

LGBT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS:

A UK NATIONAL SCOPING OF CAUSE,

PREVALENCE, RESPONSE, AND OUTCOME.



FOREWORD



In the 25 years since The Albert Kennedy Trust (AKT) was formed, LGBT young homeless people continue to be one of the most disenfranchised and marginalized groups in society. Through this much-needed report, we bring together for first time the most comprehensive evidence base for this claim, and offer a way forward.

Our own research, presented here, supports both international and national reports that show:

- LGBT young people are more likely to find themselves homeless than their non LGBT peers, comprising up to 24% of the youth homeless population ¹
- LGBT homeless youth are highly likely to have experienced familial rejection, abuse and violence (69%, AKT 2015);
- Whilst homeless, they are significantly more likely to experience targeted violence, sexual exploitation, substance misuse, and physical & mental health problems than other homeless youth.

The solution to this crisis can be found through the combined action of housing providers, and central and local government, with the support of specialist LGBT services. Mandatory monitoring of sexual orientation by housing providers, improved regulation of the private rented sector to ensure more safe, accessible and affordable accommodation, and above all wider recognition of the issues that LGBT young people face, will reduce the risk of homelessness and its destructive outcomes.

We hope the long-term impact of this report will be to provide solutions, which end lifetimes of homelessness for young people. With familial breakdown and abuse the principal reasons for LGBT youth homelessness, our overarching recommendation to policy makers, organisations, schools, and faith leaders is to work with LGBT services to develop programmes of work which encourage a culture of understanding and acceptance of sexuality / gender identity within families and youth environments.

Homelessness can destroy a young person's life, and cost the state on average £24-30,000 a year, per person.²

This report makes a number of specific, achievable and cost-effective recommendations. I hope that the evidence it contains will inspire you to act on these recommendations, or contact The Albert Kennedy Trust to seek support.

Thank you,

Tim Sigsworth
Chief Executive
The Albert Kennedy Trust

1. AKT 2015; Cull, et al, 2006
2. Evidence Review of the Cost of Homelessness, 2012

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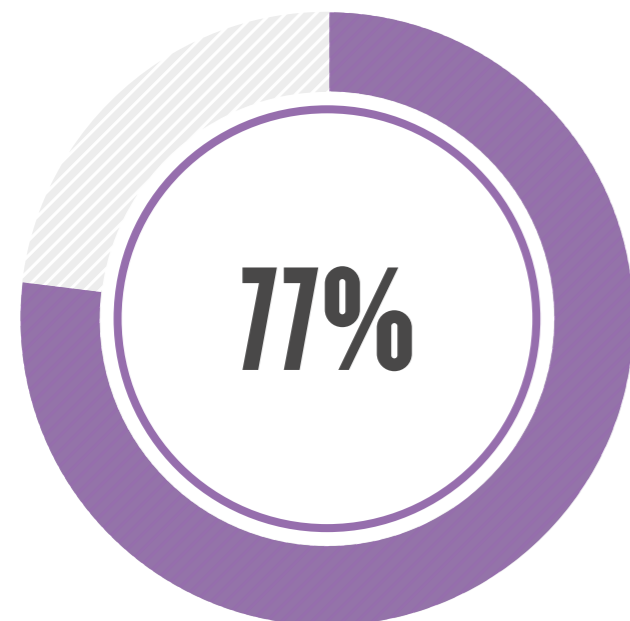
84% OF LGBT ORGANISATIONS STATED EXPERIENCE OF SERVICE USERS DISCLOSING HOMELESSNESS, RISK OF HOMELESSNESS, OR LIVING IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT.

— AKT 2014

01/ INTRODUCTION

The Albert Kennedy Trust's (AKT) National Scoping Review is a major investigation into the experience of homelessness for young people (aged between 16 and 25 years) in the UK who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (LGBT). The research focused on assessing prevalence, understanding risk, documenting support needs and reviewing the provision of services, by local authorities and housing providers, for this population of homeless youth. There were four elements to the project, each of which have generated important findings:

- A review of research related to homelessness was conducted and included studies that looked at homelessness in general and studies that specifically looked at homelessness amongst young people who identify as LGBT.
- A survey, consisting of 36 questions, was distributed to 473 housing providers across 30 cities within England, Wales and Scotland, with a response rate of 16% (N=76). The purpose of the survey was to estimate prevalence, map service provision, and increase understanding of the services offered by housing providers.
- A second survey, consisting of 26 questions, was distributed to 88 organisations across England, Wales and Scotland who were identified as providing services to LGBT young people, with a response rate of 52% (N=46). The survey was designed to explore any experiences of homelessness amongst service users accessing LGBT organisations.
- The final part of the study was a Vox Pop survey that was conducted at three Pride events across England – London, Manchester and Newcastle. The survey consisted of between four and 35 questions, depending upon the individual's answers, and was designed to provide qualitative data on any experiences of homelessness of those questioned. In total there were 139 responses: 20 for London, 88 for Manchester and 31 for Newcastle.



**OF YOUNG PEOPLE
BELIEVED THEIR SEXUAL
/GENDER IDENTITY WAS
A CAUSAL FACTOR IN
REJECTION FROM HOME**

— AKT 2014

WHAT WOULD HAVE HELPED YOU AT THE TIME?
“SOCIAL SUPPORT”

**“NETWORK OF
PEOPLE
FOR SUPPORT”**

02/ FINDINGS

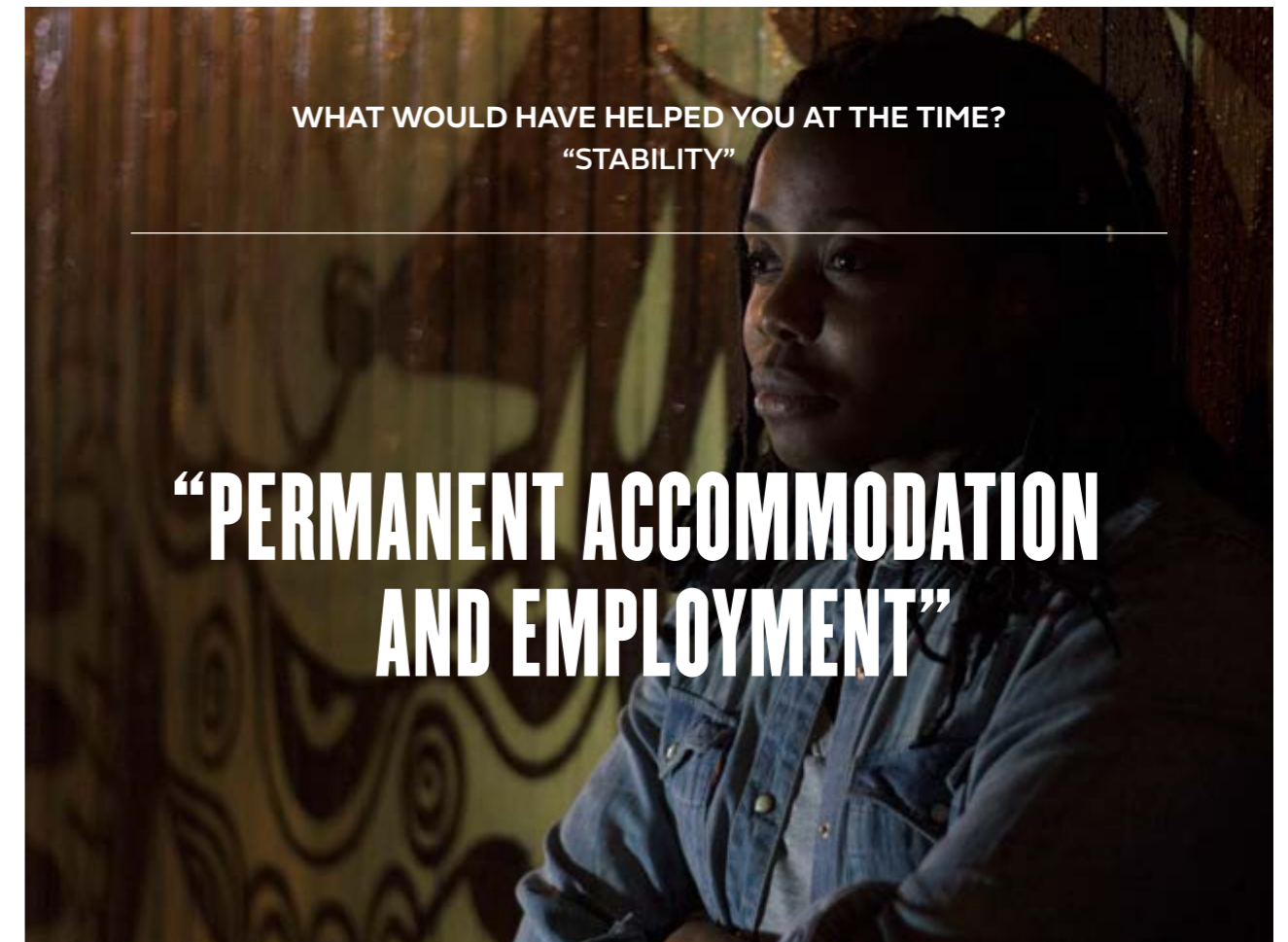
COST TO THE STATE OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PER PERSON, PER ANNUM:

£24-30,000

(Evidence Review of the Costs of Homelessness, Govt report, 2012)

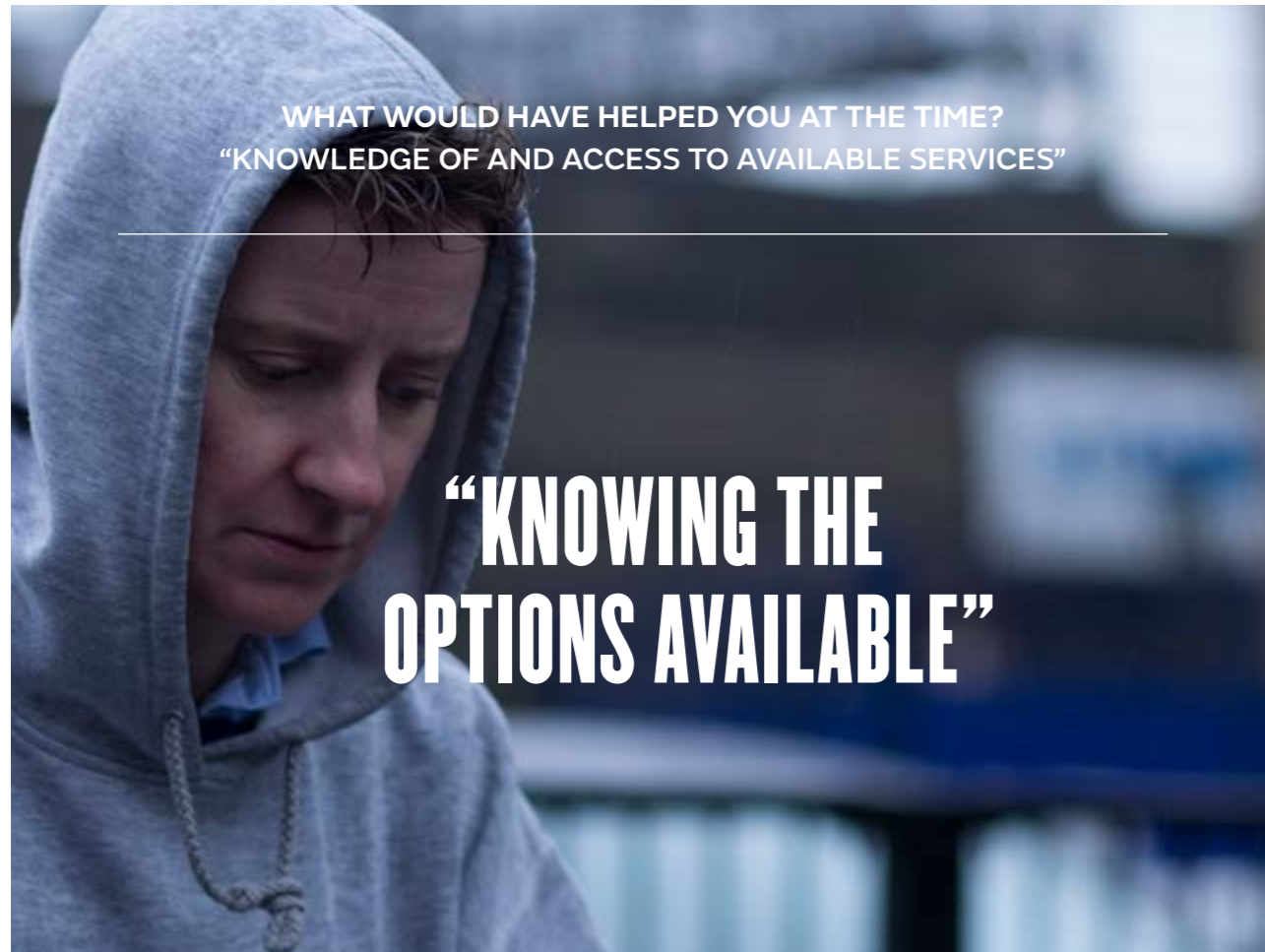
LITERATURE REVIEW:

- Young people who identify as LGBT are grossly over-represented within youth homeless populations.
- Compared to youth in general, LGBT youth are at a significantly higher risk of exposure to a range of experiences that are associated with becoming homeless, most notably parental rejection, familial physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and familial violence.
- Furthermore, LGBT young people are also at risk of bullying within education.
- Once homeless, LGBT youth are more likely to experience targeted violence and discrimination, develop substance abuse problems, be exposed to sexual exploitation, and engage in higher levels of risky sexual behaviour, than their non-LGBT peers.
- These experiences, prior to and during homelessness, have been found to be associated with the significantly higher levels of mental and physical ill health reported by homeless LGBT young people, compared to their non-LGBT homeless peers.
- Homeless LGBT young people are less likely to seek help or support than non-LGBT homeless young people. When they do, a limited understanding of the experience of LGBT homeless youth & an assumption of heterosexuality by some service providers poses further risks of discrimination.
- The lack of statutory requirements and limited resources has resulted in a dearth of LGBT-specific services. Government strategies to address youth homelessness have had little impact upon LGBT youth homelessness and the overall picture today shows almost no improvement on the situation a decade ago.



SURVEY OF HOUSING PROVIDERS:

- The most common causes for homelessness amongst LGBT young people reported by housing providers were parental rejection, familial physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and familial aggression and violence.
- The majority of respondents identified sexual/gender identity as being instrumental to their exposure to these risks for homelessness, with reports of higher rates of mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse, and sexual exploitation/risky sexual behaviour.
- However, the low response rate and lack of reliable data suggests that monitoring and recording of data on sexual/gender identity is not common practice.
- Primary reasons given for non-collection included ‘information not relevant’ and ‘no external requirement to do so’, supporting a lack of LGBT-specific knowledge amongst providers and the importance of statutory requirements. Only three organisations (4%) indicated an understanding of the unique needs of LGBT homeless young people and had appropriate initiatives in place to meet these needs.



SURVEY OF LGBT ORGANISATIONS:

- Of those LGBT organisations who reported contact with homeless LGBT young people, the three most common causes of homelessness were parental rejection, familial physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and familial aggression and violence.
- A belief by LGBT young people that their identification as LGBT was instrumental to these experiences was reported by almost all LGBT organisations.
- High levels of familial rejection, mental and sexual health issues, substance misuse, LGBT-phobic victimisation, sexual exploitation and risky sexual behaviour, and domestic violence were presented by homeless LGBT young people accessing LGBT organisations.
- All organisations stated that homeless LGBT young people were likely to have different needs, related to their sexual/gender identity, than non-LGBT homeless young people.

WHAT WOULD HAVE HELPED YOU AT THE TIME?
“ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES”

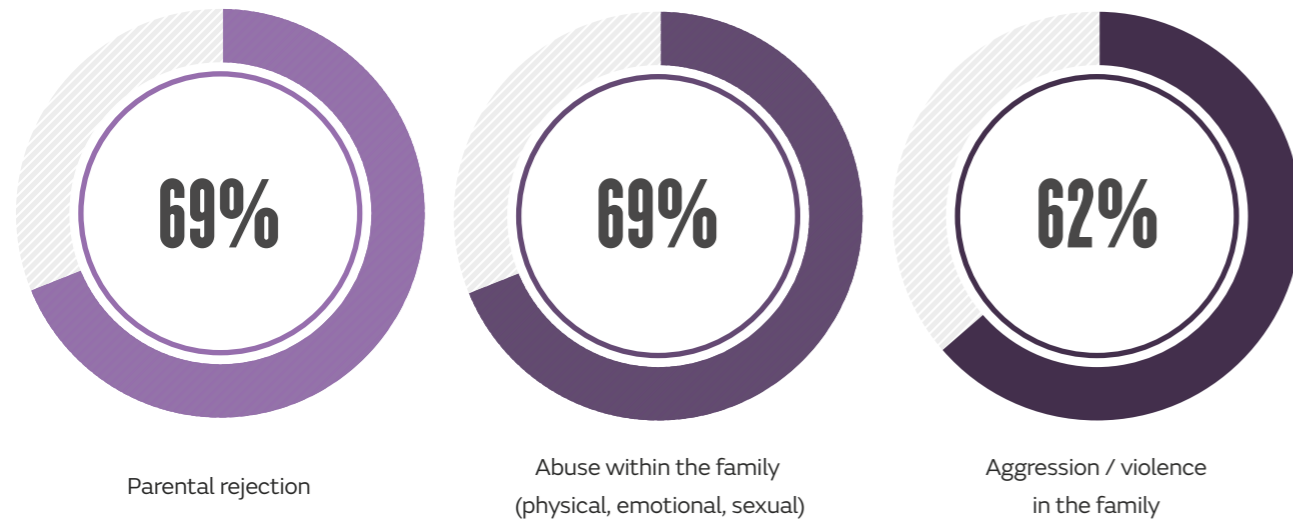
**“AS A MENTAL HEALTH SUFFERER,
SOMEWHERE SAFE TO LIVE,
NOT A MIXED HOSTEL”**

LGBT YOUTH VOX POP

- Almost a fifth of the young people surveyed disclosed that they were currently homeless or knew an LGBT young person who was currently homeless.
- The majority believed identification as LGBT was a causal factor for homelessness.
- A negative impact upon physical and mental health was reported by 68% of previously homeless and 83% of currently homeless, yet less than half had sought help.
- When asked what would have helped during periods of homelessness, the most common responses were access to mental health services, social support, substance misuse support, and knowledge of - and access to - homelessness services.

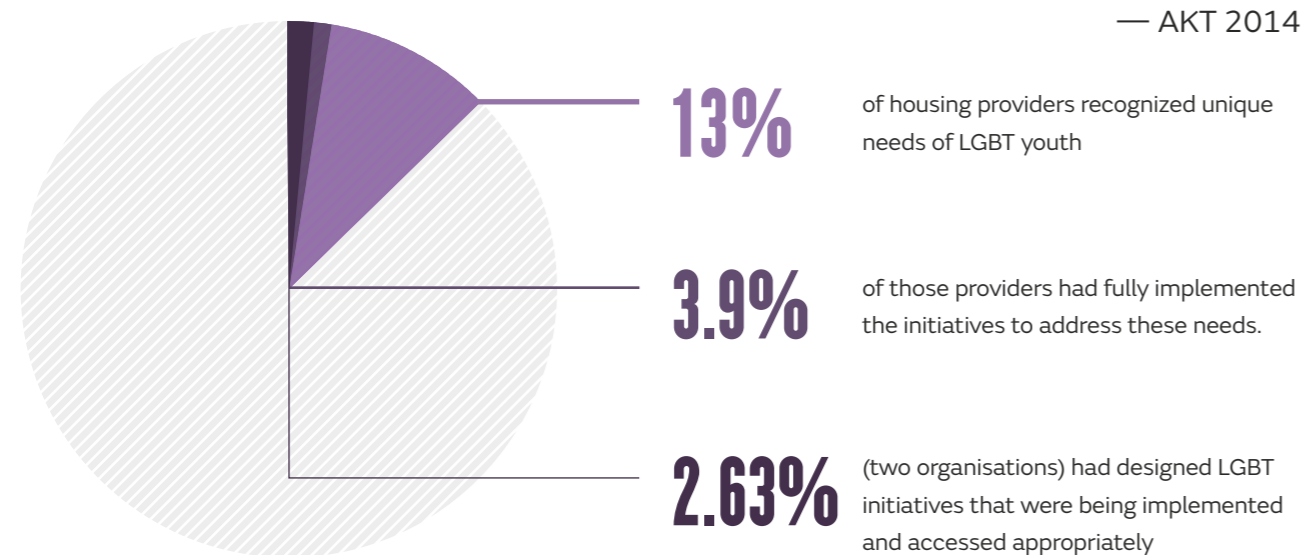
VITAL STATISTICS

TOP THREE REASONS FOR LGBT HOMELESSNESS:
— REPORTED BY LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE (AKT 2014)



TOP FIVE ISSUES PRESENTED BY HOMELESS LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE:
— AKT 2014

- 1 **FAMILY REJECTION**
- 4 **HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING**
- 2 **MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**
- 5 **SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**
- 3 **ALCOHOL ABUSE**



03/ RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

It is recommended that central government:

1. Require local providers to collect and monitor data on the sexual/gender identity of service users.
2. Develop and implement best practice guidelines and ensure local providers account for sexual/gender identity within service provision.
3. Review the definition of 'priority need' and 'local connection' in order to account for the specific and significant risks faced by LGBT young people.
4. Legislate to ensure the private rented sector is affordable, accessible and safe for homeless LGBT young people, through such measures as: rent caps, abolition of contract fees and further protection of the rights of tenants.

FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND HOUSING PROVIDERS

It is recommended that local authorities and housing providers:

1. Collect, monitor, analyse and apply data on service user sexual/gender identity within service provision.
2. Provide opportunities for service users to disclose their sexual/gender identity beyond their initial assessment.
3. Provide staff with training to understand the unique needs of homeless LGBT youth.
4. Conduct a thorough review of their housing options, policies and procedures to ensure services are appropriate for, and inclusive of, homeless LGBT young people.
5. Work collaboratively with the various local services, general and LGBT-specific, in healthcare (physical and mental), substance and alcohol misuse, skills and employability support, and social services, in order to provide a more comprehensive wrap-around service for homeless LGBT young people.



FUTURE RESEARCH

It is recommended that future research should investigate:

1. A more accurate way in which to determine the prevalence of LGBT youth homelessness.
2. A geographical mapping of prevalence to identify those areas with particularly high numbers of LGBT homeless young people in need of targeted support.
3. The unique experiences and needs of the diverse groups within the LGBT youth homelessness sector, including specifically the presently under-researched needs of trans young people.

FOR THE ALBERT KENNEDY TRUST

It is recommended that AKT:

1. Develops an online portal through which individuals and organisations can access information and guidance on issues related to LGBT youth homelessness.
2. Works in partnership with non-specialist housing organisations, education specialists and policy makers to share knowledge, improve policy and demonstrate best practice across a range of factors, including monitoring, creating an inclusive environment, and recognising and responding to need.
3. Delivers regional training events so organisations can pool resources and attend workshops, particularly for those staff within generic services.
4. Partners with research organisations and academics to build and expand the evidence base around LGBT youth homelessness.
5. Increases outreach into communities to ensure support for LGBT youth who face intersectional discrimination, such as those from faith communities or those who identify as BME.

04/ CONCLUSIONS



The findings from each part of this research project support each other and provide a number of important insights. Young people who identify as LGBT are at a significantly higher risk of becoming homeless than their non-LGBT peers and are over-represented within the UK's youth homeless population. Their over-representation is in part due to their increased exposure to parental rejection, familial physical, sexual and emotional abuse and familial violence, compared to non-LGBT young people. In addition, LGBT youth are exposed to two additional risks unique to their sexual/gender identity: experiences of LGBT-phobic bullying, and the development of a minority sexual/gender identity.

Once homeless, LGBT young people are also more likely to experience targeted violence and sexual exploitation, develop substance abuse problems, and engage in risky sexual behaviour, than non-LGBT homeless youth. As a result, significantly higher levels of physical and mental health problems are reported.

Importantly, as this study demonstrates, they are less likely to seek help than non-LGBT homeless youth and when they do, there is a broad assumption of heterosexuality by providers and a lack of LGBT specific services.

These findings have led The Albert Kennedy Trust to conclude that homeless LGBT young people are one of the most disenfranchised and marginalised groups within the UK. The recommendations in this report will go some way towards addressing this social problem.

05/ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Albert Kennedy Trust would like to thank the researcher Wayne Bateman, who gave his time pro bono to complete this exhaustive study of LGBT youth homelessness. Thanks to Professor Ian Rivers of Brunel University and Katherine Cowan (AKT Trustee) who assisted with the direction of the report throughout. Also thanks to AKT staff members Susannah Clay and Tony Buchart-Kelly who ensured Chief Executive Tim Sigsworth was supported through the administration, design and publication of this report. And of course to all researchers and organisations whose rich evidence base we have drawn upon in this scoping report.¹

We would also like to thank the organisations and young people who participated in this survey:

HOUSING PROVIDERS

Ashiana Network	Quay Foyer Raglan HA
Brighter Futures	Redditch Nightstop
Cambridge Cyrenians	Stonewall Housing
Cardiff YMCA HA	Stonewall Housing Association
Caritas Anchor House	Stonham (Homegroup)
Christian Action Housing Association	The Bridge
City of York Council	The Nomad Trust
Coatham House Projects	The Pilsdon at Malling Community
DENS - Action Against Homelessness	The Pilsdon Community
Derventio Housing Trust	The Scarcroft Project - York Housing Association
Embrace Life	Transform Housing and Support
Emmaus Brighton & Hove	Turning Point Scotland
Emmaus Bristol	Wiltshire Council Housing Options & Allocations
Emmaus Gloucestershire	Winchester Churches Nightshelter
Gipsil (Gipton Supported Independent Living)	YMCA Crewe
High Wycombe YMCA	YMCA Derbyshire
Hinckley Homeless Group	YMCA England
Home Group	YMCA HA Cardiff
ILHP	YORK HOUSING ASSOCIATION
Jimmy's Cambridge	York Housing Association - The Scarcroft Project
Julian House - Homeless Services	York Road Project
LeatherHead Start	Young Women's Housing Project
Methodist City Mission	Rochdale Homelessness
New Forest Nightstop	SASH
New Steine Mews Hostel	Shine -Rooftop Housing
Newark and Sherwood District Council	SHYPP
North W	St Basils (and St Basils Youth Hub)
P3	St. Mungo's Broadway
Pendle Action for the Community - Safespace	St. Mungo's Broadway - Bristol & Bath

1. See full report for acknowledgements

LGBT ORGANISATIONS

Allsorts Youth Project	Renaissance Dickson Road
Armistead Centre	Renaissance HIV support service Blackpool
BiPhoria	South London Gays
Birmingham LGBT	Southwark LGBT Network
Breakout Youth	Staffordshire Buddies / LGBT South Staffordshire
Care Quality Commission	Stonewall
Challenor Photography	The Lesbian & Gay Foundation
Coventry & Warwickshire Friend	The Warren
Derbyshire Friend	Trans Peer Support Group Hull
Galop	URPotential Community Interest Company
Gay Advice Darlington/Durham	Wise Thoughts / GFEST - Gaywise FESTival
Hart Gables LGBT Service	
Lancashire LGBT	
Leicester LGBT Centre	
LGBT Christian Fellowship	
LGBT Youth North West	
LGBT Youth Scotland	
Liverpool Pride	
London alternative choir	
London Lesbian & Gay Switchboard	
Mosaic LGBT Youth Centre Nottinghamshire	
Lesbian/Gay Switchboard	
OUTreach Liverpool	
POUT LGBT Young People's Group	
Push Projects	
Queer Notion	
Rainbow Head	
Rainbows Across Borders	
Renaissance at Drugline-Lancashire	

The printing and launch of this report were kindly supported by:
AVIVA and Barclays PLC



The Albert Kennedy Trust is the LGBT youth homelessness charity. Providing safe homes, mentoring, training and support to young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, just for being brave enough to come out to their parents or care giver.

Many of the young people we support have experienced rejection, abuse and/ or violence.

www.akt.org.uk

This report highlights that there is a great deal left to be done in supporting young LGBT people. It is of concern that 30% of agencies still fail to monitor sexual orientation or gender identity in finding shelter or accommodation for homeless youth. Over 60% of youth reported being homeless specifically because of family rejection and yet many of the services surveyed for this report did not feel that specific services for these youth were required. Indeed only 2.6% of the housing services surveyed acknowledged the unique needs of homeless LGBT young people and had services to meet these needs.

Professor Ian Rivers
Brunel University London

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