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**Mapping the number of extra
housing units needed for young
people**

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Introduction

This report looks at the requirements for supported and sub-market independent accommodation (social housing and private rented accommodation with housing benefit) for young people (aged 16-24). It examines the current situation and projections for the future until 2021. Young people are facing more barriers than ever to accessing housing. They are increasingly disadvantaged in the housing market due to low incomes, youth unemployment and a lack of mortgage finance. The latest figures on statutory homeless acceptances show that youth homelessness rose 12% between 2009/10 and 2011/12.

Recent research conducted by the Universities of York and Heriot-Watt, *Ending Youth Homelessness*¹ represents the most recent and comprehensive effort to define and measure youth homelessness across the UK, estimating that at least 78-80,000 young people experienced homelessness in a year. It looks at the scale of the task, and the levels of service network needed to end youth homelessness. What it does not do is to put precise numerical estimates on the requirements, either for homeless accommodation, or for the amount of independent housing that is required. This study aims to help address this gap.

Context

There have been substantial changes to the housing options available for homeless young people in recent years. Access to social housing has become more constrained and the proportion of young people entering this tenure has fallen². The private rented sector (PRS) conversely houses a diverse and growing range of households³ and is increasingly seen as an alternative to social rented housing. In recent years the PRS has increased its role as a provider of housing for young people and low income households. Accessing the sector remains problematic however, and concern has focussed particularly on difficulties with housing benefit, and for those who are unable to pay the deposit usually required. The latest housing benefit reforms have increased the age limit for the shared accommodation rate from 25 to 35. This is likely to lead those under 25 who are looking for shared accommodation to experience greater competition in the housing market.

In addition, Local Housing Allowance (LHA) has been reduced from the median to the 30th percentile of rents – meaning that across a broad market rental area, only 30% of rents are within the LHA limit, as compared with 50% previously. This has reduced the number of rooms available to under 25s on low incomes who depend on LHA, especially in higher priced areas or where other groups (such as students) compete with those on benefits for the cheaper accommodation.

Addressing the issues

Over the last ten to fifteen years, the UK government has taken an interest in the developing role of the PRS, and a growing number of schemes have been formulated aiming at tackling the difficulties many people experience in accessing the sector, and to prevent homelessness^{4 5}. Two recent studies have highlighted the growing role of the PRS in accommodating greater numbers of households. A JRF study predicted that around 1.5 million young people aged 18-30 will be in the sector by 2020⁶, whilst a study commissioned

¹ Quilgars, D, Fitzpatrick, S and Pleace, N (Centrepont, 2011)

² *Housing in England* (DCLG, 2009)

³ See *The Private Rented Sector: Its Contribution and Potential* (Rugg and Rhodes, 2008)

⁴ See *Key Principles for PRS Access Schemes* (Crisis, 2010); Giving Landlords what they want (AHAS, 2010)

⁵ *Expanding Choice, Addressing Need* (CLG, 2008)

⁶ *Housing Options and Solutions for Young People in 2020* (Clapham, D, Mackie, P, Orford, S, Buckley, K and Thomas, I with Atherton, I and McAnulty, U, 2012)

by Shelter and the Resolution Foundation predicted the rise of private renting across the young and middle age groups, especially in London⁷.

Addressing homelessness has been an ambition of government policy for decades and explicitly since the origin of the rough sleepers' initiative in 1990. A key focus has been on the 'No Second Night Out' project, which aims to ensure that no rough sleeper has to sleep out for more than one night after having made contact with services. This is an ambitious programme as it relies on an adequate supply of suitable accommodation at all times.

Aims

The aim of the research is to provide numerical data to fill the gaps in the current evidence base by:

1. Establishing housing requirements and identifying any shortfall in housing provision for all age groups, and for households headed by under 25s, by region.
2. Estimating the requirement for emergency and supported housing units for under 25s.

There are several challenges with this approach:

- Most accommodation is not defined as being for young people or older people so the needs of the two groups are interdependent. For instance, if there was a shortage of accommodation for older client groups, this would increase demand for the units that would otherwise be available for young people. This research has therefore only been able to make best estimates of the requirements for young people alone, which assume the pressure on accommodation from other age groups remains unchanged,.
- The relationship between the number of houses that would be required to end homelessness and the number of homeless households that could be accommodated if this was done is not a one-to-one relationship. This is evidently the case because the number of homeless people is small, compared to estimates of overall housing shortages. The main reason is that many people respond to affordability pressures and long waiting lists for social housing by remaining within another household (such as remaining at home with their parents). Previous research has estimated there to be around 80,000 homeless young people in a year⁸. If 80,000 new homes were built each year, this would not eliminate youth homelessness (even leaving aside the needs of other age groups) because many of the new dwellings would be bought or rented by newly forming households who are not currently homeless. There is no known method for establishing a simple numerical relationship between homelessness rates and housebuilding rates, but it is likely that the amount of accommodation required to avoid anyone sleeping rough will be many times higher than the number of rough sleepers.
- Policy and economic factors both have a substantial impact on rates of homelessness and the availability of accommodation for homeless young people. For instance, changing the rules for social housing allocation to favour working households may increase demand for the PRS with HB from other households. And substantial rates of new housebuilding could fail to reduce homelessness if (for instance) welfare reforms, coupled with a worsening recession, further reduced the

⁷*Housing in Transition: Understanding the dynamics of tenure change* (Whitehead, C, Williams, P, Tang, C and Udagawa, C, 2012)

⁸ Quilgars, D, Fitzpatrick, S and Pleace, N (2011) *Ending Youth Homelessness: Possibilities, Challenges and Practical Solutions*, London: Centrepoint

incomes of young people meaning they could not afford to pay for the available housing.

- The changing rules around housing benefit payments to under-occupying households of working age in the social sector are likely to have a particular impact on the size of accommodation that is required to meet any overall shortfall in provision – as it cannot be assumed that all these households will remain in their larger properties; many may seek to downsize. It is too soon to tell precisely what impact the policy may have so for this reason no estimate of the size of properties required overall has been made.

Given these difficulties, we have looked at the requirements for young people within the broader context of demand and supply from all age groups. Case studies and interviews were used to provide informed opinions and estimates of numbers where no official data are available, and to provide some more qualitative context.

We have also made no adjustments for changes resulting from new or future policy measures. The estimates provided therefore give a broad indication to the scale of the shortfall of accommodation, given the current policy framework and pressures on the housing system.

Methods

The first part of this project makes use of secondary data sources in order to look at access to independent housing for young people. We are defining young people as those aged 16-24 (inclusive). In practice, because data is collected by reference to the household head, we are largely confined to looking at households headed by someone aged 16-24, or at single 16-24 year olds who are homeless or in temporary accommodation.

The second part involved ten local case studies in order to ascertain whether the current level of accommodation is sufficient, and if not, what level would be sufficient.

Part I) Analysis of mainstream housing options

Secondary data sources were drawn on in order to make numerical estimates of:

- 1. The current situation**
 - a. The total number of households headed by under 25s currently in the social rented sector or in receipt of housing benefit in the PRS
 - b. The backlog of housing need of under 25s
- 2. Projected changes in requirements by 2012:**
 - a. Future changes in overall housing requirements (by region)
 - b. The tenure split
- 3. The overall shortfall.**

After determining the overall shortfall of sub-market accommodation for young people, we then looked at the size of accommodation required and the proportion of PRS claimants who are restricted to the shared accommodation rate (i.e. single people).

Data sources used were:

- the English Housing Survey (EHS 2009-10),
- the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA 2011)
- Supporting People Client data
- the Continuous Recording of Lettings and Sales (CORE 2010-11)

- the DWP's Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE 2011 and 2012)
- the Regulatory Statistical Returns (RSR 2011)

Part II) Local case studies to explore accommodation for homeless young people

Interviews with local authority homelessness services and the main providers of services were carried out in 10 local authority case studies. Staff were asked for their data on and knowledge about the numbers of young people who are turned away from services, and the reasons why this happens (in particular seeking to identify whether the service is simply full or whether the person is not eligible for some reason). An audit of available accommodation in the local authority area, drawing on data from CORE, Supporting People and the RSR, was also used. This allowed us to make estimates of the number of additional emergency and supported housing units needed (e.g. foyers) for under 25s to ensure that no-one has to sleep rough for more than one night.

Case studies were selected to ensure that they were representative of England as a whole on the following measures:

- Region (London, Southern England, Northern England⁹)
- House prices
- Level of supported housing (Supporting People places per capita)
- Rural-Urban split
- Population

The local authorities have been anonymised in this report in order to encourage open and honest contributions to the research.

⁹ A simple three way regional split was used to reflect the major differences in housing market conditions across England – London, South (South East, South West, and East regions) and North (North East, North West, East and West Midlands, and Yorkshire and the Humber regions). This split was chosen because London exhibits housing pressures not found elsewhere in the UK, so is best identified separately. With only 10 case studies, and other factors also to consider, it was not possible to ensure that all nine regions were represented.

Part I) Mainstream housing requirements

The majority of households headed by under 25s live in mainstream accommodation.

There are no real criteria for deciding which young people need social renting and which need PRS with housing benefit (HB). Affordability measures are often used for estimating requirements for social housing, but those dependent on HB in the PRS would, by definition, be unable to afford private housing, so by that criteria would be in need of social housing. It is however possible to give an indication of the supply of social housing (including the new Affordable Rented housing) and thereby deduce the requirement for private rented housing within LHA limits that would be required to meet the shortfall¹⁰.

There were seven separate stages to the analysis.

Stage 1: Establishing the total number of households headed by under 25s in the social rented sector or in receipt of housing benefit in the PRS by region.

The latest available data on tenure by age group comes from the EHS (Table 1.1)

Table 1.1: Number of households in the social sector, or in the PRS and in receipt of HB¹¹

	All households			Households headed by under 25s		
	Social renting	PRS with HB ¹²	Total	Social renting	PRS with HB ¹³	Total
North East	270,959	71,770	342,730	16,628	10,910	27,538
North West	579,808	206,200	786,007	44,283	27,010	71,293
Yorkshire & Humber	408,074	136,550	544,625	18,331	21,100	39,431
East Midlands	254,974	101,120	356,094	16,656	13,300	29,956
West Midlands	390,170	130,850	521,021	21,309	16,730	38,039
East	401,096	122,100	523,196	18,617	12,560	31,177
South East	406,675	199,930	402,954	12,933	20,830	33,763
South West	252,383	150,570	983,205	13,289	16,200	29,489
London	710,745	272,460	606,605	31,317	19,830	51,147
England	3,674,884	1,391,550	5,066,437	193,363	158,200	351,563

Source: EHS 2009-10 and DWP SHBE, 2012

The EHS does ask about receipt of HB, but like all surveys tends to under-report the rate of benefit receipt. The data on receipt of HB has therefore been supplied by the DWP from their Single Housing Benefit Extract.

As can be seen from Table 1.1, there are currently around 350,000 households headed by under 25 year olds in the social rented sector or the PRS with HB, with the North West containing the largest numbers, followed by London.

¹⁰ It has been assumed throughout that households registered for social housing are in need of such housing. Incomes of new tenants would suggest that this is largely the case at present. However, if allocations policies were altered to give greater priority to those in work it is possible that larger numbers of social tenancies would be taken by households who would otherwise be able to afford the PRS without assistance, therefore reducing the supply of social housing available for others.

¹¹ The data on the size of the social sector is taken from the English Housing Survey of 2009-10. The social sector has changed less than 1% in size between 2009 and 2012 (DCLG live tables) so the number of under 25s accommodated is unlikely to have altered substantially.

¹² These figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 by the DWP for reasons of preserving confidentiality. They do not sum to the England total for this reason.

¹³ These figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 by the DWP for reasons of preserving confidentiality. They do not sum to the England total for this reason.

Stage 2: Establishing the backlog of housing need by under 25s

The 'backlog' of need refers to the number of current households who are lacking suitable housing. Recent work commissioned by DCLG has attempted to estimate housing need by all age groups for England as a whole¹⁴. This study produces an overall figure of 1.61 million, just over 7% of households in England as a whole being in housing need. Most of these were overcrowded, sharing with another household or in unsuitable accommodation. The study does not, unfortunately, give a split by age group, except in so far as to remove concealed or sharing households aged under 25 from being in housing need.

We have therefore drawn on other data sources to give a broad indication of the extent of unmet housing need by under 25s. Housing Registers are maintained in nearly all districts in England and record the number of households who are currently registered as waiting for social housing. These are widely acknowledged to be an under-estimate in many locations, because people who know they have little chance of being housed may not bother to register (or may not be allowed to do so, especially following an extension of local authority powers in the Localism Act). Conversely, in low pressured areas some households may register who are not currently in housing need. Nevertheless they give a broad picture of the level of housing need.

Publicly available data on housing registers do not record the age group of applicants. The EHS records whether anyone in a household is on a housing register. Although it is known to under-report the frequency of registration, it shows that 19.3% of people reporting that they are on a housing register are aged under 25. It has been used here to provide an estimate of applicants aged under 25 (Table 1.2)¹⁵.

Table 1.2: Housing Register applicants by region, with estimate of numbers aged under 25

Region	Total number of applicants on housing register	Estimate of those aged under 25
North East	91,914	17,739
North West	233,902	45,143
Yorkshire & Humber	272,407	52,575
East Midlands	116,439	22,473
West Midlands	183,945	35,501
East of England	160,267	30,932
South East	225,250	43,473
South West	186,305	35,957
London	366,613	70,756
England	1,837,042	354,549

Source: HSSA 2011 and EHS, own calculations

This would suggest that there are currently **354,549** households headed by under 25s in housing need. This includes those not yet in separate households such as young people living with their parents or in shared housing.

Table 1.3 shows the profile of households aged under 25 who are on the housing register as recorded in the EHS.

¹⁴ Bramley, G, Pawson, H, White, M and Watkins, D (2010) *Estimating Housing Need*. DCLG

¹⁵ The EHS data used here has been weighted using the household weighting. The profile of waiting list applicants however is taken from the individual level data which means there may be a small margin of error in the figures produced.

Table 1.3: Profile of housing register applicants aged under 25

Age group		16-17	2%
		18-24	98%
Household type	Independent households	Couple, no children	7%
		Couple with child(ren)	16%
		Lone parent with child(ren)	29%
		Single person	13%
	Currently living within another household	37%	

Source: EHS 2009/10, own calculations

As can be seen, the majority of under 25s registered for social housing are aged 18-24. Of those who are currently living as independent households, the majority have children¹⁶.

Many of these households are likely to be already living in the PRS with HB. In order to avoid potentially double-counting when looking at the overall shortfall, it would be more cautious to assume that just the 37% who are currently living within another household are to be counted as the backlog. For all age groups, the proportion of housing register applicants recorded in the EHS who are not currently independent households is 16%. This allows us to make regional estimates of those in housing need and not currently living as independent households, as shown below (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4: Estimates of the number of housing register applicants who are not living as independent households

Region	All ages		Under 25s	
	Housing register applicants	Estimate of those not living as independent households	Estimate of number of housing register applicants	Estimate of those not living as independent households
North East	91,914	14,706	17,739	6,563
North West	233,902	37,424	45,143	16,703
Yorkshire & Humber	272,407	43,585	52,575	19,453
East Midlands	116,439	18,630	22,473	8,315
West Midlands	183,945	29,431	35,501	13,135
East of England	160,267	25,643	30,932	11,445
South East	225,250	36,040	43,473	16,085
South West	186,305	29,809	35,957	13,304
London	366,613	58,658	70,756	26,180
England	1,837,042	293,927	354,549	131,183

Source: Own calculations based on HSSA and EHS

These figures exclude those who are currently living in hostels or other temporary accommodation, no longer in need of support and who are ready to move on. As discussed in Part II of this report, it is estimated that 9,161 under 25s are currently in this position in England. This figure cannot be robustly broken down by region and therefore has not been included in this table, but should be included in the national total, which would bring the total backlog of young people currently in housing need to **140,344**.

¹⁶ It is, unfortunately not possible to know the household types of those living within another household because it is hard to tell which members of the household would want to move out with the applicant. We do, however, know that 90% of them were living with their parent(s).

Stage 3: Using household projections to establish the future changes in overall housing requirements by region

The number of households in a particular age range depends on the size of the age group as well as the propensity to form separate households. Table 1.5 shows the number of households aged under 25 in years between 2006 and 2026.

Table 1.5. Projected households aged under 25 at 5 year intervals (thousands)

Year	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026
All households headed by under 25s	815	830	789	774	833

Source: Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

As can be seen, the number of households in the under 25 age range is projected to fall by about 5 percent between 2011 and 2021, and then rise by between 7 and 8 percent in the next five years, reflecting the fall in birth rates during the 1990s and the rise in the early 2000s. 2021 is therefore a low point in the number of households headed by under 25s.

As discussed earlier, the amount of housing available to under 25s is, however, not fixed. Rather it is dependent on overall housing pressures and demand from other age groups. The overall number of households is projected to increase by more than 4.5 million households over the next twenty years¹⁷.

Stage 4: Establishing the tenure split

This overall shortfall established above relates to the requirement either for social housing, or for private rented housing that falls within LHA limits.

It is possible to look at the likely split between the 'market sector' (defined as including owner-occupation and private renting without HB) and the 'sub-market sector' (defined as including both social housing and the PRS with HB) (Table 1.6).

Table 1.6 shows the projected split between market and sub-market sectors.

Table 1.6: Households aged under 25 by tenure

	2008		2021	
	Market sector	Sub-market sector	Market sector	Sub-market sector
North and Midlands (NE, NW, Y&H, EM, WM)	247,000 (56%)	197,000 (44%)	229,000 (55%)	185,000 (45%)
South (SE, SW, E)	180,000 (69%)	79,000 (31%)	167,000 (69%)	76,000 (31%)
London	78,000 (62%)	48,000 (31%)	71,000 (69%)	46,000 (39%)
England	505 (61%)	325 (39%) ¹⁸	467 (60%)	307 (40%)

Source: Own calculations based on DCLG household projections and English Household Survey

These data are based on data from the EHS and the small sample size makes it necessary to use just a three way regional split. The likelihood of households being in each sector draws on household projections of different household types and calculates the propensity of different household types to live in each tenure, based on current patterns. For instance, if we know that 30% of lone parents live in sub-market housing at present, and there are

¹⁷ DCLG live tables. See www.gov.uk/government/organisations/departments-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics

¹⁸ This differs slightly from the more recent figure of 351,563 shown in table 1.1 because it is 2008 based. The 2008 figure has been used here because it is the latest figure for which household projections by tenure are available.

projected to be 1 million lone parent households in 2021, then we can calculate that there will be 300,000 lone parent households in sub-market housing in 2021¹⁹.

If housing for under 25s was considered on its own, there is likely to be a decrease in demand of some 56,000 households between 2011 and 2021, which could in theory reduce the backlog of 354,549 identified earlier.

However, the housing system does not work like this. Overall increase in demand for housing, relative to supply is likely to result in a decrease in the number of units available for households aged under 25.

Table 1.7 therefore shows the projected requirement for housing for all age groups by region.

Table 1.7: Households by tenure 2008 and 2021 (thousands)

	2008		2021	
	Market sector	Sub-market sector	Market sector	Sub-market sector
North East	693	419	767	462
North West	2,076	859	2,291	944
Yorkshire and Humber	1,570	633	1,840	729
East Midlands	1,246	422	1,713	546
West Midlands	1,528	714	1,693	793
East of England	1,794	612	2,147	690
South East	2,727	753	3,178	821
South West	1,730	473	2,040	529
London	2,132	1,112	2,442	1,280
England	15,496	5,997	18,111	6,794

Source: Own calculations based on DCLG household projections and English Household Survey

As can be seen from table 1.7, the overall requirement for sub-market housing is projected to increase by around 797,000 households by 2021.

Using data from tables 1.6 and 1.7, we can estimate that the overall proportion of households requiring sub-market housing who are aged under 25 is likely to fall from 5.4% to 4.5%, a reduction of 16.4% as a proportion of all households requiring sub-market housing in England. This reflects the overall reduction in the size of this age group, as the children born in the low birth rate years of the late 1990s and early 2000s enter this age group.

Stage 5: Analysis of overall shortfall

This section draws on all the analysis above in order to make estimates of the overall shortfall in sub-market accommodation (social renting and the PRS with HB). The projected new supply of social (or Affordable Rent) housing has been included, following government plans. The assumption used here has been that the remaining shortfall of sub-market housing will have to come from the PRS with the use of HB, and/or increased social housebuilding beyond existing plans.

Firstly, for overall housing requirements for all ages, Table 1.8 shows the current supply, requirement and shortfall of accommodation.

¹⁹ For further details on this method of tenure projections, see Holmans and Whitehead (2012) *New and novel household projections for England with 2008 base* (Town and Country Planning Association Tomorrow Series Paper 8)

Table 1.8: Overall shortfall in social housing and PRS with HB

	a. Projected increase in social rented housing to 2021 ²⁰²¹	b. Backlog (Table 1.4)	c. Total Requirement increase (2021-08) (Table 1.7)	Overall Shortfall (b+c-a)
North East	7,108	14,706	43,000	50,598
North West	20,800	37,424	85,000	101,624
Yorkshire & Humber	11,107	43,585	96,000	128,478
East Midlands	10,891	18,630	124,848	132,587
West Midlands	15,727	29,431	79,000	92,704
East	12,138	25,643	78,000	91,505
South East	22,547	36,040	68,000	81,493
South West	16,743	29,809	56,000	69,066
London	40,325	58,658	168,000	186,333
England	157,385	293,927	797,848	934,388

Source: HCA and previous tables

This gives an overall shortfall in supply of **934,388**, which could in theory be met by the PRS with HB if overall supply of housing and LHA limits are sufficient, or, as discussed above, through faster than planned expansion of the social housing stock.

It is not possible to estimate precisely how much of the shortfall will impact upon under 25s. However, we can estimate the proportion of sub-market housing that is likely to be occupied by households headed by under 25s by looking at the current rates (derived from Table 1.1) and assuming that this will fall by 16.4%, in line with the reduction in the proportion of households requiring sub-market housing that are in this age group (see page 10). This reflects that fact that as under 25s fall as a proportion of all households, their share of the housing stock is likely to do so too.

These new proportions can then be applied to the total size of the stock (Table 1.8, column 1) in order to estimate the likely shortfall of sub-market accommodation for under 25s.

Table 1.9: Estimate of supply required for household headed by under 25s

	a. Current Backlog (not independent households) (Table 1.4)	b. Requiring social rented or PRS with HB in 2021 (Table 1.6)	c. Total requirements (a+b)	d. Estimate of number of under 25s in social housing in 2021	e. Estimate of number in PRS with HB in 2021	f. Shortfall (c-d-e)
North East	6,563	185,000	249,169	14,256	9,115	73,432
North West	16,703			38,323	22,565	
Yorkshire & Humber	19,453			15,731	17,628	
East Midlands	8,315			14,510	11,111	
West Midlands	13,135			18,520	13,977	
East	11,445	76,000	116,834	16,024	10,493	36,138
South East	16,085			11,404	17,402	
South West	13,304			11,839	13,534	
London	26,180	46,000	72,180	27,648	16,567	27,965
England	131,183	307,000	438,183	168,255	132,392	137,535

Source: See previous tables

²⁰ This has been estimated using HCA figures for planned supply in the period 2011-2015, assuming that these plans are met, and levels continue post 2015. The split between government office regions has been estimated from HCA regions and is approximate.

²¹ This figure makes no allowance for reductions in the size of the sector resulting from the extended Right to Buy. It is too soon to know precisely what impact this will have.

In addition, to the shortfall shown here of 137,535, the 9,161 young people living in hostels who are ready to move on should be included here. This increases the shortfall to **146,696**.

We have assumed in our calculations that the overall size of the PRS remains unchanged. This is because it is difficult to estimate with much certainty what will happen to this sector, as dwellings may change from being owner-occupied to private rented (or vice versa) depending on a range of policy and economic drivers.

The results suggest that at current rates of social housing construction, the shortfall of accommodation for young people will rise a small amount, despite of the overall reduction in the size of this age group. However, 2021 is a low point in the size of the 16-24 age group; it is projected to rise over at least the following five to ten years, which will likely mean the shortfall of accommodation rises faster, unless supply is increased.

The overall supply of affordable housing, relative to overall requirements, is therefore what is critical to the opportunities for young people.

Stage 6: Identifying the proportion of PRS claimants who are restricted to the shared accommodation rate (i.e. single people) by region

Single people under 25 have for many years been restricted to the housing benefit shared accommodation rate. Those aged 25-34 have recently been restricted to this same rate. In order to determine the size of properties needed for young people, it is important to determine how many young people are subject to the shared accommodation rate of housing benefit, which limits claimants to a room in a shared house.

The data supplied by the DWP for this project was unfortunately unable to identify households restricted to the shared accommodation rate (i.e. single person households). Table 1.10 does however show the number of households in the PRS in receipt of HB by age group and by region. The figures for the numbers restricted to the shared accommodation rate have been taken from the DWP's impact assessment²² which provides national level data from March 2010, before the changes in the shared accommodation rate to extend it to single people up to the age of 35 were introduced.

Table 1.10: Households restricted to the shared room rate

	All households in PRS in receipt of HB (December 2011)		Households restricted to shared accommodation rate (based on figures from March 2010)	
	Aged 16-24	Aged 25-34	Aged 16-24	Aged over 25
North East	10,910	20,830	2,550	2,750
North West	27,010	57,460	6,900	9,300
Yorkshire & Humber	21,100	39,110	6,430	7,020
East Midlands	13,300	26,970	3,600	4,830
West Midlands	16,730	37,230	4,850	7,490
East	12,560	31,570	4,040	7,380
London	19,830	77,350	7,430	21,980
South East	20,830	50,260	7,120	15,160
South West	16,200	35,730	5,550	9,910
England	158,470	376,510	48,470	85,820

Source: DWP data from SHBE and DWP, 2011²³

²² DWP (2011) *Housing Benefit equality impact assessment: Increasing the Shared Accommodation Rate age threshold to 35 (Revised August 2011)*. DWP

²³ DWP (2011) *Housing Benefit equality impact assessment: Increasing the Shared Accommodation Rate age threshold to 35 (Revised August 2011)*. DWP

There is some uncertainty over these figures, because of the different dates used. Nevertheless they suggest that around a third of households aged under 25 in the PRS are single people who are restricted to the shared accommodation rate.

The impact assessment also contains data on the likely national level impact of the reduction to the shared accommodation rate for single claimants aged 24-34:

Table 1.11: Households claiming HB at the shared accommodation rate (March 2010)

Under 25s claiming at shared accommodation rate	53,140
Single 25-34s already claiming shared accommodation rate	35,780
Over 35s, couples or other exempt households already claiming shared accommodation rate	57,730
24-35s claiming one bedroom rate, and likely to be reduced to shared accommodation rate from January 2012	62,500

Source: DWP, 2011²⁴

As can be seen from Tables 1.10 and 1.11, substantial numbers of the single people (or possibly larger households) living in shared accommodation were aged over 25 even prior to the change in the age limit. The largest number of these were in London and the South East.

There are no data yet available to assess the degree to which the 24-35 year old age group has responded to the changes in entitlement by moving to shared accommodation, or the resultant impact on other age groups (such as under 25s competing for this same accommodation) but the likely outcome will be increased demand for shared accommodation and particularly at the lower end of the market (within LHA limits).

Stage 7: Identifying the size of accommodation required for under 25s

Unfortunately data on the size of accommodation rented by under 25 year old households on HB in the PRS are not available from the DWP, although as shown above around a third are single people restricted to the shared room rate. The others are likely to be couples, or young parents. Data from CORE do however give an indication of the requirements of households entering social rented housing (Table 1.12).

²⁴ DWP (2011) *Housing Benefit equality impact assessment: Increasing the Shared Accommodation Rate age threshold to 35 (Revised August 2011)*. DWP

Table 1.12: Number of bedrooms required by Bedroom Standard²⁵ at point of allocation for households headed by under 25s moving into social housing

	1		2		3		4+		Total
North East	2,351	55%	1,784	42%	126	3%	11	0%	4,272
North West	6,191	58%	4,153	39%	318	3%	25	0%	10,687
Yorkshire & the Humber	4,052	54%	3,049	41%	322	4%	27	0%	7,450
East Midlands	3,138	54%	2,494	43%	206	4%	13	0%	5,851
West Midlands	4,065	55%	2,994	41%	258	4%	18	0%	7,335
East of England	2,898	50%	2,628	46%	215	4%	15	0%	5,756
South East	2,634	43%	3,272	53%	223	4%	10	0%	6,139
South West	2,105	47%	2,230	49%	179	4%	12	0%	4,526
London	3,059	59%	1,974	38%	107	2%	8	0%	5,148
England	30,493	53%	24,578	43%	1954	3%	136	0%	57,161

Source: CORE 2010-11

As can be seen from Table 1.12, around half of households headed by under 25s moving into social housing required only one bedroom properties, and nearly all the remainder required just two bedrooms.

CORE data show that most of these were single parents with one or two young children.

This would suggest, unsurprisingly, that the main need for accommodation for the under 25s is accommodation with one or two bedrooms. However, as these households grow older their needs are likely to change as their families grow.

CORE data also show that over 90% of households headed by under 25s who require one bedroom were single people. If these people were instead to be living in the PRS and were dependent on housing benefit, they would be restricted to the shared accommodation rate – this highlights the extent to which policy decisions over the amount of housing space that people require may impact upon calculated requirements.

Summary

Table 1.13 shows the number of additional housing units (either social rented or in the PRS with HB) needed to meet the requirements of the whole population, and then of these how many units would be needed to meet the requirements from young people specifically, broken down by region and by size of property.

These requirements are in addition to current planned supply of new social housing.

²⁵ The Bedroom Standard calculates the number of bedrooms required by a household so that no-one has to share a room unless they are:

- a. A couple *or*
- b. Both under 10 and of either sex *or*
- c. Both under 16 and of the same sex

No more than two people should have to share a room.

This is the definition in use by the DWP when assessing housing benefit eligibility in the PRS, and from next year will be in use for social tenants too. It is broadly similar to the allocations rules used by most housing associations, though some may allocate more generously in some cases (such as an anticipated increase in family size, or a shortage of one bedroom homes).

Table 1.13: Summary of analysis of requirements

	a. Overall Shortfall in 2021	b. Requirement for young people	c. Requirement for young people by size (Table 1.12 times column b.)			
			1 bed/ room only	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
North East	50,598	73,432	40,841	29,860	2,537	194
North West	101,624					
Yorkshire & Humber	128,478					
East Midlands	132,587					
West Midlands	92,704					
East	91,505	36,138	16,807	17,892	1,358	81
South East	81,493					
South West	69,066					
London	186,333	27,965	16,617	10,723	581	43
England	934,388	137,535	74,265	58,475	4,476	318

Source: See previous tables

If this shortfall is to be supplied within the PRS, it can be estimated that 90% of the one bedroom properties can be replaced with units in shared accommodation. This would increase the requirement for rooms in shared accommodation by around 67,000 and reduce the requirement for one bedroom homes to only around 7,400 units.

In addition, there are an estimated 9,161 young people living in hostels and ready to move which increases the requirement for young people from 137,535 to **146,696**.

Part II) Supported and temporary housing options

Different types of emergency and supported accommodation

The intention of this element of the project was to draw on both secondary data sources and local case studies in order to estimate the number of emergency homelessness units (including direct access beds) and supported housing units needed to ensure that no young person has to sleep rough for more than one night.

National level data is first presented, then the details from the ten local case studies, and finally our analysis making estimates of the levels of need for supported accommodation.

Examples of the types of emergency and supported accommodation available in one or more of the ten case study areas is shown in table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Different types of emergency and supported accommodation for young people

Type	Access route	Typical length of stay	Takes emergency homeless?	Support provided?	Intended move on destination
Emergency beds within hostel	LA or self-referral	A few nights	Yes	Yes	Hostel or foyer
With host family (eg <i>Nightstop</i>)	LA or other agency	Up to 2 weeks	Yes	Yes	Back to family home, foyer or hostel
Bed and breakfast	LA	Up to 2 weeks	Yes	No	Hostel or foyer
Assessment centre	LA	Up to 3 months	Yes if space	Yes	Move-on hostel
Women's refuge	Self-referral or other agency	3-6 months	Yes if space	Yes	Independent housing
Direct access hostel	Self-referral or other agency	Up to 2 years	Yes if space	Yes	Move-on hostel or independent housing
General hostel	LA (or other agency)	Up to 2 years	Sometimes	Yes	Independent housing
Young person's Foyer or specialist hostel	LA (or other agency)	Up to 2 years	Not usually	Yes	Independent housing
Mother and baby project	LA or other agency	Up to 2 years	No	Yes	Independent housing
Move-on hostel	LA or assessment centre	Up to 2 years	No	Yes	Independent housing
Semi-independent (possibly floating support)	LA or other accommodation provider	6 months to 2 years	No	A little	Independent housing

Source: Case study interviews

As shown in Table 2.1, and described in more detail below, types of emergency and supported accommodation available in the case study areas were diverse. The research sought to explore whether separate estimates of the shortfall of emergency and longer term supported housing could be made, but the case study evidence suggested that a joint total figure was more appropriate.

Current levels of provision

The total amount of supported housing provision in England managed by Registered Providers as recorded in March 2011 was 103,207²⁶. We do not know how many of these places were filled by under 25s, though we do know from CORE that of the 120,142 people entering supported housing in 2010-11, 35,056 (29%) were aged under 25. If lengths of stays are similar between the different age groups this would suggest that around **30,000** supported housing places are currently occupied by under 25 year olds.

Table 2.2 shows national level data for different types of accommodation accessed by under 25s over the course of a year.

Table 2.2: Types of supported accommodation in use by under 25s in 2010-11²⁷

Accommodation type	Number accessing
Supported housing	29,333
Direct access	8,668
Women's refuge	3,865
Foyer	3,474
Outreach service	2,201
Resettlement service	1,190
Supported lodgings	1,075
Teenage parent accommodation	901
Residential care home	127
Adult placement	33
Total	50,867

Source: Supporting People client data 2010-11

Table 2.3 shows the client group of under 25s in supported accommodation.

Table 2.3: Client group of under 25s accessing supported accommodation²⁸

Client group	Number accessing	Percentage
Single homeless with support	23,285	45.8%
Young people at risk	10,076	19.8%
People at risk of domestic violence	5,019	9.9%
Homeless families with support	3,080	6.1%
Offenders or at risk of offending	1,800	3.5%
Mental health problems	1,448	2.8%
Teenage parents	1,411	2.8%
Rough sleeper	1,393	2.7%
Young people leaving care	1,046	2.1%
Generic/Complex needs	675	1.3%
Drug problems	533	1.0%
Learning disabilities	423	0.8%
Alcohol problems	281	0.6%
Refugees	215	0.4%
Physical or sensory disability	110	0.2%
Other	0	0.1%
Total	50,795	100

Source: Supporting People client data 2010-11

²⁶ RSR 31 March, 2011. It is possible that this figure may have fallen as a result of reductions in Supported People funding. There had been recent cuts in provision in several of the case studies.

²⁷ This does not include the 30,154 under 25s in receipt of floating support whilst living in mainstream accommodation.

²⁸ The totals in this table do not precisely match those in Table 2.2 because of missing data which has been excluded from the analysis.

As can be seen, the majority of young people living in supported accommodation are classified as “single homeless with support” or “young people at risk”. The client groups with specialist needs are much smaller in number.

In total, just under 10% of young people entering supported housing are recorded as having a disability, with mental health problems and learning disabilities forming the large majority of all disabilities (over 80%).

Routes in and out of supported accommodation

Of those accessing supported accommodation in 2011-12, 42% had moved from previously having no home of their own (staying with friends or family, rough sleeping, hospital, prison, asylum seeker accommodation or children’s home). A total of 29% moved directly from mainstream accommodation (almost entirely social rented housing or private rented tenancies) and the remaining 28% had moved from other temporary or supported housing²⁹

The average length of stay in temporary accommodation was 28 weeks.

The ten case study areas had between two and six of these different types of provision. The models of access and routes through accommodation varied a great deal. In some areas the local authority organised and controlled access to all emergency and supported housing, and all referrals from one provider to another were via the local authority. In some of these areas there was no provision available to those without a local connection, or to single people (over 18) with no support needs. In other areas, direct access provision allowed all young people to potentially access accommodation, though a shortage of supply still meant not all could find places. Overall, in the less pressured areas, young people moved around between providers more often, and in a less planned manner, whereas in the high pressured areas, they would not have the opportunity to do so.

The ten local case studies

The ten local authority case studies illustrate the different ways in which emergency and supported accommodation could be accessed, as well as the different configuration of services available for homeless young people. These different models of support (such as in hostels or via floating support services) impact upon the number of units of supported or emergency accommodation required.

They also illustrate some of the specific shortfalls in provision for groups such as ex-offenders and young mothers.

Case study 1

Case study 1 is a small district in the north of England with relatively low house prices and significant rural areas.

In one year, 130 people under 25 present at the council for help with housing, though they can also self-refer to the major accommodation providers. All young people who approach the local authority are signposted to other providers but the council staff are not able to check whether they actually find a place. They are also offered mediation, access to a rent deposit scheme and/or floating support. If they are found to be statutory homeless then emergency accommodation is offered temporarily.

²⁹ Supporting People client data 2010-11

The profile of under 25s is as follows 80% single, 5% couples and 15% couples or single parents with children. In total there are 47 supported housing bed spaces for under 25s, one dedicated emergency bed for under 25s and the council will place people in B&B accommodation as a last resort, although this is rare. Most under 25s go straight into supported housing or remain on a waiting list for a supported place providing they have somewhere to stay in the short-term. Of the two main providers, one accommodates 80-100 under 25s a year (where the average stay is 6 months to a year) and the other about 40 a year (where the average stay is just under a year).

None of the young people in supported housing are considered to be able to manage in independent accommodation. Most move on after six to twelve months once they have built up their skills but may continue to have floating support. Where people move on to depends on their age. Providers work with under 18s to enable them to return to family, or they sometimes move on to stay with friends. If they are over 18 there are attempts to secure a local authority tenancy, but this is rare, so most move into the PRS and some into supported accommodation or general hostel accommodation from other providers.

It is thought that slightly more emergency and supported housing than is available at present is required in the district to meet the needs of young people unable to live independently. There were eight young people on waiting lists for supported accommodation at the time of interviewing, so these under 25s could be accommodated in either emergency or supported additional housing if it was available.

It is estimated that there is an average of two people of all ages sleeping rough every night. So there would not need to be much of an increase in provision to accommodate them, and they are considered unlikely to be aged 16-24. It was reported that there is a need for more specialist supported housing for high risk groups such as ex-offenders and people with mental health needs.

Case study 2

Case study 2 is a largely rural district in the south of England with a small population and high house prices.

An assessment is carried out when young people present at the council to determine if they are statutory homeless, in which case they will be provided with immediate accommodation in a hostel or a B&B if necessary if statutory homeless. If they are non-statutory homeless, they will be referred to local supported housing or to supported housing provision out of the area. There is a County Community Project which runs a one stop housing service where providers meet once a week to see which accommodation applicants are most suited for.

About 10% of young people have already been in contact with other accommodation providers and have not been housed because they want self contained accommodation or because accommodation is full.

Based on the data for last year, 41 people under 25 approached the council for help with housing. Floating support was provided in 4 of the 41 cases whilst the others were provided with supported accommodation. The council are looking to develop homelessness services across the borough through the expansion of floating support and homeless prevention work and "reconnecting" more back to other authorities.

Only a few of those entering supported housing are considered to be able to manage in independent accommodation, for example, if they have been living independently and the landlord sells the property. It is very rare for any under 25s to sleep rough in the area, but those on the waiting list typically avoid rough sleeping only by sofa surfing with friends. Typical lengths of stay in supported accommodation vary from two months to two years

depending on support needs and available options. Some young people may be initially housed for a couple of months by one provider before moving to other supported housing. Some eventually go into Housing Association accommodation or into the PRS and some return home.

Case study 3

Case study 3 is a London borough. The local authority manages and controls access to all supported and temporary accommodation. There is no direct access accommodation or referrals accepted from any other agencies. The local authority has two separate units that assist homeless people, one for families and one for single people. Families, if they are eligible, would generally be provided with accommodation, either in the PRS or in the local authority's own stock, or in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Single people are assessed to establish whether they have support needs and a local connection. If they do, they are referred into voluntary sector provision. This is largely segmented into accommodation for young people (16-21 or 16-24) and for older age groups. The accommodation for older age groups takes clients from the age of 18 but in practice accommodates very few under 25s. The accommodation is also separated into short stay (emergency) accommodation for stays of up to three months, and longer-stay supported housing for stays of up to two years.

In the past year, 881 young people came to the council who were homeless or at risk of being homeless. Of these, 214 young people were accepted into supported accommodation. A further 25 were rehoused by another agency (social services or a private rented landlord), 86 made their own arrangements, and 84 returned home. This leaves 94 who were referred to supported housing but not accepted, 75 who were not assisted because they had no local connection, 49 who were judged not to be homeless and 379 who were assessed as having no support needs. To avoid double-counting, only the 379 with no support needs and the 94 referred but not accepted to supported accommodation have been included in the analysis as being unable to be assisted.

It is unlikely that these individuals would have accessed temporary or supported housing in the borough by any other means as none of the providers take referrals except from the council. It is likely that only a small minority of these will end up rough sleeping, though many are believed to sofa-surf. Others remain with families until their circumstances change. Young people who present to the local authority who are rough sleeping would generally be assessed as having some support needs.

As in most of London, stays in temporary accommodation are often lengthy. The short-stay accommodation regularly has people staying for longer than the intended three months, and the longer stay for more than two years.

The council run a scheme to help people access the PRS but are finding that it is difficult to find accommodation within the LHA caps and are also finding that other London boroughs in more expensive parts of London are competing with them for any accommodation that is affordable to low income households.

Case study 4

Case study 4 is a largely rural district in the north of England with fairly low house prices, a dispersed population and relatively low levels of supported housing provision.

A range of housing options are considered for young people who approach the council for assistance including a rent deposit scheme, supported housing options, payments to

facilitate access to the PRS and direct allocation into local authority stock. There are some areas of low demand stock which can be let quite quickly, or alternatively young people at risk of homelessness may be given additional priority within the allocations scheme to enable them to bid successfully for properties in other areas.

The nature of the area means that many young people are not willing to move to all parts of the district as the main town where the council (and much of the accommodation) is based is somewhere many will never have been to. Conversely there are strong links between some parts of the district and a neighbouring city, with many young people crossing district boundaries to attend schools and colleges. The city has a wider range of accommodation options and young people from the case study district will usually be accepted into this.

The main supported accommodation for young people within the district is a 14 bed Foyer where young people spend an average of six months before moving on to social housing, the PRS, to other supported housing, back with parents or in with friends. Access to independent housing is relatively easy, as demand overall is much lower than in many areas. There are sometimes difficulties in persuading young people to move to shared housing in the PRS as some of the Foyer's accommodation is self-contained and of a higher standard.

Young people can self-refer to the Foyer, and are commonly referred by the council. Around one person per week is turned away because the Foyer is full. It is thought that most of these young people do find somewhere else to stay, though some do not. There are currently five people on the waiting list for the Foyer.

Case study 5

Case study 5 is a large authority in the south of England containing a mixture of urban and rural areas and broadly average house prices.

When young people approach the local authority they are first given advice about how to access shared accommodation in the PRS but may also be referred to supported accommodation if they are not yet able to manage living independently. A few applicants may apply for social housing using the council's Home Choice register, but access to social housing is difficult. For those owed a duty, the local authority may refer them to one of four emergency beds in local hostels, or to a B&B if these are full, but they will look to move people on very quickly as it is not really considered suitable for under 25s.

The main supported accommodation provider in the area has 34 bed spaces, each with its own bathroom, kitchen/living room and bedroom. Most referrals are from the local authority, but some do come from other agencies and there are a few self-referrals. All providers' accommodation is at or around capacity. The main provider has a waiting list of five people who have been referred and approved and a few more who have not yet been interviewed. Over a year the main provider accommodates around 50 young people, all of whom have been assessed as being in need of support.

When they move on, some young people move into social housing, some go to family or friends and a few go into the PRS. Some may have floating support when they first move on. There are also seven semi-supported flats with support in the area.

There is also a seven-bed project for young people with high support needs which mainly houses 16 and 17 year olds. This accommodation is insufficient to meet needs and recently eight young people were interviewed for one vacancy.

There is also a shortage of suitable move on accommodation, particularly because the new housing benefit restrictions make access to the PRS for young people difficult, and there is therefore a problem with bed blocking in the area.

Case study 6

Case study 6 is a city in the south of England with high house prices and high levels of supported housing provision.

The Council conducts a joint assessment with Children's Social Care who lead for 16/17 year olds. If they are over 18 applicants go through the housing options service with a full housing assessment of their needs. The Council refers applicants directly to supported accommodation through a one stop referral point and this is the only means of access. There is a bond scheme for over 18s who can live independently to go into the PRS. Generally all young people go straight into supported housing when beds are available or are put on a waiting list, but there are a minimal number of emergency spaces if they are homeless and have nowhere to go and there is nothing available on that day.

There are about 90 bed spaces for under 25s, but all projects have a waiting list and there is a need for more accommodation:

"We have at least 4 requests for emergency housing each week – multiply that by the number of providers in [the city] and that should give an idea as to how much is needed. The situation is becoming a big issue across the county".

However, it is not believed that there are any under 25s sleeping rough in the city.

Very few young people go into emergency accommodation, instead going straight into supported housing where spaces are available. Priority is given to 16 and 17 year olds and then anyone at risk of rough sleeping. Over 20s are unlikely to be housed in a young person's project and remain on waiting lists. All accommodation for under and over 25s runs a waiting list and over 100 people are currently on waiting lists (though this may include an element of double-counting). Bed blocking is also an issue as there is a shortage of suitable independent housing for people to move to when they are ready.

The local authority has a reconnection policy so if a young person has no local connection they try to reconnect them to the area they came from. If they do not want to return then they try to find an area with no local connection policy but the young person may not want to leave the city. The local authority and the accommodation providers asserted that no one is sent away if they do not have a bed somewhere as they said that most young people can find somewhere to stay, for example with friends, whilst they wait for a bed space to become available. If they are turned down by a project, they come back and are referred somewhere else. Housing people with severe mental health needs is an increasing concern as there is currently a lack of specialist provision for this group in the area.

A small proportion are currently considered potentially able to manage in independent housing with floating support and the council is looking at developing this.

There is a need for more supported housing but in particular for more specialised housing for young people with mental health and personality disorders. There is a need for housing for smaller groups in smaller clusters where there is more one-to-one support.

Case Study 7

Case study 7 is a city in the north of England with low house prices.

There is a variety of provision in the city for homeless young people, including a foyer and a direct access assessment centre, to which the council can also refer young people. There is also a young women's project offering an alternative to the large assessment centre for young women both in emergency and for relatively long-term support. As well as supported housing for young people, there are also some privately run hostels which operate without any funding from Supporting People funds. As independently run enterprises they are free to take people from outside the city, and frequently do. However, their size, location in close proximity to one another and open access means that they have acquired a poor reputation among other service providers in the city. One is in the process of being closed down as part of a regeneration project.

The council control access to the assessment centre, but other providers in the city continue to take people on a direct access basis. The assessment centre is of sufficient size that it is usually able to help people who are homeless, but has more difficulties in moving people on who need longer term support.

Those able to live independently, however, can usually access social housing or private rented housing within a reasonable time frame, so there are no overall issues of 'bedblocking'.

The main issues in the city are therefore the type and location of accommodation rather than the overall shortage of accommodation. The city is dispersed and young people from one part of it often do not want to be accommodated on the other side. There is also acknowledged to be a shortage of accommodation for people with very high support needs and concerns that some accommodation providers are not currently able to offer sufficient support to the client group they house.

Case study 8

Case study 8 is a district in the south of England with average house prices, a large town and some rural areas.

The local authority operate their housing options service in the mornings, aimed at preventing homelessness and facilitating access to the PRS, and a drop-in centre in the afternoons, aimed at picking up emergency cases and ensuring they have somewhere to stay for the night, and carrying out statutory assessments as necessary. There is one main hostel in the area, which takes all age groups including most under 25 year olds. It commonly runs a waiting list of 25-30 people so is often unable to take all emergency cases. The local authority estimate that they are able to help around half of the under 25s who approach them for assistance, though this does include those who are not statutory homeless, and acknowledge that there is a considerable rough sleeping problem in the area with around 20 rough sleepers each night (all ages).

Some young people, particularly 16-17 year old care leavers but also others who have suffered relationship breakdown with their parents, are helped via supported lodgings with host families. These are intended to be a very temporary solution whilst the young person waits to access the hostel, or whilst mediation with their parents helps them to return home. It is run on a county-wide basis, which gives more flexibility with meeting needs. It is currently considered that there would be sufficient numbers of host families available if access to hostel provision could be speeded up.

There is a hostel for over 18s which is the main option, for longer term supported accommodation and this had a total of 57 young people in residence when last calculated. However, the long waiting list of 25-30 people suggests it is not meeting demand. Referral to this hostel is generally via the local authority and there is a close working relationship between the hostel and the local authority if people need to move on from the hostel into social housing.

The council also run a bond scheme to facilitate access to the PRS. However, their services are coming under more and more pressure, meaning they are increasingly targeting this at priority need cases rather than the single homeless. It is hoped that creating a local lettings agency will help to facilitate access to a wider range of households, and particularly to under 35s looking for shared housing.

Case study 9

Case study 9 is a seaside town in the south of England with fairly high house prices.

The first port of call for many homeless people is a voluntary sector organisation which runs an assessment centre (for stays usually of less than one month) and a recovery project for those with addictions to drugs or alcohol where clients can stay up to two years, though stays of less than one year are more common. Both of these projects provide supported accommodation to single homeless people and can often take people immediately in an emergency. However, most clients are older, with only 9% of clients in the last year being under 25.

The council can refer people to this accommodation, though in practice direct access self-referral is more common.

The charity also manages semi-independent self-contained units, which are used as move-on accommodation, but a condition is applied that they must be in work, voluntary work or training.

In terms of more specialist accommodation for young people, there is a Foyer and a youth housing project. They are both for young people aged 16-24 and only take referrals from the local authority or social services. Both are usually full and young people typically spend a couple of months on the waiting list before they can access the accommodation. Currently there are four people on the waiting list for the Foyer and three for the youth housing project. It is likely that the same people are on the lists for both.

The council see around 15 people a day asking for accommodation, of whom they estimate at least half to be under 25.

There are two small women's refuges in the district, accommodating a total of ten women (with or without children) of all ages, but most commonly under 25. There is also a five bed project for teenage mothers and babies.

Both the Foyer and the hostels report difficulties in moving single homeless people on to self-contained housing, particularly at the present time because the local authority's redevelopment programme has reduced the number of social housing lets available for new tenants. Instead, single homeless people are generally assisted to access the PRS which is also problematic because of the LHA restrictions. It is therefore estimated that, if there was sufficient mainstream accommodation, the current provision of emergency and supported accommodation would meet demand.

Case study 10

Case study 10 is a city in the north of England with average house prices.

There are just over 150 supported bed spaces available for under 25s. For 16/17s, a youth homeless worker, based within the Housing Options team will conduct a child risk assessment and if vulnerable they are placed through children's services. This means there are wider options available such as foster services.

Applicants over 18 years old see a general Housing Options advisor and the local authority uses a range of options including using access to the PRS, providing floating support in their own home, or even to paying parents top-up funds to keep them until the housing team can arrange a planned move.

There is a strong focus on preventative work. Some emergency accommodation is provided with host families or in 'crash pad' places within hostels which can be used for 3 or 4 weeks if it looks like mediation or breathing space for the family may mean the young person may then be able to return home, or else into longer term supported housing:

"We do not turn people away. If they really have nowhere to go then we find them somewhere, but most can find a place with family until we can make a planned move."

When the young people are ready to move on from supported housing then the housing team goes through the available options, and tries to dissuade people from assuming there will automatically be access to social housing as many young people can live successfully independently in the PRS and/or share with friends. Some young people move on to university or return to family. In addition, those who complete a resettlement programme within a hostel receive top priority for social housing.

There is also a Housing Association that provides an assured short hold tenancy in a flat for six months as move on accommodation with floating support for those not quite ready for independent living. This helps to ensure that hostel beds are not blocked, and after six months, if they manage successfully, they can keep the flat or bid to move.

It was estimated that a further 10 bed spaces would remove the waiting list for supported housing, but it was also felt that this local authority is relatively well resourced with services and a good system that has developed a strong emphasis on preventative work.

Analysis

This section draws on the case study information in order to make estimates of the requirements for emergency and supported housing for under 25s. This has drawn where possible on data from each of the ten local authority case studies on the number of people accommodated and turned away. Where no data source exists, it also draws on estimates by local authority and voluntary sector staff of the additional requirement for supported housing places that would be needed to avoid having to turn young people away.

Interviewees were asked to estimate a number of key measures of need based on their experience in the area, caseload and waiting lists. These were then scaled up to make a national estimate. In order to work out *additional* need for support housing, we had to look at a number of factors including move on rates, and an estimate of the proportion of their clients who were deemed ready to move on, as opposed to those in need of supported accommodation. We also asked about what happened when people were turned away, or kept on the waiting list, and other providers that they might go to for accommodation, in order to avoid double-counting. Each organisation was asked only about the numbers they

dealt with, and this information was used, together with available secondary data, in order to estimate the total shortfall in each area.

None of the ten areas reported any surplus accommodation, and all reported shortfalls and waiting lists for at least some of the accommodation available.

Deriving the figures

The approach taken firstly looks at the supply of supported accommodation for under 25s. This draws chiefly on the data from the case study interviews, though the overall size of the supported sector (for all age groups) is estimated from secondary data sources for comparison, and as a check that the under 25s figure is plausible. The annual numbers moving into and within supported housing are also given for context.

We then draw again estimates from agency staff in the case study areas of the proportion of their current residents who are considered to be ready to move on but waiting for suitable independent accommodation – the ‘bedblockers’.

In determining the requirement for independent housing, an allowance must be made for those who leave supported housing to live within another household (such as in with a partner, or back to their parents). This figure has been estimated from the Supporting People outcomes data.

In some case study areas agencies supplied data of the numbers of young people they were unable to accommodate, with no alternative accommodation likely to have been found. This figure was multiplied by the average length of stay in supported accommodation in order to produce estimates of the overall shortfall. In other areas, agency staff instead supplied estimates of the overall additional requirement they thought there was in order to avoid turning young people away.

This figure is the shortfall, assuming that the ability of young people to move on from supported housing to independent housing remains as it is. We have also calculated the net figure for the shortfall, that subtracts the ‘bedblockers’, so gives the requirement as it would be were there sufficient independent accommodation available to enable all to move on as soon as they are ready.

The table below (2.4) presents these key findings from each of the ten case studies, together with estimates scaled up to national level.

Table 2.4: Analysis of supply and requirements for emergency and supported accommodation by young people

Case study area	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	England
a. Supported housing places for all ages (RSR)	163	61	1,111	49	251	501	611	147	196	301	103,207
b. Calculated estimate of number of supported housing places for under 25s (CORE and RSR) ³⁰	47	8	362	23	84	57	181	66	50	37	30,115
c. LA/agency estimate of number of supported housing places for under 25s (interviews) ³¹	48	21	235	18	77	90	131	74	59	150	29,438*
d. Moves into supported housing (CORE)	67	7	53	42	104	65	143	100	34	14	23,510
e. Moves within supported housing (CORE)	7	3	52	3	54	18	15	58	11	12	9,449
f. 'Bedblockers' in supported housing ready for independent housing (interviews)	15	5	166	0	37	22	3	10	10	13	9,161*
g. Moves from supported housing to within another household (SP move on outcomes exc. floating support)	29	6	37	15	36	28	52	69	11	37	8,921
h. Moves from supported to social housing (CORE)	6	9	83	10	41	69	29	13	15	18	8,135
i. Number turned away each year with no other provision available	-	-	379	29	-	-	-	150	-	-	-
j. Average length of stay in supported housing (SP move on outcomes, exc. floating support)	19	21	41	20	31	23	23	18	47	24	28
k. Number of additional supported housing units required to avoid 'turn aways' (calculated i. times j. [as fraction of a year] or interviews)	10	8	300	11	28	25	30	53	6	10	15,670*
l. Net number of supported housing places required if there was adequate settled accommodation (calculated k. minus f.)	-5	3	134	11	-9	3	27	43	-4	-3	6,509*
Case study area	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	England

* These data are estimates derived from scaling up from the ten case studies (multiplying the total of the ten case studies by 326/10). Even though the case studies were carefully selected in order to be as representative as possible of England (in terms of size, levels of provision, housing pressure and urban-rural differences), there is clearly a substantial margin of error in doing this, so the results are uncertain and purely indicative.

³⁰ The proportion of new entrants to supported housing has been derived from CORE data and applied to the size of the stock of supported housing shown in row a)

³¹ This includes both stock that is specifically for the under 25s only, and stock that is available for other age groups but currently occupied by under 25s.

As can be seen from Table 2.4, the evidence from the case studies suggests an overall shortfall of emergency and supported accommodation for young people of **15,670** units. If there was an adequate supply of independent accommodation for young people to move on to, this shortfall would reduce to **6,509** places.

Issues

There are a number of issues which need to be borne in mind when looking at these estimates, some of which the methodology attempted to address.

Unknown outcomes

Some local authorities did not have any records of the total number of young people who approached them looking for emergency or supported accommodation, or were unable to distinguish from their records between those who were adequately housed and simply seeking housing advice on some issue, and those who were actually homeless (but unlikely to be in priority need). In addition, some local authorities had overall numbers but could not identify under 25s.

Turning young people away

It was very difficult to establish numbers of young people 'turned away'. In many local authorities the council and/or providers argued that no young person was turned away without ensuring they had somewhere to stay, though this would not necessarily mean they were appropriately housed. Some would be staying temporarily with friends (for example sofa surfing) and remaining at risk of homelessness. Most accommodation providers have a waiting list for accommodation, so whilst those applicants may have had somewhere to stay, they could not be immediately housed in supported accommodation.

Floating support

Whilst all ten local authorities and every accommodation provider we spoke to agreed that they could fill more bed spaces if they were available, there was some concern that simply expanding the provision of supported housing was not the only or most appropriate solution. Floating support is used to support young people both at home with their family, and when they move into independent accommodation, and its use is being expanded considerably (alongside the closure of hostel provision) in some case study areas³². Views differ as to how many young people would be able to manage to live independently with floating support as opposed to hostel provision. Some expressed concern about the potentially damaging effects of hostel provision on vulnerable young people, particularly if they started to identify with other homeless people separating themselves from the rest of society. Others, however, especially the specialist providers for young people, felt that their clients were very much in need of the support they offered in hostel-style accommodation.

Bed blocking

Another major issue that affects the need for supported accommodation is that of "bed blocking". It has long been the case that hostel provision has filled up with people waiting to access independent housing, thus preventing others from accessing supported provision. Local authorities in many areas have been addressing this difficulty by prioritising people in hostels for social housing in order to speed up move-on. However, the difficulty that then arises, especially in the more pressured areas, is that the hostels become seen as a route into social housing. There were also difficulties reported in some areas with persuading young people to move on from self-contained good quality accommodation in Foyers to shared housing in the PRS often in unpopular areas or of much lower quality. Difficulties in

³² Though it is known to have been hit by budget cuts in other areas.

affording the rent, bills and service charges were also reported as a major issue for single people under 25 who are restricted to lower benefit levels than other age groups.

Homeless prevention

Homeless prevention work was widely seen as a crucial way of preventing young people leaving home unnecessarily and helping reduce the pressure on accommodation. Prevention services were being developed and expanded in most of the case study areas. If successful, this could be expected to reduce demand on homeless accommodation.

In order to make numerical estimates the following assumptions have therefore been made:

- It has been assumed that access to settled accommodation (social renting or the PRS with HB) remains as it is at present.
- It has been assumed that the level of supported accommodation within the mainstream housing stock (i.e. floating support) remains as it is at present.
- It has been assumed that homelessness prevention work continues on its current scale.
- No allowance has been made for increases in homelessness as a result of welfare reform, including cuts to housing benefit.

The needs of particular groups

In terms of particular shortfalls for certain groups, it was young people with high support needs that were identified in nearly every area as the group whose needs could not always be met by current provision. These needs often related to mental health problems manifesting in behaviour that providers found difficult to manage within their current models of support. Ex-offenders were also mentioned as a group for whom it was often difficult to find appropriate accommodation as there was a shortage of specialist supported housing for this group.

Conclusions

Independent housing

Part 1 showed that there is a current shortfall of accommodation for those who cannot afford market rates. This could be in the form of social rented or private rented accommodation with the use of housing benefit.

The overall shortfall, for all age groups, is estimated as **293,927** at the present time, and predicted to rise to **934,388** by 2021. For households headed by young people, the current shortfall is estimated to be **140,344**, including those needing to move on from hostels³³, rising to **146,696** by 2021. This slight rise is predicted to occur, despite the overall fall in the size of the 16-24 age group, because of the overall increase in requirements for sub-market housing from the population overall, and the fact that under 25s are likely to suffer from overall shortages. These are all conservative estimates that make no allowance for people in housing need not registered on waiting lists, nor for those in unsuitable or overcrowded housing. They also assume that planned rates of social housing construction are built to time.

Increasing supply could be achieved by any combination of:

- Increasing overall housing supply
- Increasing the supply of social rented housing
- Increasing the supply of private rented housing
- Increasing the LHA limit so that more private rents fall within it
- Facilitating access to the PRS for low income households

However, if the current Right to Buy reforms are successful at increasing uptake, the supply of social rented housing will slowly decline. Similarly the current reforms to housing benefit are likely to reduce supply of PRS accommodation within LHA limits, and increase competition for shared accommodation. They may also deter some households from forming, which would reduce the overall requirements, though possibly at the expense of increasing overcrowding and/or homelessness.

In reality, it is unlikely that the supply of social housing will increase, and even at current build rates planned provision is uncertain to be realised. The PRS has grown considerably over the past decade and would have the potential to make up some of the shortfall in sub-market accommodation with the use of LHA. However, local authorities may need to do more to ensure that low income households are able to access this sector.

Supported housing

In terms of supported housing, Part II of this report has estimated that an additional **15,670** units of emergency and/or supported accommodation are required to avoid turning away young people who are without suitable accommodation. It is likely that a small proportion of these young people are currently street homeless and a larger group are sofa-surfing or staying in other temporary forms of accommodation. If there was an adequate supply of independent housing for young people, this research suggests that there would still be a shortfall of emergency and supported housing, but that this shortfall would reduce to **6,509**.

It is also important to remain aware of the geography of provision. The demands on accommodation are much greater in the high pressured parts of the country, and in

³³ As the focus of this project was on the under 25s, the comparable number of over 25s needing to move on from hostels has not been included, but the 293,927 figure is undoubtedly an underestimate.

particular in London. As can be seen from column 3 in Table 2.4, more than half of the overall shortfall of accommodation in the ten case study areas is in London.

In other parts of the country, the types of accommodation, the systems for providing floating support and issues around the location of the accommodation available can all be at least as important as the overall level of provision. An adequate supply of accommodation suitable for those with very high support needs was considered problematic in nearly every area so is clearly an area for development of further provision.

As discussed above, these are not fixed requirements for housing units, as other solutions such as an expansion of homeless prevention work, more floating support or further development of schemes such as placing young people within host families for emergency accommodation could all potentially reduce the need for bricks and mortar provision.

However, it is likely that some of the shortfall will need to be met through the provision of additional supported housing units, particularly due to the high support needs of many of those struggling to find suitable accommodation and the fact that prevention work has already been significantly expanded in many local authorities.

Whatever measures are chosen to address the shortfall, this research has revealed the scale of need for accommodation for young people – both supported and independent – to be significant. There is a shortfall at the present time, and unless measures are taken to increase supply, the overall shortfall in the availability of sub-market accommodation is likely to increase levels of need over the next ten years.

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