

# In Her Shoes: young women's experiences of homelessness



## The facts about women's experiences of homelessness

- In England 2020-21, more than 46 thousand young women (aged 16-24) presented to their local authority as they were homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- There were five times as many young women (aged 16-24) who lost their last settled accommodation due to domestic violence as men in England 2020/21.
- In 2020/2021, 1 in 5 young women had experienced sexual assault once or more while they were homeless.

## Our report

*"I think it did have a negative impact the fact that I was a woman, definitely, I was more exposed to abuse, domestic abuse. And that was experienced when I was sofa surfing. So yeah, it was really, really tough as a woman, and also I felt as a woman, I was undervalued by the system."*

The report explores the homelessness and housing experiences of young women, using in-depth qualitative interviews with young women and key stakeholders, analysis of Centrepoint's Youth Homelessness Databank for 2021/22, and a review of existing research data. In doing this, the report found that:

- Many young women spoke of the **lack of woman-only services**. Additionally, stakeholders spoke about the **lack of LGBTQ+ services**.
- Women faced **additional difficulties** when they were also: under 18; a mum; a domestic abuse survivor; someone with substance misuse problems; or from another country.
- The majority of women said the amount they received from **benefits was not enough to live on**. This was damaging to their health and wellbeing, impacted on their ability to access employment, education and training, and put them at risk of exploitation and abuse.
- Several women had experiences of **domestic violence** and were untrusting or unaware of the support that is available.
- Many women faced **barriers to jobs and education** such as poor mental health, lack of child care and qualifications.

## Recommendations

- Government and local councils should allocate more funding for specific homelessness accommodation, including **women-only and LGBTQ+ services**.
- **Increase benefits** to reflect the real cost of living to ensure vulnerable households do not face a real-terms cut to their incomes.
- Improve **training** for service providers to ensure they take the needs and experiences of vulnerable young women seriously.
- Introduce **new employment schemes** for vulnerable young women with a variety of options and carefully considered pathways to progress into careers.
- Improve affordability of **childcare** for vulnerable young women on low incomes or benefits to help them to be able to engage in education and employment opportunities.

**Read the full report [here](#).**

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Listen our 'In Her Shoes' podcast special, featuring two former Centrepoint residents, [here](#).