

# YPI:

YOUNG PERSONS' INVESTIGATION



What's it like to be a  
homeless young person in  
Kettering?

**connexions**

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

**Kettering**  
*Borough Council*

# YPI: THE PROJECT

We are a team of 6 young people aged between 18 and 22.

All of us have personal experience of being homeless and using local homelessness services.



With the support of Connexions staff and MWB Consultancy Ltd. we undertook an investigation of what it is like to be a homeless young person in Kettering.

In December 2008 we interviewed 24 young people about their experiences of homelessness. We have produced this leaflet to tell you about the project and what we found out.

## **YPI: Briefing**

The aim of this project is to help improve the council's understanding of the needs of homeless young people.

Kettering Borough Council will use you as "peer researchers" as we hope that you will be able to get more honest information from your peers than older researchers.

You will need to undertake two training sessions to prepare you to interview other young people. These sessions will cover confidentiality, personal safety and interview techniques.

Regards  
Kettering Borough Council

## Background

The journey into independence and adult life is a challenge for almost all young people. For young people who become homeless and disconnected from family support that journey can be a severe test of their resourcefulness and resilience.

Being homeless is not a good way to start your life as an independent young adult.

In 2008 57 young people, aged between 16 and 24, were found to be homeless by Kettering Borough Council.

These young people are usually placed in supported accommodation. Once accommodated they are assigned a key worker (or resident support worker) who works with them to acquire the life-skills needed for a tenancy in the future.

# Some examples of the questions we asked...

How did you become homeless or need help with housing?

What different services have you used or been in contact with in Kettering since you left home?

How did the service make you feel?

How did the staff treat you?

What has been the most fun?

What advice would you give someone about to move into their own place?



# FINDINGS



## Becoming homeless:

Most of the young people became homeless following disputes with their family. Arguments were often about drugs and alcohol or the restrictions of living at home.

## Homelessness Services:

Young people reported mixed experiences of their first contact with services. Most were particularly positive about the role played by Connexions. On the whole we found that young people were happy with the services available but sometimes felt that they were not always taken seriously.

Some interviewees had to repeat their stories several times to several different people and felt that the various homelessness services could be joined up better.





## What does a good service look like?

The interviewees commented on what would make for a high quality homeless service for young people. They said they would like:

- Help that young people can access before things become a crisis
- Flexible staff that listen and don't jump to conclusions
- Staff that keep you informed with what is happening
- The chance to meet other people who have had similar experiences
- Getting support into college and work
- Key workers that do what they say they will do

## **Hostels:**

The interviewees had varied experiences of hostels but generally the Council's hostel on London Road received very negative comments.

## **Supported Accommodation:**

Half the young people felt that rules in Supported Accommodation could be restrictive, such as not allowing guests in rooms.

However, they also said that their time in supported accommodation was a very important part of moving on and developing friendships.



## **Key workers:**

All of those we interviewed mentioned the importance of key workers (or resident support workers) in helping them move on. Half the young people we spoke to were very positive about their key workers but some felt that they had not received a consistently good service.

**What advice would you give to another young person who was considering leaving home or at risk of becoming homeless?**

"Plan your next move and start saving up for a flat"

"Go and get help and then use the help that is offered"

"Stay with your parents for as long as possible (if it is safe to do so)"

"Do not become homeless, it does not help"

"Think before you move out"

If you would like a copy of the full research report please contact Charlotte Smith, Housing Strategy Officer, Kettering Borough Council on 01536 410333.

# THE TEAM



**BEN**

"I wanted to raise awareness of the potential seriousness of homelessness and young people"

**COURTNEY**

"I really enjoyed having the opportunity to be able to get my point across about homelessness"



**LOUIE**

"It was great to explore the experiences of other young people and I enjoyed having a say on how the project should run"



**DANIEL**

"It was really good to work in partnership with Kettering Council so that we can help young people in need of housing"



**ALEX**

"I enjoyed doing something different and learning about other young people's experiences"



**DONNA**

"It was very interesting to hear about other young people's problems and discuss how their situation could be improved"



Dear Young Researchers,

On behalf of Kettering Borough Council's Housing Options team I would like to thank you for your invaluable contribution to the Young Persons' Investigation.

We were impressed with your hard work, commitment and enthusiasm towards the project.

The findings have already lead to changes in the services we provide for young people. Most significantly, the unpopular hostel on London Road in Kettering has now been closed.

As a result of this project, in autumn 2009, Andrew Odom, Housing Options Advisor will be released from his normal duties to allow him to implement changes to improve the Housing Option service for young people.

Once again I would like to thank you for working with us on the Young Persons' Investigation.

Regards  
Charlotte Smith  
Housing Strategy Officer

If you would like further  
information or advice about  
homelessness in Kettering  
please contact:

**Connexions Kettering,**  
23 Dalkeith House,  
Kettering,  
Northants,  
NN16 0BS  
Tel: 01536 513862

**Kettering Borough Council's  
Housing Options Team,**  
Municipal Offices,  
Bowling Green Road,  
Kettering,  
Northants,  
NN15 7QX  
Tel: 01536 410333



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