

LIVING CONDITIONS – HOUSING

With regard to finding accommodation that allows for independent living, young people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods experience a number of obstacles. For example, very often they are unable to access decent, affordable and secure housing, are discriminated against in the private housing market, and are unable to access social housing. Consequently, they can be at risk of homelessness, which can have a negative impact on their health and well-being and prevent them from continuing their education, finding employment or keeping a job.

— A case study in tackling homelessness is provided by a voluntary group in the United Kingdom, Bristol Nightstop, which has established a network of host families offering emergency overnight accommodation to young people who are homeless.



Young people should have access to affordable and youth-friendly housing services that are easy to get to. Member state authorities are called on to do the following:

- ▶ improve access to suitable and affordable housing for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods;
- ▶ consider the housing needs of young people – especially vulnerable young people, families, victims of violence and minority groups – when making and delivering housing policies, strategies and services;
- ▶ involve young people and other vulnerable groups in making any decisions that affect their access to housing;
- ▶ simplify the way in which young people can get help and support when they have difficulties with their housing needs;
- ▶ improve co-ordination between public housing and other social services;
- ▶ ensure that young people have information about how to access housing and help with housing. This information should be youth-friendly and available in places where it is readily available to young people, for example through public information services, citizens' advice centres and youth centres;
- ▶ encourage and support the creation of different types of housing, such as social housing and affordable private rental housing, so that young people can find the option most suited to their individual needs;
- ▶ ensure the diversity of local communities by the use of mixed housing schemes. People from different backgrounds and cultures should be able to live as neighbours and no one should feel that they are living in a ghetto;
- ▶ ensure that the houses young people live in are safe and clean and allow them to be healthy;
- ▶ ensure that young people know their housing rights by providing youth-friendly communications on these rights, and have housing rights displayed in locations that young people frequent;



Bristol Nightstop, UK

— The Bristol Nightstop project is a community response to a community problem. The project is funded by a grant from the UK National Lottery. This grant pays for a Project Leader, a Host Co-ordinator and a Key Worker who works alongside other volunteers and experts to provide accommodation for young homeless people seven days a week.

— When no other options are available, Bristol Nightstop arranges temporary and emergency accommodation for young homeless people between 16 and 25 years of age: these are safe places in the homes of hosts. The hosts are vetted and trained through the project's volunteer Host Network and they offer a warm room in their homes, an evening meal, breakfast, support and compassion. They are recruited, trained, supported and supervised by Bristol Nightstop project workers.

— The project also provides emergency key worker support to give expert advice, help young people to return home where possible and support them when and where they need it. A key objective of the project is to provide young homeless people with clear, expert advice that facilitates their transition into safe emergency accommodation and supports them in accessing longer-term options.

— Nightstop works closely with a range of partner agencies, organisations and service providers in Bristol. These networks and partnerships work together to support young people "from day one for as long as it takes", so as to ensure that they can break free from the cycle of homelessness at the earliest opportunity.

(FEANTSA 2014)

- ▶ make sure that housing providers meet minimum standards; spot-checks and inspections should be carried out by the housing authority responsible;
- ▶ provide a way for complaints to be made to the relevant housing authority about poor housing standards and involve consumer protection organisations in providing such a service;
- ▶ provide "halting sites" for Traveller communities, with access to clean water, electricity and proper sanitation. Where necessary, support to overcome any conflicts should be provided to Traveller communities and the local "settled" community.