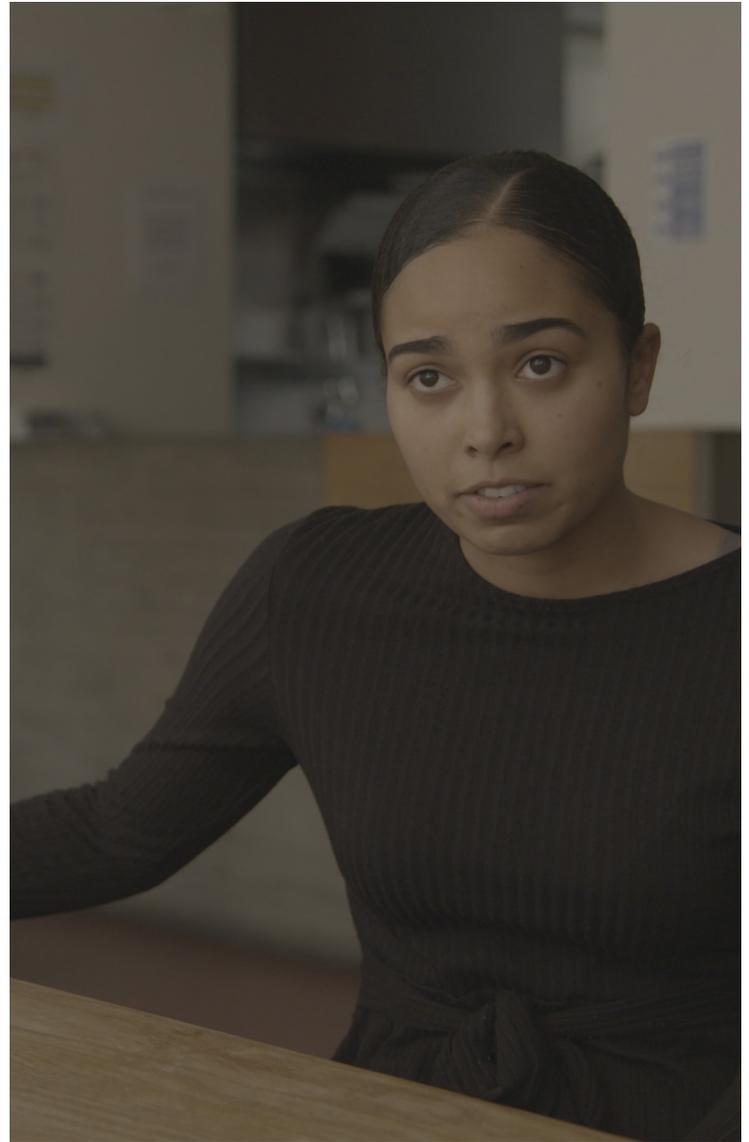
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**Are you
surprised that
there is no
qualitative
guidance out
there for
emergency
accommodation
for young
people?**

**No, I have been
living it for four
years**

Aida, age 21



What is there?

**Existing
Legislation Control**
Requirements for housing
homeless in general
(nothing in addition for specific
groups)

Bedroom sizes follow the
overcrowding act

HMO legislation, comply with fire
safety order

Unspecified space requirement of
shared amenity spaces for occupants

Gap in Provision
What needs to be done to
bridge the gap?

?

London Housing Design Guide
Requirements for permanent London housing

Flexibility of dwelling plans

Demonstrate relationship with local
context

Outdoor spaces

Entrance and approach should be
visible from the public realm

Storage and Utility space
requirements

Hallways and circulation space in the
home

Floor areas for Kitchen, Dining and
Living Areas for level of occupancy

Shared circulation within buildings

Residential Mix and Appropriate
Density

Floor to Ceiling Height in habitable
rooms

Dwelling type minimum space
standards

Noise, Ventilation, Daylight and
Sunlight

Car parking and cycle storage

Level of privacy in relation to
neighbouring property and the street

Should be expected as a minimum

1

Introduction

Miranda MacLaren, Polina Pencheva, Heather Macey

Through conversations, meetings, site visits, historical analysis, debate and personal experience, our research has been consolidated into 3 pieces of work: Manifesto, Leading by Example and Recommendations

Through our collective research we wish to urge the GLA and each local borough to ensure that there must be qualitative guidance available for emergency accommodation for young homeless people. Each £ spent on new and improved emergency accommodation should focus on successful outcomes with the ultimate aim to ensure each individual never experiences homelessness again.

The term 'homeless people' covers a wide range of demographics with varying needs of support who in turn require specific accommodation and support models. We have focused our research on young homeless people aged 18-25, who in typical circumstances would be at the beginning of living independently from their families and gaining agency to make their own decisions.

Through our research we see that **the system works against young people,** young people find it harder than most to secure a home as they are unsupported in many cases due to family relationship break down, and if they are employed are more likely to be on zero hour contracts and low paid jobs. Many young people don't associate themselves as

Let everyone have a safe home and a chance to have an equal opportunity

Aida, age 21

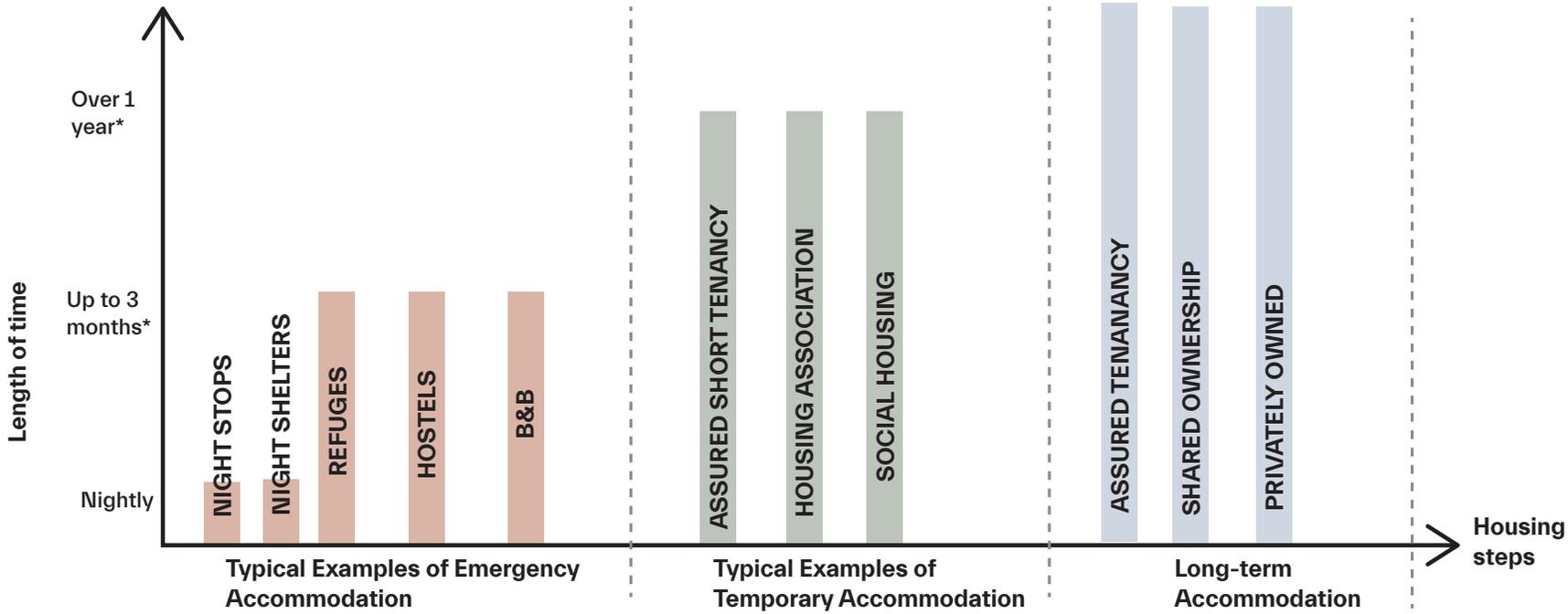
homeless, as there is evidence to show that **for every rough sleeper you see there are 13* times that many who are hidden homeless,** predominantly sofa surfing with friends. There are many reasons why young people find themselves without a home at this age through broken relationships, violence, poverty and persecution and who will be at their most vulnerable at the point in their life when they should be looking forward optimistically. Young people crave the stability and support to be able to gain the confidence and skills to live independently and securely. We know that supportive and dignified accommodation is what all young people deserve.

Currently there are no specific qualitative guidance for emergency accommodation and none for the specific needs of young people. This form of accommodation is referred to in broad terms within the New Draft London Plan as Policy H14 Specialist Supported Accommodation, however there is no additional guidance offered. This lack of clear guidance leads to other forms of guidance and legislation being referred to in support of (typically) change of use applications. These alternatives have not been designed to the specific needs of young people. Living in unsuitable and sometimes hostile emergency accommodation for weeks and months further erodes confidence making it harder for young people to get what they deserve, a place to call home.

* Housing committee report 2017

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Existing Options





Emergency

"Something dangerous or serious, such as an accident, that happens suddenly or unexpectedly and needs fast action in order to avoid harmful results"

Cambridge Dictionary Definition

Due to lack of housing stock it is quite likely that - although emergency accommodation is provided for typically a maximum stay of 12 weeks - many young people will find themselves in this form of accommodation for months and even years. .

Whether in a night shelter, hostel or bed and breakfast, a young person may find themselves sharing a room, a corridor, bathroom or a kitchen with a wide demographic who are victims of abuse, care leavers, have mental health issues, families who have fallen on hard times, drug issues, prison leavers and so on. Sometimes young people can find themselves sharing spaces for a night or even months with little in common with those around them. This vulnerable position can only heighten their anxiety.

Almost a third of urgent housing budget is spent on emergency bed and breakfasts, data shows Damien Gayle @damiengayle Guardian

18-25 year years old



In most forms of emergency housing for young people, rent must be paid. If the young person has no or low income, they must claim housing benefit to help with renting, from the council or a housing association, or universal credit housing costs to help with renting from a private landlord.

£££ per night



Night Shelters

Winter Shelters

Night Stop

Woman's Refuge

Hostels

Bed&Breakfast

Predominantly charities and volunteers or publicly funded
Free or minimal charges to individual

Predominantly privately run
Charges money to either individual or council

I visited a young person in supported accommodation and found they were only given a sleeping bag to sleep in.

Mary, social worker

Hostels

A homeless young person usually must get a referral to get into many hostels over the age of 18. This means young people will need to know where to look and find an organisation to help them whether it be a charity or via a social worker. The number of beds per hostel can vary greatly from 10 to 100+ beds.

On top of rent (either being paid or subsidised by housing benefit or universal credit) a service charge is added of £10 – £35 a week for: meals, heating and laundry. This isn't covered by housing benefit and will need to be paid for from other benefits or income.

If the **young homeless person is from abroad, they can't claim benefits and most hostels won't accept them.** In a hostel it is most likely that the young person will be sharing a room typically with people of the same sex. The young person will most likely be sharing a kitchen, a bathroom and a laundry

with strangers. **There is no need for additional supportive spaces to be provided,** there is no requirement for the hostels to provide any tailored care for the young people.



Source : Shelter Blog

Bed and Breakfast

Bed and Breakfasts (B&Bs) offer basic accommodation and **are run as private businesses.** A young homeless person would be referred to stay here by the council. The B&B provides a private furnished bedroom.

Rooms for families and single people will be in the same building alongside the young homeless person. A shared bathroom, shared kitchen and washing machine is provided, some will provide breakfast but most likely the tenant will need to cook for themselves.

B&Bs costs vary, and can be disproportionately high where housing benefit covers all or most of these costs.

There are some disgusting places i have had to visit, blood on the walls and bedrooms with no windows

**Cliff, social worker
Depaul**

B&Bs and emergency hostels are the focus of our research as they can cost the individual and the council a great deal of money and young people can end up staying in these places for long periods of time. However, neither have been designed with the specific needs of young homeless people in mind. In most cases they do not provide suitable private, shared and support spaces specific to the individual's needs as there are no qualitative guidelines which they must adhere to.

A young person can find themselves sharing with a wide range of people and will either end up stuck in their private or shared room for long periods of time or, due to the lack of shared and private amenity on offer, will head out during the day while jobless, vulnerable

and without adequate daily support. **These forms of accommodation in particular should be held to a higher standard.** Guidelines specific to their tenants should be followed and accommodation closed down if not meeting these standards.

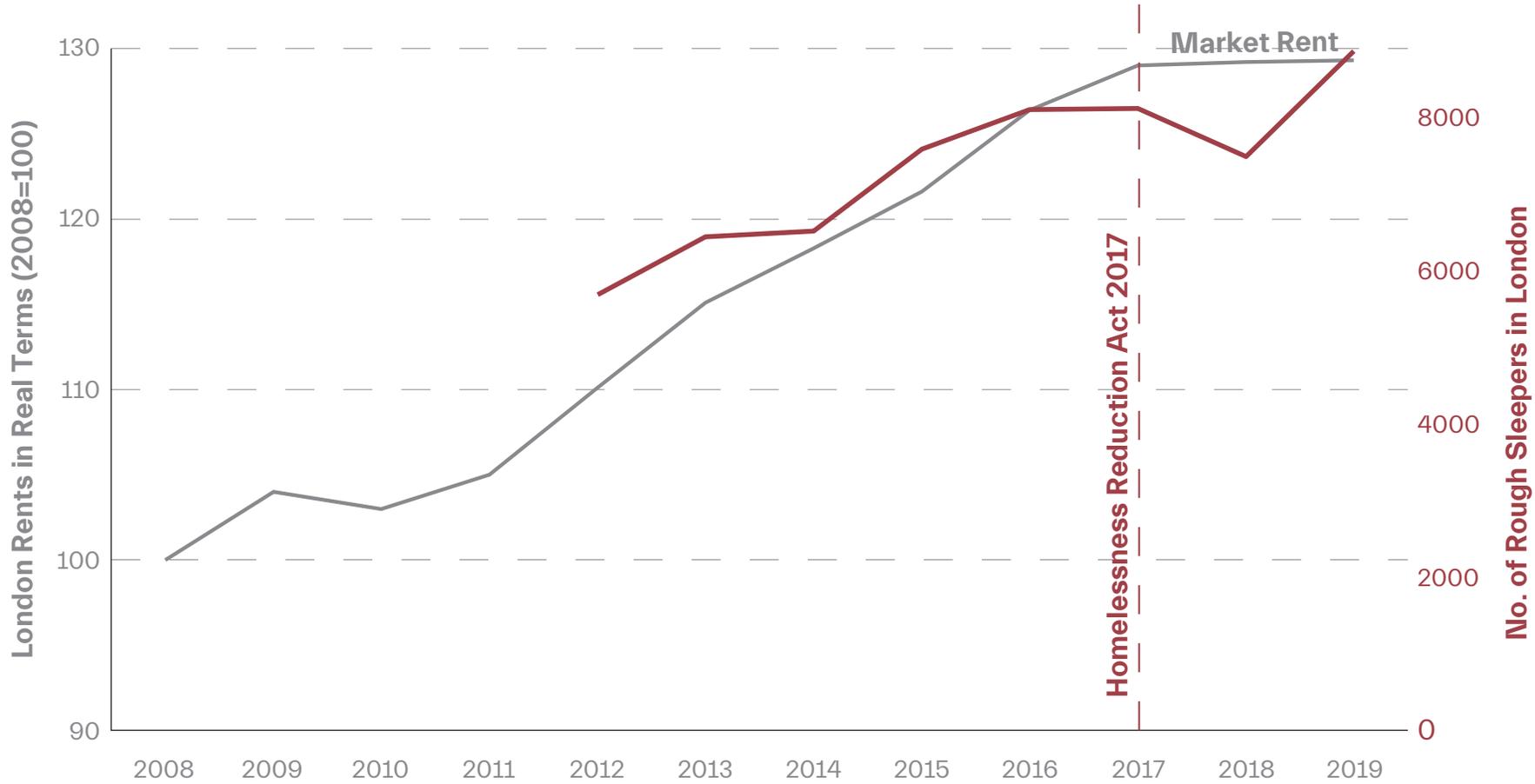
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The Costs

The cost of emergency accommodation has increased with most boroughs seeing a continual rise year by year. Furthermore, with this increase in costs for emergency accommodation we would expect to see in return a drop in homelessness and people getting the support they need to get back or into independent living. This is not the case. This illustrates that investment of money needs to be focused on successful outcomes. There are organisations leading by example that show, with careful consideration to the quality and space standards of emergency accommodation, that change is possible, proving that with a balance of support and promoting independence many people can get back to independent living.

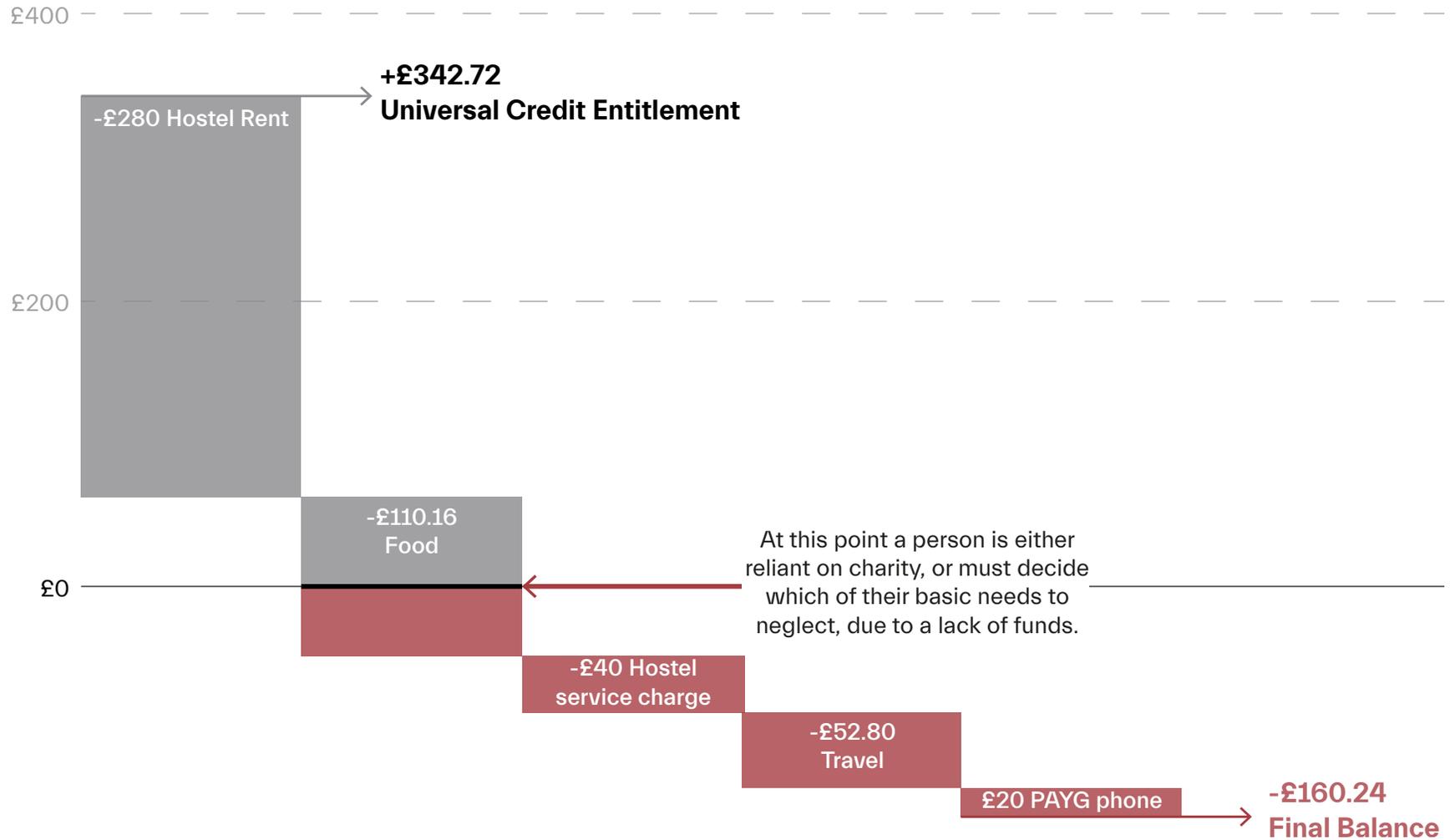
Most of the current costs within emergency accommodation are spent on private hostels and B&Bs, this money can be better spent.

Impact of increasing rents in London



Source @london.gov.uk

Example of a young person's monthly costs if unemployed



Source: estimates from typical monthly costs in London

4

Existing Guidance

The Homelessness Reduction Act requires each local authority to prevent homelessness and to secure safe accommodation.

Within the New Draft London Plan homeless accommodation is referred to under section H14 in the general term Specialist Supported Accommodation, but no individual set of guidance is referred to for this particular user group.

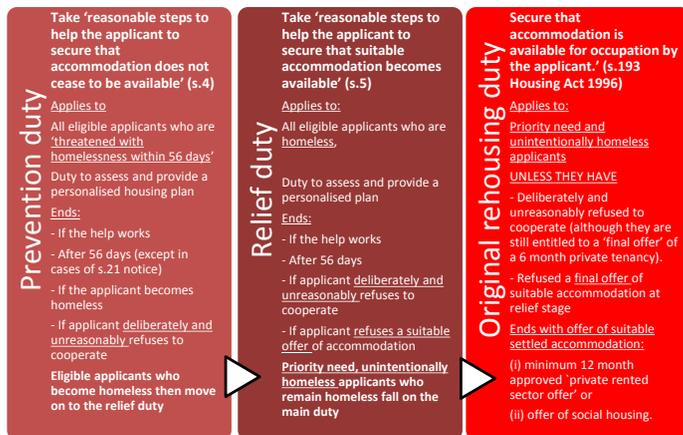
Each borough interprets H14 specialist supported accommodation for homeless individuals differently.

The most common guidance used are the HMO guidelines which are referred to by each borough, some boroughs do require an increase to these standards, however in the HMO guidelines requirements there is no reference to qualitative aspects or support facilities.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

"The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is one of the biggest changes to the rights of homeless people in England for 15 years. It effectively bolts two new duties onto the original statutory rehousing duty. It places new legal duties on local housing authorities and amends the existing homelessness legislation in the Housing Act 1996. These new duties apply to all eligible applicants (i.e. on the basis of immigration status) and are blind to intentionality and priority need. The prevention duty is also blind to local connection."

Shelter



Source Shelter publications: April 2018

"The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need.'

These include:

a. an enhanced prevention duty extending the period a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days, meaning that housing authorities are required to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage; and,

b. a new duty for those who are already homeless so that housing authorities will support households for 56 days to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation."

*February 2018
 Ministry of Housing,
 Communities and Local Government*

Homelessness Code of Guidance

Duty to provide interim accommodation

What does this legislation control?

Space and room standards applicable to interim accommodation

Factors considered in assessment of 'suitability' for an individual applicant

Overcrowding - Part 10 of the Housing Act 1985

Proximity and accessibility of local services and medical facilities

Slum Clearance - Part 9 of the Housing Act 1985

Local connection to borough

Compliance with HMO standards of health and safety and overcrowding

Medical needs, well-being and social consideration

B&Bs are not suitable for 16-17 year olds even on an emergency basis

The availability of accommodation impacts the suitability assessment for the applicant

Local authorities can set their own minimum standards for interim accommodation (B&Bs and other shared accommodation)

Guidance for Youth Homeless Accommodation

?

Homelessness Code of Guidance

Who is the code for?

The code is issued specifically for local authority members and staff. It is also of direct relevance to private registered providers of social housing. Private registered providers have a duty under the 1996 Act to co-operate with housing authorities in exercising their homelessness functions.

Many of the activities discussed in the code require joint planning and operational co-operation between housing authorities and social services authorities, health authorities, criminal justice agencies, voluntary sector organisations and the diverse range of bodies working in the private rented sectors - so the code is also relevant to these.

The duties include the requirement for housing authorities to ensure that any temporary accommodation found for a homeless person must be suitable to their specific needs.

Housing Act 1985

No overcrowding criteria

Overcrowding Space Standard

One person, single bedroom



The overcrowding act ensures that one person must be provided with between 6.5 sqm and 11 sqm floor area size. Any room less than 4.64 sqm may not be used as sleeping accommodation.

All habitable rooms can be used for sleeping, there is no requirement for amenity space under this act.



Shared living space

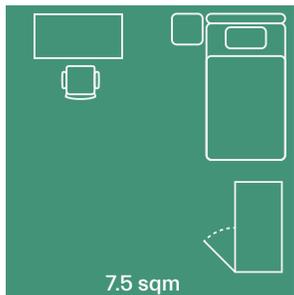
x20 occupiers

1 sqm per person

New London Plan

One person, single bedroom

← min. 2.15m →



A one bed-space, single bedroom must have a floor area of at least 7.5 sqm and be at least 2.15m wide.

This allows for bed, wardrobe and additional furniture such as a desk, and thus plans should demonstrate this possibility.

To ensure no overcrowding, the Housing Act uses a minimum square meters guide for the number of people in a room. It reduces the risk of unsafe accommodation if followed correctly by landlords.

Definition of overcrowding:

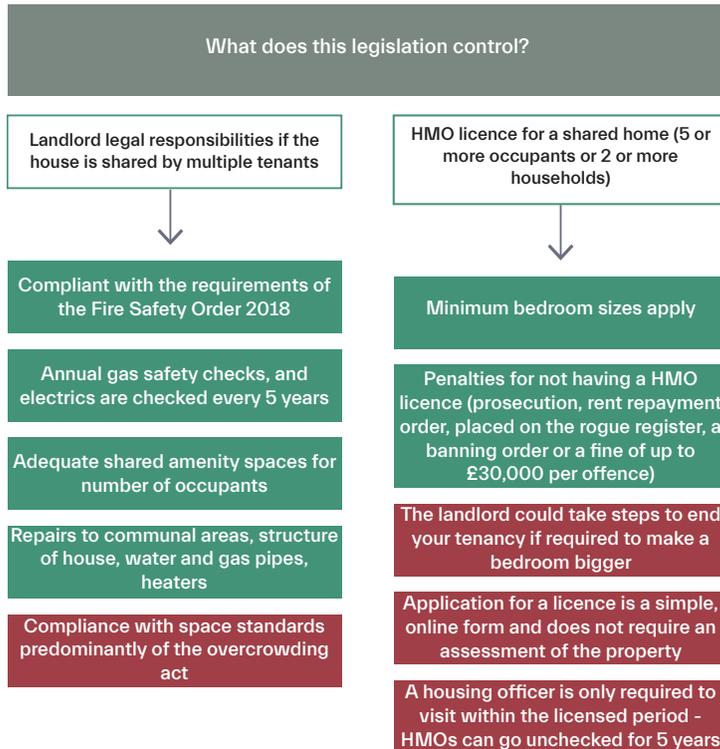
"A dwelling is overcrowded for the purposes of this Part when the number of persons sleeping in the dwelling is such as to contravene—

- (a) the standard specified in section 325 (the room standard),
- or
- (b) the standard specified in section 326 (the space standard)."

Housing Act 1985

Housing Act 2004 (Houses of multiple occupation)

HMO Guidelines Houses of multiple occupation



The Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) legislation casts a wide net. The full definition is found in sections 254 to 260 of the Housing Act 2004. In broad terms, an HMO can be described as a building or part of building (flat) which is occupied by more than one household (which is defined as occupiers of the same family and includes spouses, co-habitees, same sex couples and any blood relative) where:

- At least one of the households shares or lacks access to a basic amenity (basic amenities means a WC, personal washing facilities and cooking facilities)

or

- The building is fully converted into self-contained flats or studios and the conversion work does not fully comply with the building standard of the 1991 Building Regulations AND less than 2/3rd of the flats are occupied by long leaseholders.

Guidance for Youth Homeless Accommodation

?

These standards are based on the Boer war to prevent the transmission of disease, every piece of legislation has rehashed it in some way.
Paul, EHO

HMO's are used for a variety of forms of multiple tenants and as such are split into different categories, these are:

- HMOs comprising bedsits/studio rooms.
- HMOs comprising self contained flats.
- Flats in multiple occupation (FMOs) where flats are multiply occupied by more than one household.
- Hostel/staff accommodation.

Emergency accommodation can fall into most of the above categories and in some cases one such property could require a mix of these guidelines. The risk of overcrowding and fire can be greater in these housing typologies as they tend to be for low income users sadly are often not given the same consideration by some landlords as more traditional forms of housing. The HMO guidelines focus on these minimal guidelines to prevent harm, but have no qualitative aspects. They are general and do not refer to the need of particular user groups that fall within these housing categories.

The owner of the property of multiple tenants must obtain a license to confirm they are capable of complying with the requirements of the license. It is a simple online form and through a series of questions will typically be accepted (unless you have committed a felony). The HMO should be visited by a housing officer within the period of the license, in the worst case a property could go unchecked for 5 years of housing residents. That could mean a bedsit, a hostel, or a bed and breakfast that offers lower short term rates for a young person may not even comply with these very basic requirements.

**The only thing
that has
substantially
changed in
HMO
legislation is
fire detection.**

Paul, EHO

[48]

Fire Safety Order 2005 (Houses of multiple occupation)

The Fire Safety Order ensures that the 'responsible person' (owner/manager) for the property meets the requirements of the fire safety order. The responsible person must:

- carry out a fire-risk assessment identifying any possible dangers and risks;
- consider who may be especially at risk;
- get rid of or reduce the risk from fire as far as is reasonably possible and provide general fire precautions to deal with any possible risk left;
- take other measures to make sure there is protection if flammable or explosive materials are used or stored;
- create a plan to deal with any emergency and, in most cases, keep a record of your findings; and
- review findings when necessary

[49]

Is it working?

There is a gap in the provision of tailored emergency accommodation due partly to the gap in guidance. The general guidance explained in the previous pages aims to prevent slums and to deter rogue landlords. However, rather than guidance preventing the race to the bottom guidance should be available for this essential sector to promote high quality empathetic design principles focusing on the support structures that are required for young homeless people.

Overleaf we interviewed Paul, an Environmental Health Officer with 40 years of experience of visiting HMO properties and ensuring the buildings and their owners comply with fire safety and the general guidance required to hold an HMO license. We asked him if, in his experience, he thinks that this form of guidance is suitable for young homeless people?

Paul Fitzgerald

Director of Southern Environmental Services Limited,
BSc. (Hons.) Environmental Health
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (MCIEH)

Paul: In 40 years of working as an Environmental Health Officer for HMOs, I have not seen any meaningful improvement in the guidance to prevent poor quality

accommodation. **The bare minimum is typically provided and I want to see the bar raised.**

Anyone can set up an HMO, its a simple online form, and once you get around to visiting it could have been housing people for five years.

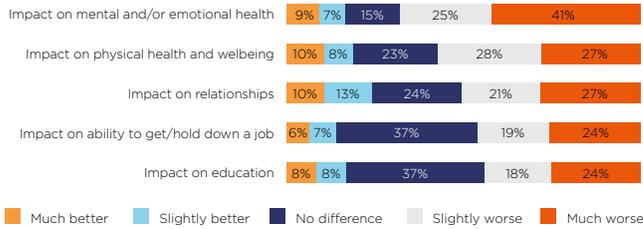
HMO guidance does not cover the needs of vulnerable people, there is no additional requirement for the support spaces or management, it relies on social services who are understaffed. The HMO legislation doesn't even work for non-vulnerable users. There are a broad range of HMOs from professional (high quality) to homeless (low quality generally) with similar prices per dwelling.

HMOs are considered a cash cow in the industry.



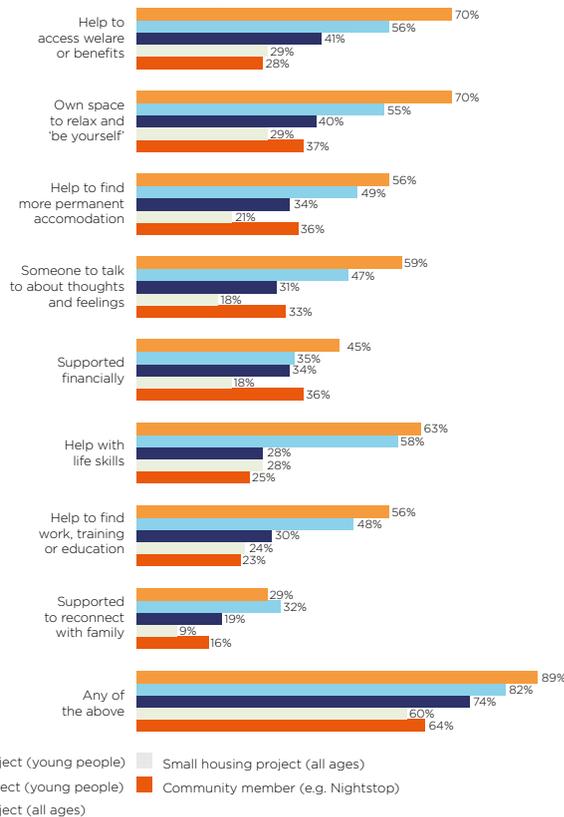
Below diagram @Depaul:

Impact of being in emergency accommodation



Below diagram @Depaul:

Support received in accommodation types



Depaul Survey

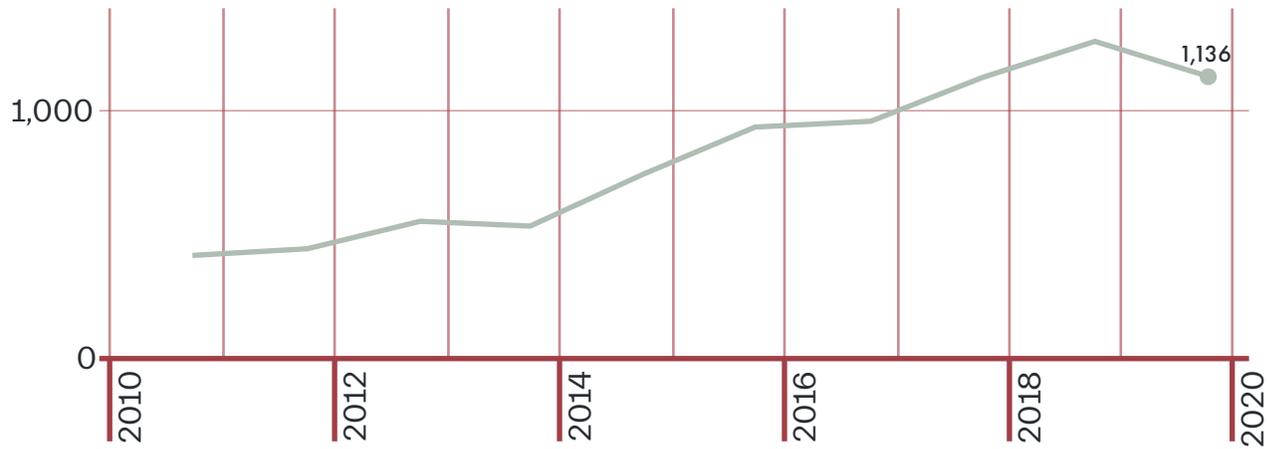
Danger Zones and Stepping Stones: Phase Two
A quantitative exploration of young people's experience of temporary living

Depaul 2017

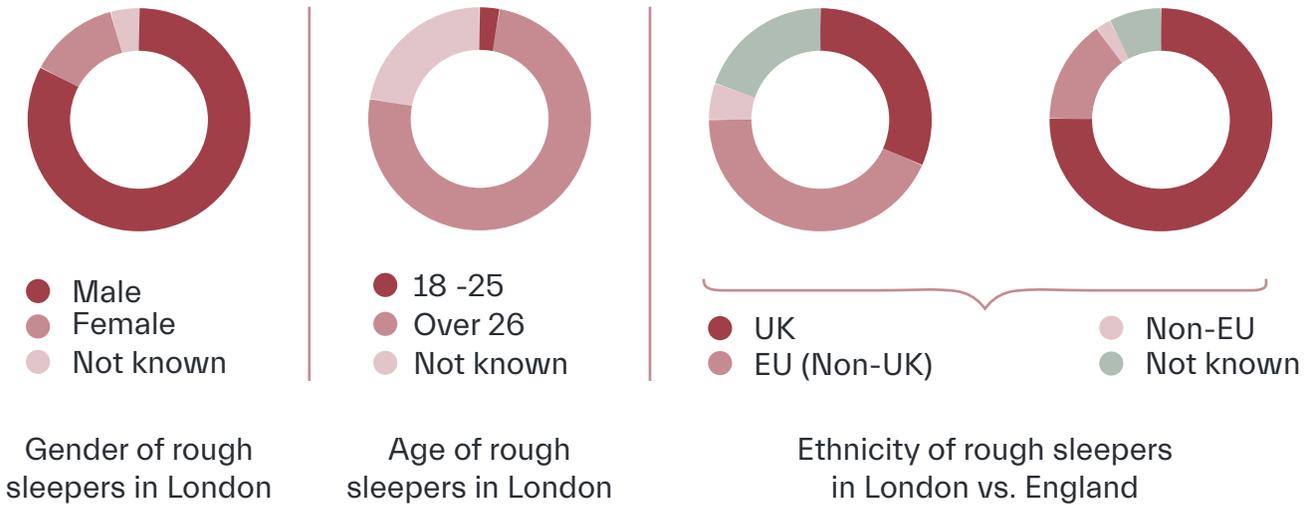
Depaul's survey illustrates the impact on young people of poor emergency/temporary accommodation but also how with accommodation tailored to their age group they gained far more support.

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 well-being had been negatively affected by temporary living.**

Nearly half (48 percent) said that temporary living 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 a negative impact on their lives.



Rough sleepers in London 2010-2020 (pre Covid-19)



Source : Rough snapshot in England- Autumn 2019, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

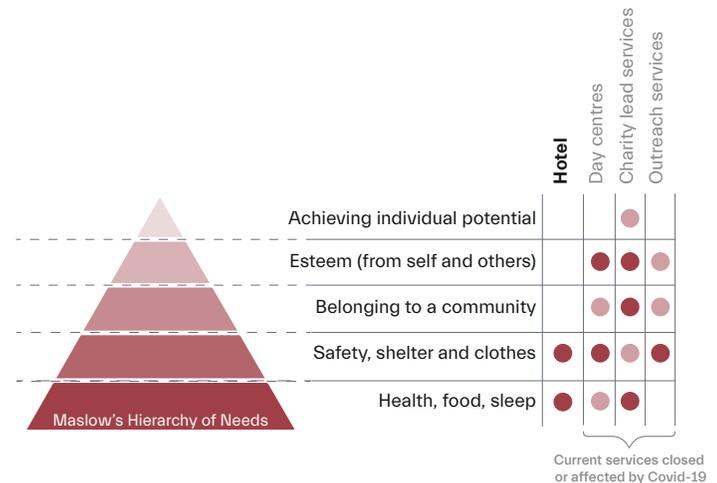
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Covid 19 Crisis

"We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to think boldly and imaginatively about how we meet the needs of all people who have slept rough or who are at risk of sleeping rough."

Alexia Murphy, Depaul

London Boroughs and the GLA have acted to safely re-house people who are sleeping rough during the Covid-19 pandemic in line with 'Everybody In'. This was an unprecedented operation, which the Government estimates resulted in 90 per cent of known rough sleepers being placed in hotel or other emergency accommodation.



With the end of the furlough scheme, the reduction in bar work and retail work, it will be harder than ever for young people to find work

Phil, NYHC

The official Greater London rough sleeping statistics, for Q1 2020/21 (April-June), came out in August. The statistics cover the period during which the GLA and local authority Covid-19 hotels were opening and accommodating people who had been sleeping rough or in shelters:

In total during the period April - June 2020 outreach teams recorded 4,227 individuals sleeping rough in the capital. This is a 14% increase on the previous quarter and a 33%

increase on the total figure for April - June 2019

There was also an increase in the number of young people, aged 18–25, sleeping rough from 303 in Q4 2019/20, to 447 in Q1 2020/21. This means that the proportion of the total rough sleeping population aged 18–25 increased from 8% to 11%.

The needs for specific emergency housing for young people is needed now more than ever. The priority is to intervene now to prevent their homelessness becoming entrenched.

7

Next Steps

Miranda MacLaren, Polina Pencheva, Heather Macey

Through our own experiences (as architects acting on behalf of clients) trying to gain planning for emergency accommodation, we know first hand of the onerous and complex planning journey that is common to achieve a consent for designs specific for this essential sector. We experienced misunderstandings from the planning departments, ward members and the public of who this type of accommodation is for and its purpose.

The lack of clear guidance was surprising to us particularly when compared to the increasing guidance for traditional housing models.

Each council has a duty to prevent and eradicate homelessness yet the guidance and current provisions fall far short of meeting that duty. There are organisations, individuals and designers leading by example who show with determination that purposefully designed and built projects for young people can be achieved and produce successful outcomes. These are illustrated in the next booklet "Leading by Example". After seeing examples and meeting young people who have gained confidence and independence through their positive experiences of emergency accommodation and support services we were then able to imagine what could be possible.

What do you need?

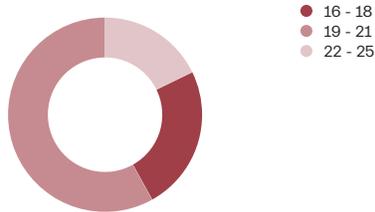
We asked.

During the lock-down we asked members of New Horizon Youth Centre (day care centre for the support of young people) about their current housing experience during the Covid crisis. We asked them a series of questions in order to guide our recommendations [Part 3] for emergency accommodation tailored to their needs.

See results overleaf.

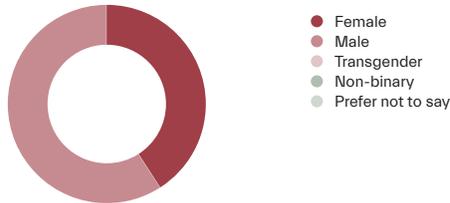
What age group do you belong to?

17 Responses



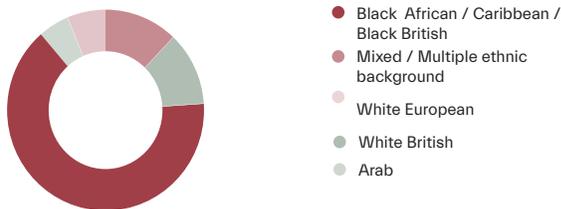
How would you describe your gender?

17 Responses



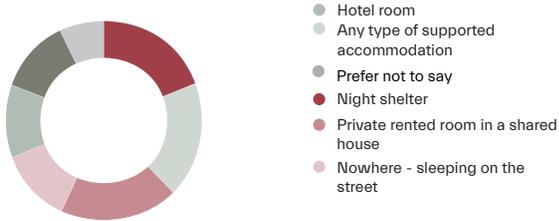
What is your ethnic group?

17 Responses



Where were you staying immediately before lock-down and Covid-19?

17 Responses



How would you describe the place where you are currently staying e.g. your residence?

17 Responses



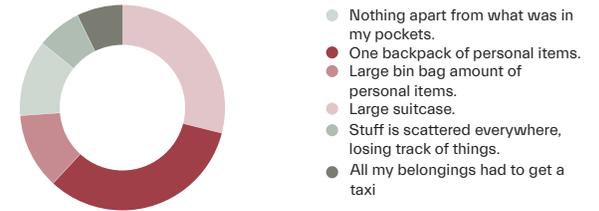
Did recent social distancing measures due to Covid-19 change your place of residence?

17 Responses



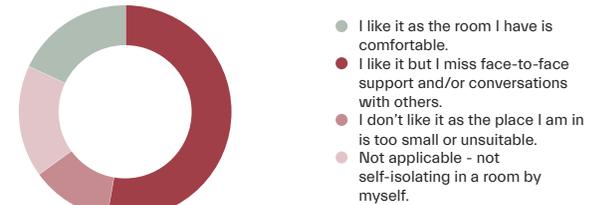
When you last moved how would you describe the amount of personal things you had with when you arrived at your new place of stay?

17 Responses



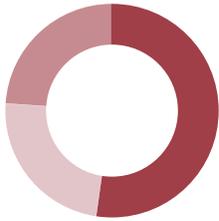
If you are self-isolating in a room by yourself, how would you describe it?

17 Responses



Do you currently share cooking facilities with anyone else?

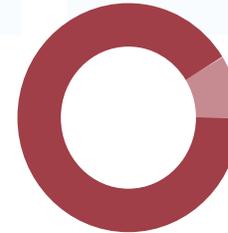
17 Responses



- Yes I am sharing cooking facilities
- No I have my own cooking facilities
- No I don't have access to a kitchen or cooking facilities

If you could choose, would you prefer...

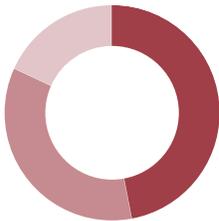
17 Responses



- Having your own bathroom as you prefer not to share.
- Don't have a preference.

If you could choose, would you prefer....

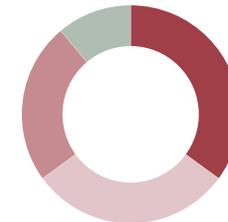
17 Responses



- Your own cooking facilities but would like other shared spaces where you can meet others like a living room.
- Your own cooking facilities as you prefer not to share.
- Don't have a preference.

If you could choose, when you are in your room what would you like to look at through the window?

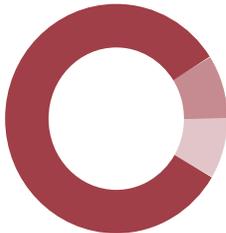
17 Responses



- The street - as you love people watching.
- A tree and a quiet back yard (hate noise and city lights at night).
- Don't mind providing the view is nice.
- Don't care as long as I have a window

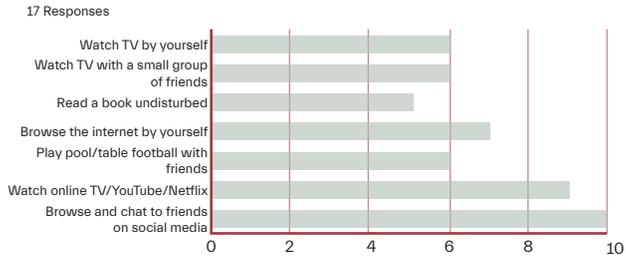
Do you currently share bathroom with anyone else?

17 Responses

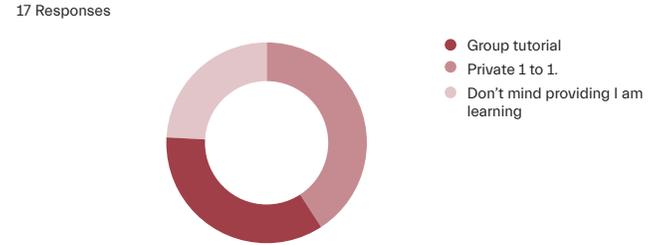


- Yes - I have to share a toilet and shower room.
- No - I have my own private bathroom.
- No - I don't have access to a bathroom at all.

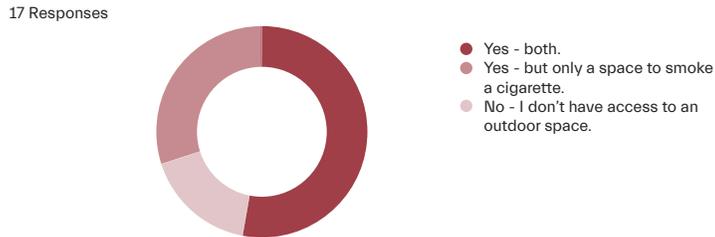
In normal circumstances, in the evenings or when you are relaxing during the day what would you rather do?



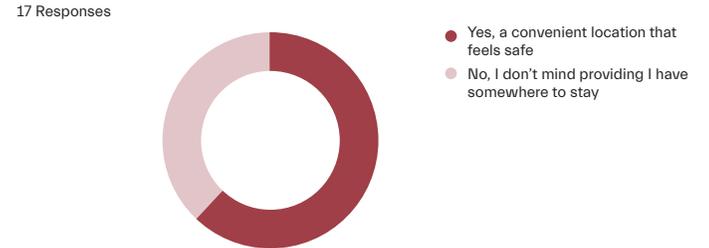
If you need some help preparing for a job interview, language lessons or filling in forms would you prefer chatting to a group learning the same thing or chat to someone privately?



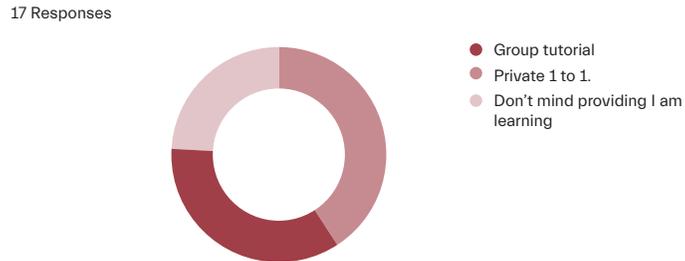
In your current accommodation, do you have access to an outdoor space where you could just sit in the sun or smoke a cigarette?



When you are staying in accommodation, do you think the building entrance and general location of the building are important

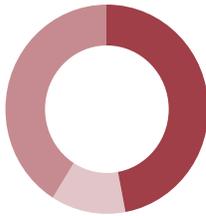


If you need some help preparing for a job interview, language lessons or filling in forms would you prefer chatting to a group learning the same thing or chat to someone privately?

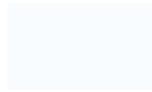


Would you like to see the building entrance with an illuminated front door or lobby clearly visible from the street?

17 Responses



- Yes this will make me feel more comfortable
- Don't know
- No, I would feel embarrassed if someone sees me



Any other comments or suggestions of what can be improved?

6 Responses

Food Vouchers

The food

We need a fridge in each room because some people steal food from the kitchen

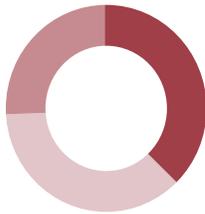
Helping to provide food

The rooms are too small if you could make them a little bigger it would be great

Every time... the time taken.

Would you like to see when you enter the building?

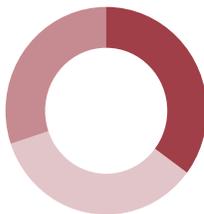
17 Responses



- A friendly face to help me find my room and show me around
- A space to have a cup of tea and chat before going to my room
- I don't know

What level of support would you like in this kind of accommodation?

17 Responses



- I would like support staff there 24/7
- I would like support staff during the day and just security at night
- No need, I can live independently without support

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Thank you for sharing your story

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With particular thanks to
Alexia Murphy, Phil Kerry and Emma
Henley for the mentoring along the way.

With particular thanks to Odelay Films
for their generosity, passion for film and
making the story behind this research
visible and accessible to more people.
Ben Falk, Frank Dow and Jossiah
Newbolt.

Edited and designed in London, August
2020 as part of the RIBA Research Grant
2019