



Access to Safe and Secure Housing for At Risk and Vulnerable Young People

PREPARED BY

CRESA / Public Policy & Research

FOR THE

**Centre for Housing Research,
Aotearoa New Zealand**

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**Prepared for
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research is the first systematic attempt to explore the alignment between the housing sector and the housing needs of at risk and vulnerable young people in New Zealand. It provides information necessary to better align the housing sector and the service sector that provides for and attempts to improve the life chances and wellbeing of at risk and vulnerable young people.

The young people encompassed by the terms 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' is not precisely defined in policy or services but generally include young people who have come to the attention of social, educational, justice or health services as requiring active management, treatment or support. They include but are not limited to disabled young people, young mothers, young refugees, young people in visitor/work permit families, young people leaving state care, young people recovering from mental illness and/or addictions and young people needing habilitation after offending.

The research involved engaging directly with vulnerable and at risk young people through interviews and focus groups. These were undertaken in Manukau and Waitakere cities. It also involved a national survey of organisations that provide services to at risk and vulnerable young people and a limited review of international practice in relation to housing and at risk and vulnerable young people.

At Risk and Vulnerable Young People in Insecure or Unsafe Housing

Most service providers do not systematically assess the housing conditions of their clients. Social housing providers including Housing New Zealand Corporation, local council housing providers and community-based providers do not give priority to young people in housing need. The exception being Housing New Zealand Corporation does prioritise sole parents in housing need, some of whom may be young people. Consequently, young people are likely to be under-represented on the waiting lists and in the tenancies of those providers.

We estimate that around 30.4 percent of at risk and vulnerable young people are in unsafe and insecure housing. Conservatively we estimate that there are between 14,500 and 20,000 young people 12-24 years old who are both at risk and vulnerable and are in insecure or unsafe housing.

Between the ages of 17 and 24 years, we estimate that around 12,000 at risk or vulnerable young people are in insecure and unsafe housing. Housing that is unsafe can be defined so for a number of reasons. It may be unsafe because of its physical condition or unsafe because the young person is at risk of physical or sexual abuse. Or it may be unsafe because the places in which a young person lives exposes him or her to illegal activities and dangerous environments. Housing that is insecure can be insecure because of affordability problems, or because the landlord is likely to evict tenants, or because the housing is temporary or a building or place not intended for permanent or long-term habitation

At Risk and Vulnerable Young People's Housing Experiences

It is estimated that around 12.6 percent of at risk and vulnerable young people are in: unaffordable housing; overcrowded housing; dilapidated housing and/or mal-adapted housing. It is estimated that a further 13.8 percent are living in dwellings in which they are exposed to criminality, sexual or physical abuse, gang activities/members and/or drug making. A further 2.5 percent are estimated to have no fixed abode or are living on the street.

For the 80 at risk and vulnerable young people participating in this research, accessing affordability was a significant barrier to accessing safe and secure housing. Other barriers included: lack of knowledge about how to go about getting accommodation; landlords' reluctance to let tenancies to young people; their lack of skills at running a household (including budgeting skills); their lack of necessary credentials and renting histories; anxieties around signing tenancy contracts; and a lack of suitable housing stock. Many of the young people felt stigmatised by their pasts even when they were victims rather than perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.

In addition, attaining affordable and safe housing did not mean that it could be retained over time. Many of the young people have experienced situations where the place they have been living in has been sold, or the landlord has wanted to take the property off the rental market. Affordable accommodation must at times be 'given up' because it is not near to public transport and employment, education/training and facilities such as shops, health centres and for young mothers, facilities for early childhood education.

Experience of the Housing Sector and Housing Assistance

Many of the young people, especially those 16-18 years of age have not received any housing assistance. The exceptions are some young people leaving state care, young offenders and those in addictions or mental health programmes, who may have received some assistance such as advocacy, mentoring, advice, and skill development.

Many at risk and vulnerable young people reported feeling intimidated by Work and Income and Housing New Zealand Corporation. Few had any direct experience of housing delivery from Housing New Zealand Corporation. Some received monetary assistance from Work and Income for bonds and assistance to buy household goods. A few of the participants in this research, mainly young mothers, receive the Accommodation Supplement. Almost all the remainder were unaware of the Accommodation Supplement. Most of the young people have dealt with real estate agents. Their experiences have varied. A few have had good experiences. Most felt they were a low priority for real estate agents and got poor service.

What At Risk and Vulnerable Young People Say They Need

At risk and vulnerable young people consistently identify a need for housing information and advisory services; housing advocacy; housing stock specifically suited their needs; and, improved existing services. They believed that their ability to get secure and safe housing would be improved if they received help to understand tenancy agreements, assistance with accessing computers, newspapers, real estate agents and travelling to look at houses. At risk and vulnerable young people also reported needing help to make better housing choices, particularly about the repair and performance of prospective rental houses.

The types of housing that at risk and vulnerable young people identified they needed included: affordable, smaller sized housing (one and two-bedroom) that is close to public transport and facilities; housing attached to tertiary education or training programmes; opportunities for self-build; access to Housing New Zealand Corporation housing; and supported living options, especially for young disabled, young people with addiction and/or mental health issues and young refugees.

The young people called for a range of improvements to existing services including better coordination between services, including provision of wrap around services that combine income support, accommodation search, budgeting, access to education/training, and employment. Better training of staff to understand the housing needs of at risk and vulnerable young people and to reduce stigmatisation in the housing sector were also identified as important.

Adequacy of the Range of Housing Assistance and Coverage

The 147 service providers participating in the national survey reported providing housing-related assistance or support to about 2,160 clients. At best, less than two thirds (63.8 percent) of at risk and vulnerable young people known to be in unsafe or insecure housing were assisted. At worst, the proportion of clients in unsafe or insecure housing who were assisted in 2007 could be less than a fifth of those in need.

Service providers overwhelmingly report (91.8 percent) that the localities in which they work require increased housing services for at risk and vulnerable young people. Many young people are typified as coming from violent family situations over which they have little control but having few housing choices except those that perpetuate a young person's exposure to violence. Emergency housing and night shelters are seen as very unsafe. Service providers reported that there were risks, especially for young women, associated with living in mixed hostels. They perceive the lack of housing solutions for at risk and vulnerable young people place them in environments which are likely to drive victims of anti-social behaviour into becoming perpetrators of it and undermine habilitation of young people previously engaged in anti-social behaviour.

Why Meet the Housing Needs of At Risk and Vulnerable Young People?

Over half the service providers (58.1 percent) reported that they believed that meeting housing need was an essential part of clients achieving positive outcomes. A further 29.4 percent reported that meeting housing need mattered a lot to achieving positive outcomes. Similarly, 85.1 percent of the providers reported that unmet housing need presented a barrier to or inhibited at risk and vulnerable young people from achieving positive outcomes.

According to service providers, unmet housing need contributes to and exacerbates the vulnerability of young people and their likelihood of engaging in undesirable behaviours. For those young people coming from dysfunctional families, being in insecure or unsafe housing recreates and perpetuates a history of chaotic lifestyles. They suggest unmet housing need cements young people into prostitution, criminality and makes gang affiliations rational, albeit undesirable choices. Insecure and unsafe housing among vulnerable and at risk young people tends to become a vicious cycle in which poor housing becomes an embedded experience.

International Trends

Internationally, it is recognised that many of the problems faced by at risk and vulnerable young people are faced by other young people. The problems of relatively low incomes, high house prices and debt loading are endemic. However, those problems are compounded for at risk and vulnerable young people. At risk and vulnerable young people have persistent and longstanding resource deficits. These are young people that have few people, if anyone, to whom they can turn, no savings, little information, no credentials on the housing market and poor life skills.

They are also vulnerable to stigmatisation and have difficulty engaging key players in the housing sector such as landlords. They are also poorly served by a homogenous housing stock largely designed for nuclear families, often in neighbourhoods poorly served by public transport and deficient in amenities catering for young people. Those problems are exacerbated by policy settings that fail to recognise their needs, provide inadequate protection, largely exclude them from housing provision, offer limited assistance through benefit systems and encourage under-servicing by housing providers.

Internationally, housing stabilisation has been accepted as an important pathway for integration, habilitation and recovery for at risk and vulnerable young people. Over the last two decades, three changes in policy settings have emerged in the international arena. There has been recognition of young people as having separate eligibility and units of entitlement for housing assistance. There has been allocation of funding specifically to fund programmes targeted to the housing needs of younger people. Housing strategies, programmes and practices have been designed to meet the particular needs of young people.

Despite diversity in specific responses to youth housing internationally certain commonalities can be observed. In particular, adoption of a principle-based approach to youth housing provision embodying the principles of supporting youth development; prevention and early intervention; and multiple entry to integrated, tailored services. Internationally, there is a move towards a comprehensive service framework based on inter-sectoral planned and funded action involving central and local government agencies, non-government service providers and the housing and construction sectors.

Change in New Zealand

International policy and practice provides real and practical models for New Zealand. New Zealand has a substantial number of at risk and vulnerable young people in insecure and unsafe housing. Service providers report that those conditions compromise and inhibit the outcomes achieved by their service delivery. Service providers have identified some general principles to guide service and housing provision for at risk and vulnerable young people, so that they can make a durable transition to independent living.

At risk and vulnerable young people need to be able to stay in any assisted living until they are ready to leave. There needs to be a range of options available, especially for young people who have been in state care, so that they can move from supervised to unsupervised independent living. At risk and vulnerable young people who lack family support need to be able to withdraw from independent living for short periods of time, just as other young people do as they return home to, for instance, save money or organise a new living arrangement.

At the local level, achieving effective responses to meet the housing needs of at risk and vulnerable young people will require New Zealand to recognise young people as having separate eligibility and units of entitlement for housing assistance. Housing strategies, programmes and practices designed to meet the particular needs of at risk and vulnerable young people need to be developed. If they are to be effective New Zealand needs to build the capacity of young people to engage with the housing sector, providers to meet youth housing needs, and communities to embrace housing solutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This research has been prompted by an increasing concern with the impacts of unmet housing need on young people who are already vulnerable and at risk. The aim of this research is to look at the alignment between the housing sector and the housing needs of vulnerable and at risk young people.
- 1.2 In undertaking this research we have purposefully avoided narrow definitions of age. While the main focus is on 16-24 year olds, in some instances the discussion embraces young people as young as twelve years who are functioning largely independently from families and the more common arrangements for their age.
- 1.3 This research is the first to specifically focus on the housing needs of at risk and vulnerable young people in New Zealand. The research establishes an information platform where none existed before through engaging directly with vulnerable and at risk young people and service providers concerned with their integration, habilitation and recovery.
- 1.4 Because of resource constraints, the research with young people has been confined to Manukau and Waitakere cities but the research with providers has been nation-wide. Manukau and Waitakere cities were selected because of the relatively high proportions of their population who are young and, consequently, the range of at risk and vulnerable young people residing in those areas. The research with young people explored the dynamics of the housing experience of at risk and vulnerable young people. The national surveys of service providers and community-based housing providers has allowed us to make some preliminary assessments of the extent of insecure and unsafe housing among at risk and vulnerable young people as well as the implications of unmet housing need for their well-being.
- 1.5 One of the issues that has emerged out of this research is the lack of a clearly articulated definition of the terms 'at risk' and 'vulnerable' in relation to young people. Agencies, both governmental and community-based, tend to use those terms to explain their service delivery and policy settings. However, the term has no precise meaning. Nor are there established methods to establish, or even estimates of, the numbers of young people that Government and other agencies deem to fall within those categories. The terms embrace a diversity of different characteristics and needs.
- 1.6 Effectively the phrase 'at risk and vulnerable young people' has become a catch-all for young people who, for various reasons, have come to the attention of social, educational, justice or health services as requiring active management, support or treatment. Young people who have been victimised fall within the ambit of the term. Young people who have perpetrated inappropriate behaviour against others or themselves also fall within the ambit of the term. So too do young people who are significantly resource disadvantaged in some way such as refugees and disabled young people. Similarly, the term embraces those considered at risk of poor life outcomes such as young mothers or those dealing with mental illness and/or addictions.

- 1.7 The specific sets of young people that have been the focus of this research are discussed in more detail in Section 2 and Section 3.
- 1.8 This report is structured as follows:
- The remainder of Section 1 comments on the research context.
 - Section 2 emphasises the distinction between the housing needs of at risk and vulnerable young people and housing need among young people in general.
 - Section 3 describes the research methods and approach used to examine the housing needs and experiences of at risk and vulnerable young people.
 - Section 4 estimates the numbers of at risk and vulnerable young people in New Zealand who are in housing need.
 - Section 5 describes housing need among at risk and vulnerable young people from their own perspectives.
 - Section 6 sets out service providers' perspectives on the housing needs and housing provision for at risk and vulnerable young people.
 - Section 7 considers international trends in policy and programme responses to youth housing needs both for at risk and vulnerable young people as well as for young people in the mainstream.
 - Section 8 comments on ways in which New Zealand could more effectively address the housing needs of at risk and vulnerable young people.

Research Context

- 1.9 Preliminary scoping commissioned by the Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand (CHRANZ) prior to funding this research suggested that New Zealand's approach to young people and their housing needs is diverging from evolving practices overseas. New Zealand has traditionally treated meeting the housing needs of young people as subordinate to meeting the housing needs of families. Social housing, whether delivered through central or local government or by way of the community sector, has not been targeted to young people. New Zealand's current policy settings and range of housing assistance and programmes largely assume that young people's housing needs will be addressed through the provision of housing assistance to families.¹
- 1.10 The paradigm overseas, however, is for central and/or local government to accept significant responsibilities for the provision of safe, affordable and secure housing for their young people as individuals in their own right rather than as members of assisted families. This is associated with providing a wide range of programmes tailored specifically to meet the needs of young people at risk.

¹ James, B. (2007) *Children's and Young Person's Housing Experiences: Issues and scoping paper*, Report prepared for Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand.

- 1.11 Those developments have been prompted by a recognition that young people are particularly vulnerable to housing stress. This is partly due to the relatively low incomes of young people and their consequent exposure to affordability problems. It is partly due to the tendency for young people to be subject to discrimination within the housing market. It is also because housing stress is increasingly recognised as being associated with poor social, economic and health outcomes.
- 1.12 Of particular concern has been the impact of unmet housing need and housing stress on at risk and vulnerable young people. At risk and vulnerable young people need pro-social environments that are conducive to behaviour improvement, growth and achievement.² Safe and secure housing is one component of pro-social environments. Stabilising the housing situation of vulnerable and at risk young people is a critical aspect of rehabilitation, habilitation and recovery among those who are at risk of offending, have previously offended and among those with mental illness, behaviour problems or addictions.
- 1.13 CHRANZ has commissioned this research to allow all those concerned with improving outcomes for vulnerable and at risk young people to reflect on whether New Zealand needs to make a paradigm shift in its approach to housing provision young people if the needs of at risk and vulnerable young people are to be met and their life chances and well-being optimised.
- 1.14 There is a deep unease in New Zealand's public and community sectors about the appropriateness of current policy settings around housing assistance to young people.³ However, New Zealand's current research data and knowledge about young people and housing is too limited and fragmentary to prompt significant change in the way in which New Zealand addresses young people's housing needs.
- 1.15 The main informational gaps are around the:
- Prevalence of unmet housing need among vulnerable and at risk young people.
 - Size and distribution of the population of vulnerable and at risk young people with unmet housing need.
 - Socio-economic and vulnerability characteristics of vulnerable and at risk young people facing unmet housing need.
 - Characteristics of the housing markets in which vulnerable and at risk young people are most likely to experience unmet housing need.
 - Impacts of unmet housing need on the life chances and wellbeing outcomes for at risk and vulnerable young people.
 - Impacts of unmet housing need on the efficacy of programmes and services designed to improve short-term and long-term outcomes for at risk and vulnerable young people.
 - Solutions that vulnerable and at risk young people and the service providers that deliver services to them see as addressing unmet housing need.

² A pro-social environment is the counter-point to anti-social environments. Pro-social environments allow for the modelling of, and embed, positive behaviours, values and cultural norms and assist young people to avoid behaviours and choices that are harmful to themselves or others.

³ James, B. (2007) *Children's and Young Person's Housing Experiences: Issues and scoping paper*, Report prepared for Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand.

Key Research Objectives and Questions

- 1.16 The objectives of this project are to identify:
- The extent to which young people at risk are inhibited from accessing affordable, safe and secure housing
 - How barriers to affordable, safe and secure housing affect vulnerable and at risk young people
 - The range of housing services that are needed to address the needs of vulnerable and at risk young people
 - Pathways to improving the provision of safe, secure and affordable housing to vulnerable and at risk young people.
- 1.17 Answering those broad objectives requires a body of information about the unmet housing needs of vulnerable and at risk young people to be developed that answer a number of more detailed questions. Those are:
- Among New Zealand's vulnerable and at risk young people, what proportion experience unmet housing need?
 - What is the size of the population of vulnerable and at risk young people with unmet housing need?
 - How is the population of vulnerable and at risk young people with unmet housing need distributed regionally?
 - What are the characteristics of vulnerable and at risk young people facing unmet housing need?
 - Given that vulnerable and at risk young people are made up of different groups with different vulnerabilities, are some groups of vulnerable and at risk young people more vulnerable to unmet housing need than others?
 - What are the characteristics of the housing markets in which vulnerable and at risk young people are most likely to experience unmet housing need?
 - How do vulnerable and at risk young people perceive and experience housing need and does this vary from one group to another?
 - How do vulnerable and at risk young people see their housing futures and its contribution to their future well-being?
 - What are the housing services, assistance and solutions that vulnerable and at risk young people believe will have a positive impact on their overall well-being and optimise their social and economic integration? Do those vary from one at risk group to another?
 - What are the impacts of unmet housing need on the life chances and wellbeing outcomes for young people? Do vulnerable and at risk young people and the service providers that engage with them see those impacts in a similar way?
 - What are impacts of unmet housing need on the efficacy of programmes and services designed to improve short-term and long-term outcomes for vulnerable and at risk young people?
 - What are the housing services, assistance and solutions that service providers who engage with vulnerable and at risk young people believe will have a positive impact on their overall well-being and optimise their social and economic integration?

- 1.18 Answering those questions is beyond the very limited resources that can be allocated to this research. However, this research has been commissioned to begin to fill those informational gaps. In doing so, it identifies a whole range of issues which will require focused and committed attention through further research, policy analysis and sectoral development.

2. THE SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

- 2.1 This report is not about all the young people in New Zealand who are currently suffering housing stress and confronting unmet housing need. Rather it considers one set of young people in New Zealand – at risk and vulnerable young people. The young people encompassed by the terms ‘at risk’ or ‘vulnerable’ are somewhat fluid but generally include young people who have come to the attention of social, educational, justice or health services as requiring active management, treatment or support.
- 2.2 The at risk and vulnerable young people that this research set out to consider in relation to housing were:
- **Disabled young people** –Disability raises two important housing related problems for young people. Firstly, disability marginalises young people in the housing market both because disabled young people are likely to be resource poor and because the housing stock is generally not suitable to their needs. Secondly, the inability of disabled young people to independently enter the housing market is likely to exacerbate the significant difficulties they encounter moving from child dependency to productive adulthood.
 - **Young Mothers** – Like disabled young people, young mothers are resource poor and have considerable problems pursuing further education, training and employment. They are also not seen as desirable by landlords. Sole mothers are also vulnerable to overcrowding. Research has shown that sole parent households are more likely to be living in single bedroom dwellings with parent and children sharing bedroom space.⁴ Inability to access safe and appropriate housing not only exposes the young mother to risk but also impacts on the health and well being of their children.
 - **Young Refugees** – Like young mothers, refugees are not preferred tenants in the housing market. They tend to be resource poor and they face considerable challenges in relation to language facility, detachment from kinship and other supportive networks, recovery from post-traumatic shock and cultural dislocation. In addition, research has shown that transitions from dependence to adulthood and independence can be particularly difficult for children from refugee families. Those problems are likely to be exacerbated where housing options are limited both for the existing household and for young people seeking to form new independent households.

⁴ Saville-Smith, K. J. and Amey, B. 1999, *Overcrowded Families in New Zealand - Regional Patterns*, Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment, Wellington

- **Young People in visitor/work permit families** – A number of young people are excluded from assistance because their parents are on visitor or work permits. The implications of that status for accessing safe and secure housing needs to be explored.
- **Young people leaving state care** – Young people are in state care either because they present behavioural challenges that have not been able to be managed within the family, or because they have no family or because they are at risk within their family. Typically these young people have long histories of instability and marginalisation. The movement from a situation in which they are the responsibility of the state to a situation in which they are not, is triggered by age. The ability to negotiate the timing of 'leaving home' is limited and for that reason barriers to accessing alternative housing can be particularly problematic.
- **Young people in recovery** – Young people seeking to recover from mental illness and/or addiction are particularly in need of stable and safe housing. However they are typically marginal to the housing market not only because they have limited incomes, but because they can be detached from family and friendship networks, and face stigma on the housing market.
- **Young people in habilitation after offending** – Like young people in recovery, young offenders are particularly in need of stable and safe housing. They too are typically marginal to the housing market not only because they have limited incomes but because they are seen as high risk tenants. They may also face constraints on where they can live (e.g., directed through legal requirements) and are often alienated from family and friendship networks.

2.3 Those sets of at risk and vulnerable young people were targeted for focus group selection, but as the selection process evolved within the time constraints of the project, it became apparent that a less narrow recruitment process allowed us to recruit young people with many of those characteristics by engaging with key service providers dealing with wide range of young people. The process of recruitment is described in Section 3.

2.4 Not all at risk or vulnerable young people are exposed to unmet housing need or are under housing stress. Similarly, not all young people who suffer housing stress come to the attention of social, educational, justice or health services, although overseas research has shown that for some young people the trigger or the point that tipped them into that set of young people known as 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' was unmet housing need.

2.5 Because this report is about housing need among a sub-set of young people and is not concerned with what might be termed 'mainstream' young people in housing need, the quantum of young people estimated as in housing need in this report must be seen as only a part of the young population confronting housing stress and housing exclusion. Internationally, it has been recognised that unmet housing need among 'mainstream' young people may also have profound personal and societal implications. The prevalence of housing need among New Zealand's young people as a whole and the social and economic implications of that need has yet to be determined in New Zealand.

- 2.6 In considering the alignment of the housing sector to the housing needs of at risk and vulnerable young people, this research is concerned with the extent to which those young people are able to access secure or safe housing or are exposed to unsafe or insecure housing. Housing that is unsafe can be defined so for a number of reasons. It may be unsafe because of its physical condition or unsafe because the young person is at risk of physical or sexual abuse. Or it may be unsafe because the places in which a young person lives exposes him or her to illegal activities and dangerous environments. Housing that is insecure can be insecure because of affordability problems, or because the landlord is likely to evict tenants, or because the housing is temporary or a building or place not intended for permanent or long-term habitation

3. RESEARCH METHODS

- 3.1 The research focuses on the capacity for the housing sector to respond to the needs of vulnerable and at risk young people. In particular, it is concerned with:
- The extent to which young people at risk are inhibited from accessing affordable, safe and secure housing.
 - How barriers to affordable, safe and secure housing affect vulnerable and at risk young people.
 - Identifying the range of housing services that are needed to address the needs of vulnerable and at risk young people.
 - Identifying pathways to improving the provision of safe, secure and affordable housing to vulnerable and at risk young people.
- 3.2 The research is shaped around three components:
- Component 1 engaged directly with vulnerable and at risk young people.
 - Component 2 engaged with the service providers that deliver services to vulnerable and at risk young people.
 - Component 3 involved a limited review of international practice in relation to housing and at risk and vulnerable young people.

Component 1: The Voices of Vulnerable and At Risk Young People

- 3.3 This component of the research involved focus groups and interviews. These were undertaken in Manukau City and Waitakere City respectively. Those two cities were selected because they combine:
- large populations
 - high proportions of young people
 - significant populations of young people that could be considered vulnerable or at risk.

- 3.4 Manukau City, the third largest territorial authority, has a high number and proportion of children and young people, with 42 percent of its population under 25 years. High proportions of school students in the area are Maori and Pacific. The city has the largest number of Maori residents of all territorial authorities in New Zealand and the largest Pacific population in the world. It is one of the most culturally diverse areas in New Zealand, with around 165 ethnic groups. Just over 40 percent of the city's population were born overseas compared to just over one fifth of New Zealand's population. Manukau City is an area where housing issues including the connection between health and housing, education and housing and youth homelessness have been highlighted. Manukau City has the highest level of crowding in households in New Zealand. The proportion of young people who are single parents is higher in Manukau than in the country as a whole.⁵
- 3.5 Fifth in size of territorial authorities, Waitakere City also has a relatively youthful population, with over one third of its population under 25 years. The city is one of the most ethnically diverse in New Zealand, with an increasing number of refugees. Like Manukau City, Waitakere City is a major area for refugee resettlement through Housing New Zealand Corporation accommodation, and the housing needs of new migrant families have emerged as key issues. The city has one of the largest Pacific and Asian populations in New Zealand. The Maori, Pacific and Asian populations have a younger age profile than the rest of the resident population. Just under half of new migrants are under 25 years old.
- 3.6 High housing costs have been identified as a problem for residents, although costs are not as high as in some other Auckland areas. This brings its own issues, with people shifting into the area in search of cheaper housing. There is also a high demand for Housing New Zealand Corporation rental accommodation, very little development of third sector housing, a lack of emergency housing and residential services such as youth services and mental health services. The housing needs of people with disabilities have also been identified as pressing.⁶
- 3.7 It cannot be claimed that the experience of young people in those two cities represents the experience of young people throughout New Zealand. Nevertheless, limiting the focus groups to Waitakere and Manukau cities means that the similarities and differences between different groups of vulnerable and at risk young people can be explored in a more controlled manner.

⁵ Manukau City Council Youth Policy and Action Plan (2004); Manukau City Council New Settlers' Policy (2003); Quality of Life Project (2007) in Twelve of New Zealand's Cities www.qualityoflifeproject.govt.nz.

⁶ Quality of Life Project (2007) in Twelve of New Zealand's Cities www.qualityoflifeproject.govt.nz; Waitakere Wellbeing Report (2004) www.waitakere.govt.nz

- 3.8 The focus groups explored:
- How vulnerable and at risk young people perceive and experience housing need.
 - The impacts of their housing experiences on their lives.
 - How vulnerable and at risk young people see their housing futures and the contribution of housing to their future well-being.
 - What housing services, assistance and solutions vulnerable and at risk young people believe will have a positive impact on their overall well-being and optimise their social and economic integration.

The guidelines for the focus groups are found in Annex A.

- 3.9 To access the vulnerable and at risk young people across the categories focused on in this research (see Section 2), a combination of focus groups and individual interviews were used. Because of the nature of their lives and their unpredictable housing circumstances, some groups were hard to access. Three scheduled interviews could not be done because the young people concerned had housing-related commitments, including having to move out of their accommodation, or appointments with housing providers. We relied on community-based organisations to help us access young people. In total, 46 young people in the at-risk and vulnerable categories focused on in this research were included.

- 3.10 Details of the numbers and characteristics of the vulnerable and at risk young people who participated in the research are outlined below.

- **Disabled young people** – It was not possible to organise focus groups with young disabled because of the logistics of getting disabled young people together in the short time available. Instead, extensive publicising of the research was done through disabled networks, including those of the Auckland Disability Resource Centre and CCS Disability Action. These organisations are very efficient at contacting people across the disabled communities. Housing New Zealand Corporation also sent letters to tenants with young disabled on CRESA's behalf, inviting them to participate in the research. Young people who wished to be interviewed contacted CRESA via phone, fax or email and were then interviewed. Despite extensive publicising over three weeks and a number of contacts made, only seven young disabled were interviewed. They included physically disabled, vision impaired, intellectually disabled and ADHD. All identified as NZ European/ Pakeha and ranged in age from 17-24 years. To supplement these interviews, further analysis was undertaken of interviews with 17 young disabled who participated in the Future Proofing housing research.⁷
- **Young mothers** – Eleven young mothers participated in two focus groups and one interview. Most ranged in age from 16-19, while one was 24. All except one were accessed through teen parenting education programmes. The majority were Maori or Pacific.

⁷ Saville-Smith, K., James, B., Fraser, R., Ryan, B., and Travaglia, S. (2007) *Housing and Disability Future Proofing New Zealand's Housing Stock for an Inclusive Society*. Report prepared for the Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand www.chranz.org.nz.

- **Young refugees and young asylum seekers** – It was not possible to organise focus groups with young refugees and young people in visitor/work permit families. Instead, interviews were conducted. Despite extensive searching through refugee and migrant networks, only one community organisation was able to arrange interviews with young refugees. In addition, some young refugees were accessed through Housing New Zealand Corporation, which sent letters to refugee tenants on CRESA’s behalf, inviting them to participate in the research. In all, eight young refugees ranging in age from 16-mid 20s were interviewed. These included four young asylum seekers who had come to New Zealand without families and were in the process of applying for refugee status. The young asylum seekers were included as no young people in visitor/work permit families were found. The young asylum seekers are in the most vulnerable housing situation as they are excluded from assistance.
- **Young people leaving state care** – New Zealand has around 1,886 children and young people twelve years and older in state care. The vast majority are placed in state care because they have been subject to neglect and/or abuse. A smaller number are in state care because they have been involved in significant offending or anti-social behaviour. Young people coming out of state care were involved in two focus groups accessed through a provider of a programme facilitating young people transiting to independent living. The Ministry of Social Development has provided data setting out the status and number of young people in Child Youth and Family care (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Children & Young People 12 Years and Older in CYF Care at 31 March 2008

Age	Care & Protection	Youth Justice	Other Enactments	Unknown	Total
12 years	308	-	8	6	322
13 years	330	-	5	4	339
14 years	379	30	5	6	420
15 years	361	76	7	13	457
16 years	168	120	1	4	293
17 years	16	20	1	11	48
18 years	4	-	-	2	6
19 years	-	-	-	1	1
Total	1566	246	27	47	1886

- **Young people in habilitation after offending** – Those young people were accessed through a provider facilitating youth offenders into independent living. They were aged from 14 to 18 years and included young men and young women of Maori, Pacific and NZ European decent. Some of the young offenders had also had been in state care.
- **Young people in recovery** – Eight young men and women ranging from the late teens to early 20s participated in one focus group and one interview. An alcohol and drug programme and a church-based community service provider facilitated access to those young people.

- 3.11 In addition, to widen and strengthen the analysis, three focus groups were conducted with 34 young people aged 16-24 in three life skills/work skills programmes with private training providers. These young people were mainly Maori and Pacific, with no or few school qualifications. The groups included approximately 12 young mothers and young people who had used addictions or mental health services, although they were not recruited into the focus groups for those reasons. Recruiting young people through these generic training programmes is indicative of the way in which at risk and vulnerable young people connect with services in a variety of different ways. The experiences of these young people accessed through generic programmes were similar to those young people recruited through specialist programmes for conditions or behaviours which place them in the category of vulnerable or at risk young people.
- 3.12 Overall, 80 at risk or vulnerable young people were interviewed or participated in focus groups.

Component 2: The Voices of Providers of Services

- 3.13 To establish a broad national understanding of the size and dynamics of unmet housing need among at risk and vulnerable young people, a national survey of providers of services to vulnerable and at risk young people was undertaken. This involved service providers in the following sectors:
- education and training
 - social services
 - health
 - migration and refugee services
 - justice
 - housing
 - recreation
 - religious
 - arts
 - employment.
- 3.14 Providers were identified through: consultation with central and local government; community service directories; Charities Commission; and, consultation with service providers and the community sector.
- 3.15 The net of agencies and organisations that might deliver services to at risk or vulnerable young people was purposely kept wide. Because so little research has been undertaken into housing and other services to those young people, the surveying was used as an opportunity to test the extent to which the community sector was engaged with young people. Those organisations that did not see themselves as providing for young people we assumed would self-select out of the survey.
- 3.16 Providers were asked to participate in the survey through a self-complete postal questionnaire. Two questionnaires were developed. One was designed for any organisation providing services to at risk young people and a second was designed specifically for those organisations providing *housing* services to at risk young people.

- 3.17 The questionnaires consisted of around 24 predominantly close-ended questions with opportunity for more extensive commentary in the final question. The closed-ended questions were pre-coded and analysed in SPSS using both univariate analysis of frequencies and cross tabulations. A copy of the youth service provider questionnaire and the housing provider questionnaire can be found in Annexes B & C respectively. These are referred to as the National Service Provider Survey and the National Housing Provider Survey respectively.
- 3.18 The surveys were implemented by mail-out in early April 2008 with telephone follow-up in late April and early May. Where requested copies of questionnaires were e-mailed and in a small number of cases, questionnaires were completed over the telephone where providers indicated that this would be helpful. A total of 161 organisations involved in service and/or housing provision returned completed questionnaires. Those are made up as follows:
- 116 service only providers
 - 14 housing services only providers
 - 31 services and housing providers.
- 3.19 Further insights into the housing experiences of vulnerable and at risk young people were gained through discussions with Auckland service providers that had either assisted our access to young people, or offered information about their youth client base. Interviews were conducted with one mental health service provider, four youth justice and care providers, church-based community services in two locations, a refugee support organisation, a housing network and Maori social service provider.

Component 3: Policy and Practice Internationally

- 3.20 Those primary research activities were supplemented by a review of international literature and commentary. Three sets of literatures were explored:
- Firstly, literature related to the risk factors, interventions and outcomes for at risk and vulnerable young people.
 - Secondly, literature and commentary around trends in housing policy and provision were explored.
 - Finally, literature and commentary around specific housing programmes and interventions for at risk and vulnerable young people were reviewed.

4. AT RISK & VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE: ESTIMATES OF HOUSING NEED
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- 4.1 This section provides an estimate of the numbers of at risk and vulnerable young people in insecure or unsafe housing. Those estimates have been undertaken by using two primary sets of information. Those are:
- Data generated by the national survey of service providers under taken in the course of this research.
 - Information on the prevalence of young people with behaviours and characteristics that appear to fall within the phrase 'at risk and vulnerable' drawn from the longitudinal Christchurch Health and Development Study

(CHDS⁸), a longitudinal study of a birth cohort of 1,265 children born in the Christchurch urban region in mid-1977.

- 4.2 The approach to undertaking the estimates is described below. Essentially two estimates are provided. The first estimate is based entirely on the data generated by the national survey. The second estimate uses data from that survey and applies it to data generated by the CHDS.

Approach to Estimating Numbers in Housing Need

- 4.3 Establishing the numbers of at risk and vulnerable young people in housing need is fraught with difficulty. Most service providers to at risk and vulnerable young people do not systematically assess the housing conditions of their clients. Social housing providers including Housing New Zealand Corporation⁹, local council housing providers and community-based providers do not give priority to young people in housing need. Consequently, young people are likely to be under-represented on the waiting lists and in the tenancies of those providers.
- 4.4 Difficulties arising from the lack of administrative information about housing need among at risk and vulnerable young people are exacerbated by considerable fluidity around the numbers of young people who might be considered vulnerable and/or at risk. Under those conditions of uncertainty, the estimates of vulnerable and at risk young people in housing need must be treated with some caution. In our view, the estimates provided here are likely to be conservative estimates.
- 4.5 Our approach has involved developing a housing profile of the young people who are clients of the service providers that participated in the National Service Provider Survey and extrapolating that housing profile to two population estimates of at risk and vulnerable young people. The first population estimate is the total number of at risk and vulnerable young people reportedly serviced by those providers in the year ending 31 December 2007. The second population estimate is drawn from the CHDS.

At Risk and Vulnerable Young People Serviced by the Service Providers

- 4.6 A total of 147 providers delivering services directed to at risk and vulnerable young people participated in the National Service Provider Survey. As explained in Section 3, responses to the National Service Provider Survey were sought from a wide group of mainly non-governmental agencies and organisations that might have some service relation to at risk and vulnerable young people. In addition, public service providers believed to have a likely involvement in providing services to at risk and vulnerable young people were included in the survey frame. Some organisations are locally based only, others are part of a wider network of organisations or an organisation that has a national presence but operating through local offices. Some of the latter responded at the local level, while others responded through their national office.

⁸ Fergusson, D. M. and Horwood, L (2003) Resilience to childhood adversity: Results of a 21 year study. In: Resilience and Vulnerability: adaptation in the Context of Childhood Adversities, S. Luthar (ed) Cambridge University Press.

⁹ Housing New Zealand Corporation does prioritise sole parents some of whom may be young people.

- 4.7 In most cases – 71.4 percent of providers – youth services are provided as part of the delivery of a larger organisation. Most organisations have been long standing. The average operating period is 33 years and the median operating period is 10 years. There is a tendency for providers to be dealing with the young age groups. Almost 62 percent of providers reported delivering to 12-16 year olds and around 54 percent of providers delivered services to 17-20 year olds. However, less than a quarter (23.1 percent) reported providing services to 21-24 year olds.
- 4.8 In total, the providers reported providing services to 47,804 young people aged 12-24 in the year ended 31 December 2007. Table 4.1 shows the proportion of providers servicing those clients varies in relation to the primary presenting problem of at risk and vulnerable young people.

Table 4.1 Proportion of Service Providers Delivering Services to Clients with Specified Problems – National Survey of Service Providers

Characteristic of Young Clients	Providers (n=147)	
	Providers	% of Providers
Behavioural problems	90	61.2
Criminal offending	73	49.7
Mental health problems	63	42.9
Substance abuse/addiction	58	39.5
Persistent anti-social behaviour	56	37.4
Need of protection from physical abuse	54	36.7
Need of protection from neglect	46	30.6
Need of protection from sexual abuse	42	28.6
Young mother with baby	39	26.5
Unemployment	37	25.2
Literacy and reading recovery	28	19.0
Severe conduct disorder	27	18.4
Transition from foster/state care	21	14.3
Physically impaired	15	10.2
Refugee or migrant	13	8.8
Sight impaired	7	4.8
Deaf	5	3.4

*Multiple response

- 4.9 Providers can deal with a variety of young people showing different sorts of problems. As Table 4.1 shows, most of the service providers (61.2 percent) responding to the national survey dealt with young people who had behavioural problems. Almost half (49.7 percent) dealt with young people involved in criminal offending. Almost as many providers reported dealing with young people seeking recovery from mental illness and 39.5 percent had young people dealing with substance abuse/addiction among their clients. Over one third (37.4 percent) of the providers were dealing with young people displaying persistent anti-social behaviour. A similar proportion of providers (36.7 percent) were assisting young people who required protection from, usually familial, physical abuse. About a third of service providers assisted young people that had been neglected (30.6 percent). Around a quarter of providers reported assisting young people who had been sexually abused (28.6 percent of providers) and young mothers (26.5 percent of providers). Smaller proportions of providers reported delivering services to disabled young, or to young people leaving state care or young migrants/refugees.

Housing Profile of At Risk Young and Vulnerable Young Clients

- 4.10 Of the 147 service providers responding to the national survey, 89 service providers (60.5 percent) reported on the housing status of those who were clients in the 2007 calendar year. They provided for about a quarter of the total number of clients reported. Almost two-fifths of service providers had no specific data regarding the housing situation of their clients.
- 4.11 Providers were able to characterise the housing situation of 11,505 clients. Table 4.2 sets out the housing profile of the 11,505 young people whose housing arrangements are known to the service providers.

Table 4.2: Housing Situation of Young Clients – Year Ended December 2007

Known Housing Situations for Young Clients of Providers Participating in National Service Provider Survey	Young People	% At Risk and Vulnerable Young Clients
Adequate, long-term housing – family	5647	63.3
Adequate, long-term housing – other carers	901	
Adequate, long-term independent housing	584	
Adequate, long-term supported housing	146	
Residential care	362	6.3
Short-term, adequate housing	361	
Emergency housing	123	1.7
Camping ground	38	
Hotel/motel/backpackers	27	
Night shelters	4	
No fixed abode/streets	285	2.5
Unaffordable housing	575	12.6
Overcrowded housing	497	
Dilapidated housing	267	
Maladapted housing for disability	105	
House in which exposed to criminality	555	13.8
House in which exposed to sexual or physical abuse	508	
Gang house	340	
House used for drug making	180	
Total	11,505	100.2

- 4.12 Table 4.2 shows that the majority (63.3 percent) of young people are in adequate long-term situations. A small proportion (6.3 percent) is in adequate but short-term housing situations. That is they are in residential care or short-term housing situations. The remainder, 30.4 percent, of these young clients are in unsafe and/or insecure housing situations¹⁰.
- 4.13 It has already been noted that housing need can be manifest in a variety of ways. So too can unsafe housing and insecure housing. The design or physical condition of a dwelling may make a dwelling unsafe. But the people living with a young person or accessing a young person in their home may also make a dwelling unsafe. Similarly, housing can be insecure for a variety of reasons ranging from unaffordability, fragile tenure arrangements, or the temporary nature of a dwelling. When asking providers about the nature of their at risk and vulnerable young people's housing conditions, no attempt

¹⁰ The providers participating in the national survey are distributed nationally and are not confined to housing markets identified as overcrowded and/or with affordability problems (See figure 6.1).

was made to predetermine providers' views of what constituted certain housing conditions. For instance, the survey did not specify unaffordable housing as housing outgoings in excess of 30 percent of net income.

- 4.14 This research has been concerned to establish whether the providers of services for at risk and vulnerable young people saw those young peoples housing situations as problematic and, broadly, the range of factors or conditions generating unsafe or insecure housing. Further research is required to establish the profile of housing unaffordability, overcrowding and other problems such as the frequency and nature of an individual's exposure to abuse, criminality and so forth wherever they are living.
- 4.15 3,497 at risk or vulnerable young people are known by the providers to be in unsafe or insecure accommodation or without housing. That set of 3,497 at risk and vulnerable young people are the few for whom housing situations are accounted. Many service providers could not provide data as to the precise housing situations of all or some of their young clients but they did, however, know that many of their young people had precarious housing conditions.
- 4.16 The total number of at risk and vulnerable young people reported as clients was 47,804. An estimate of the overall number of those clients in unsafe or insecure housing situations can be made by assuming that the profile of unsafe or insecure housing need among the total number of clients serviced by providers is similar to the housing profile of clients for whom a housing situation is known. That is, it can be assumed that around 30.4 percent of at risk and vulnerable young clients are in insecure or unsafe housing. That is, it is estimated that the providers who participated in the Service Providers Survey were dealing with 14,532 at risk and vulnerable young people in insecure and/or unsafe housing situations.

Estimate Using Christchurch Health and Development Study Data

- 4.17 One of the problems with housing estimates from providers' client lists is the possibility that clients are reported by more than one provider. To control for that possibility, we have undertaken another approach to estimating the number of at risk and vulnerable young people in unsafe and/or insecure housing situations. This involves using data from the Christchurch Health and Development Study (CHDS).
- 4.18 The CHDS provides data on childhood exposure to family adversity that can be used to estimate the number of at risk young people in the population. The CHDS uses a range of variables to span the potential array of risk exposures, and from this estimates that just over 9 percent of the cohort had experienced six or more adversities.¹¹ This was the group that had experienced the most adversity.

¹¹ Fergusson, D. M. and Horwood, L. (2003) Resilience to childhood adversity: Results of a 21 year study. In: Resilience and Vulnerability: adaptation in the Context of Childhood Adversities, S. Luthar (ed) Cambridge University Press.

- 4.19 In the 2006 census, 311,889 people were in the 12-16 age group and 445,215 were in the 17-24 age group. In total, 757,104 people were in the 12-24 age group. Based on 9 percent of young people being at risk, an estimate of the number of at risk young people aged 12-16 is 28,070 and aged 17-24 years is 40,069 (for 12-24 age group, 68,139). This suggests that the total numbers reported as clients by service providers is between two thirds and three quarters of the young people identified by Fergusson *et al.*, that could be considered at risk or vulnerable.
- 4.20 Assuming that 30.4 percent of at risk and vulnerable young people are in unsafe and/or insecure housing situations (see section 4.11), this suggests that in the 12-24 age group a total of 20,713 at risk young people are in unsafe and/or insecure housing situations. Of those, 8,533 at risk young people aged 12-16 years and 12,180 aged 17-24 years can be expected to be in unsafe and/or insecure housing situations¹².

Overall Estimate

- 4.21 We assume that the Service Providers Survey estimate of 14,532 at risk and vulnerable young people aged 12-24 in unsafe and/or insecure housing situations is a conservative estimate at the lower end because it is based on service contacts. The estimate of 20,713 (based on CHDS data relating to at risk young people) may be at the higher end, although Fergusson *et al.*, report that their data slightly under-represented children from socially disadvantaged families, who could be exposed to at risk factors.¹³

5. AT RISK AND VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES

- 5.1 This section discusses the housing experiences of at risk and vulnerable young people who participated in the interviews and focus groups. It starts with an overview of the young people's current housing situation, then looks at the range of barriers at risk and vulnerable young people face in getting the housing they need. The impacts of not getting appropriate housing are then considered. Following on is a discussion of the types of housing assistance they have received. Finally this section outlines the types of housing information, supports and services that the young people say they need.

Current Housing Situation

- 5.2 What is striking about the young people's present living arrangements is that they are a 'snapshot in time'. Residential movement is commonplace and indeed an expected part of their lives. In the last two years, over half of the 80 young people spoken to in interviews and focus groups had moved at least once. Most had moved 2-3 times. A few had moved six or more times. The most common reasons for moving were: unaffordable rents; poor condition of the house; overcrowding; family conflict; breaking up with partner; unsafe or incompatible flatmates and unsafe neighbourhood.

¹² To assist the targeting of programmes and services it would be desirable to understand the extent to which the burden of unsafe and insecure housing falls differentially on at risk and vulnerable young people of different ethnic affiliations and personal identities. The lack of robust data regarding the profile of at risk and vulnerable young people combined with the uncertainties around their housing status already described, and uncertainties around the quality of ethnicity data collected by service providers do not allow reasonably robust estimates of this nature to be made.

¹³ Fergusson, D. M. and Horwood, L (2003) Resilience to childhood adversity: Results of a 21 year study. In: Resilience and Vulnerability: adaptation in the Context of Childhood Adversities, S. Luthar (ed) Cambridge University Press.

- 5.3 Their current living arrangements range from living with immediate family or other relatives, flatting, and living in households that they have established. A small number of the young people are boarding, living in a hostel, flatting in private rental with the help of a supported accommodation service and living in transition accommodation after completing a recovery programme.

Living with family

- 5.4 Many young people in the 16-18 years age group we spoke to are living with parents or caregivers (e.g. in a foster family), or reside with other relatives (including the relatives of their partner). Almost half of those over 18 were also living with relatives, or had returned to live with relatives after a period of living elsewhere. Some are living with relatives in overcrowded housing.

Examples of those living with relatives:

Eighteen year old Emily, who has a baby, lives at home with 11 other people in a four bedroom house. She has applied to Housing New Zealand Corporation for accommodation and understands that she is 'at the top of the list'.

Paige (16) lives at home with her mum and other relatives. She has a baby but receives no income support, and says if she did, she would be paying board. Her mother is not keen on her receiving a benefit because her family regards it as creating dependency. When she completes her education in about 18 months time, she and her partner (who doesn't live with the family) will move to a small provincial town where they grew up. She believes that housing will be a lot cheaper there.

- 5.5 Staying with parents and other relatives is done mainly for financial reasons. Some young people clearly intend to remain living with parents or other relatives for a few years yet. Or they are waiting for older siblings to get a place that they will also move to. Shifting in with other relatives is often done as a step towards independence. It is affordable, and enables the young person to gain experience as a boarder or flatmate that can be used to achieve a reference. While it is a prudent financial response, there is also a desire to be independent from relatives, as these young people observed:

If I had a preference, it's not where I would want to live. I want my own space, my own responsibilities (focus group)¹⁴.

I would like to move out of mum's house but it is so unachievable, it's the cost of the bond, rent and household costs (young mother).

I've been living at home, although my situation here isn't ideal ... so I'd like to get out sooner rather than later. I've been looking around for a year. It's pretty frustrating (young disabled).

At the moment I'm living at home because I can't find a place that I can afford. But it takes away my independence. I like my space (young disabled).

- 5.6 There is a high reliance on relatives for housing. However, some have no family back-up of any sort or no contact with any family; consequently expectations of agencies that young people seek out relatives to accommodate them are unrealistic and inappropriate, particularly for those who have left home due to violence and abuse.

¹⁴ Comments are paraphrased, not verbatim quotes. 'Focus group' indicates comments made by participants in the three focus groups with students in training providers.

Flatting

- 5.7 Living in a flatting arrangement was less common amongst the young people we spoke to, although it was more common for young men than for young women to be in flatting situations. Often these situations are unstable or transitory, characterised by uncertainty about the security of tenure, and the unreliability of flatmates.
- 5.8 To keep their housing expenses at an affordable level, young people need to rent with others, although this presents some challenges in finding compatible people. A common experience is flatmates leaving, and those remaining having to shoulder the housing costs themselves. Often this proves to be unviable and they have to relinquish the tenancy. Having problems with flatmates was a very common reason cited for moving.

It was not comfortable, so I moved back to the hostel. I had a flatmate, he left and I had to pay all the rent. It was too expensive. I only have a part-time job (young asylum seeker).

Getting others to stay so they all chip in ... they leave, so you can't afford it and have to move out (young person in recovery programme).

Examples of those flatting:

Joe lives in a flatting situation with some mates. He likes that but would not like to be in a flatting situation if his flatmates were not friends. Joe has a history of CYF care since he was 13 years old, and feels like he was shunted from home to home. He received some assistance to get into the flat in the form of an advance from Work and Income to buy household goods. He admits he spent that money on "having fun" and wishes he had been made to spend it as intended. He is happy where he is although he says the rent costs do not leave much for living.

Wayne lives with a group of young people in a flat. He enjoys that, but living is tough. He pays \$180 per week for the room, which includes power and food. That leaves \$30 per week for everything else.

Establishing households

- 5.9 Some of the young people with partners and/or children have established new households. Like other young people living independently, most struggle with housing costs, uncertain tenure and difficulties in finding suitable housing.

Examples of those living in independent households:

Jim lives with his girlfriend and her children, but the accommodation is temporary. This is a fairly new relationship. He has lived in many housing situations over his childhood and adolescence, mainly in foster care placements. Now he is in employment (although he finds it difficult to get full-time work) and wants to live in a three-bedroom house.

Robyn has been in care for a number of years, having been in several foster care placements over her adolescence. She has also offended on a minor scale. She is currently living with her boyfriend, who is an ex-prisoner. Robyn had contacted Housing New Zealand to see whether it could provide her with housing assistance. She reported being told she did not meet their criteria for priority service. Her boyfriend received assistance from Housing New Zealand as an ex-prisoner.

Natasha is a 16 year old sole parent. Previously homeless, she lived with a series of friends before being assisted into a one-bedroom private rental by a community social service organisation.

Kim was living with her partner and their baby, however when they broke up, she had to find accommodation for herself. She says that she has found it a lot easier to access income support as a single mother. She has a three-bedroom private rental, which she shares with a flatmate. Kim worked out her budget and knew what she could afford. Money is tight, but she considers herself resourceful and a good money manager.

Barriers to Getting Housing Solutions

5.10 Most of the at risk and vulnerable young people who had attempted to go flatting, or were living independently described problems getting into suitable housing. Most young people emphasised the prohibitive costs of housing, but they also talked about other barriers that are sometimes equally hard to overcome. These include:

- vulnerability to stigmatisation
- lack of knowledge about how to get accommodation
- landlords' reluctance to let to young people
- their lack of skills at running a household (including budgeting skills)
- their lack of necessary credentials and renting histories
- the difficulties young people under 18 years have in signing tenancy contracts, and
- the lack of suitable housing stock for young people.

Some also felt that their personal histories and circumstances weighed against their getting the sort of housing they wanted.

Unaffordable housing costs

5.11 Cost was identified as a major problem. Those in rental accommodation talked about the amounts they were paying and their inability to find alternatives that were affordable. Most pay \$130-150 per week for a room to rent. One young person pays \$180 per week for a room, power and food out of a total weekly income of \$210. Some young mothers are paying \$300 - \$330 per week for a house.

5.12 The up-front costs are also prohibitive. Typically, young people will have to front up with the equivalent of 5-6 weeks rent to cover the bond and the rent in advance. Although some young people talked about getting an advance to cover these costs, others felt they could not contemplate independent living because they could not see how they could save that much money.

5.13 Another upfront cost is the real estate agent's letting fee¹⁵. The average letting fee is around \$400. Many agents will not allow a tenant to enter the property without the letting fee being paid. In Auckland it is rare to find private rental that is not let through an agent. Letting fees are common.

¹⁵ The Residential Tenancies Act Amendment Bill introduced to Parliament in May 2008 seeks to prohibit letting fees.

- 5.14 Added to direct housing costs, are set-up costs of appliances and furniture (most houses are rented un-furnished or semi-furnished) and connection fees to power utilities. Young people tend to be new customers, which incurs utilities payment in advance.

[when offered the chance of accommodation] I keep quiet because I don't have money to pay them. I have no idea what to do, that's for sure (young refugee).

I'm just coping with the finances. There's no left over money at the end of the week. I can't pay to fix the car (young mother).

The biggest barrier is the bond, \$1,600 (young mother).

There's not a lot in the price range I can afford (young disabled).

- 5.15 Many of the young people in private rental accommodation that we spoke to have used up all their entitlements from Work and Income for assistance with housing costs, making moving to a new house difficult as they need to find money for a new bond, letting fee and rent in advance.

Lack of awareness and information

- 5.16 Lack of knowledge about getting housing was widespread amongst the young people we spoke to, particularly those under 20 years. As discussed above, many of the young people in the 16-18 year age group live with relatives and some have not yet left their parental home. Almost all in this age group appear to have no or very little idea about the procedures they need to go through to get rental accommodation. They do not tend to plan ahead, and find it hard to envisage what is entailed in searching for a house. They have not given serious thought to how they are going to make the transition to their own housing. Often their motivations for leaving are negative and reactive, related to family conflict or overcrowding, rather than related to planned moves for education, training or employment.

- 5.17 Many in the 16-18 age group are unaware of their lack of knowledge about the housing market. Frequently their expectations of what is available are unrealistic, and there is no sense of the financial implications of renting and running a household. Some believe it is simply a matter of looking in the paper to find a flat. Others have a general idea about the weekly costs of rent, and a vague understanding that a bond is required. Few are aware of letting fees, rental contracts, their rights and responsibilities as tenants, landlords' rights and responsibilities, what income support they might be entitled to, the existence of the Tenancy Tribunal and the Accommodation Supplement. Added to that, a few young people have literacy problems and consequent difficulties in dealing with forms. Many in the 16-18 year age group are very reluctant to approach Work and Income for information about possible housing assistance. Indeed, there was a pervasive lack of awareness of existing sources of information about the rental market.

- 5.18 Some of the young people do not have the support of family to give them information, advice, and act as advocates. For instance, to take them to potential rental properties, to act as guarantor, to help negotiate with a landlord, to provide them with household goods, to advise them and, perhaps most importantly, to provide backup if it all goes wrong. Usually, these young people do not have a home they can go back to if independent living goes wrong, or they run out of money.

Negative attitudes of real estate agents and landlords

- 5.19 One of the main barriers to getting accommodation that young people cited were the negative attitudes of real estate agents and landlords towards young people. This barrier was also apparent in the National Landlords Survey, which found that students, sole parent families, single young men and young people in general were not preferred tenants.¹⁶ Young people felt that landlords discriminated against them, assuming they would not pay the rent, have parties all the time and leave the place in a mess. Some young people tried to estimate the numbers of places they had to look at before a landlord would agree to let to them. One estimated being accepted for one out of ten places he looked at. Some young people reported that they ended up not having any choice over the accommodation they rented – all the choice was in the hands of landlords.

It took one year to find a place, mum did the talking. We saw places, but they look over us and think you're just going to have parties (focus group).

They stereotype us as all bad, having parties (young mother).

Brown people get looked at. They think you'll invite over gangsters (focus group).

- 5.20 Added to the general perception of young people as undesirable tenants, some landlords appear to be reluctant to take on beneficiaries, young mothers with children, those who are culturally different (such as young refugees) or who have special housing requirements (such as young disabled).

Landlords don't like kids, they worry that guys will come over and there will be violence from the dads (young mother).

Most landlords ask my age and then just say no I'm too young. I've only had one lady who was willing to rent to me, but I lost her number and the place was let by the time I went back (young disabled).

- 5.21 Many young people reported that they struggle to be taken seriously as applicants by real estate agents and landlords:

The real estate agent didn't take us seriously because we were young. We get declined with no reason given (focus group).

Landlords never respond. You don't know if you've got the house or not. You have to be persistent, keep ringing up for houses (young mother).

- 5.22 Some young people, particularly young women, have experienced inappropriate behaviour, such as a real estate agent or landlord coming on to the property with no notice given to the tenant. This contributes to young people feeling unsafe in their housing.

I tried flatting before. It was working [with flatmate] but I had problems with the landlord ... walking in without knocking. I complained then he put the rent up, it was too much so I had no choice but to move back to my sister's (young disabled woman).

¹⁶ Saville-Smith, K. and Fraser, R. (2004) *National Landlords Survey: Preliminary Analysis of Data*, CRESA Wellington.

- 5.23 Others have experienced difficulties in getting real estate agents and landlords to accept references, incremental repayment of arrears (instead of lump sum repayment), and in getting bonds returned promptly. Many of the young people who had moved flats indicated they were reluctant to pursue getting their bonds back, even if it jeopardised their ability to take up a new tenancy.

Lack of household and living skills

- 5.25 Two of the young people interviewed, a young offender and a young person coming out of care (who also had an offending history), identified their lack of household skills as a problem in achieving suitable housing. They talked about their need to learn how to budget (especially to ensure that the power bill was paid), cook and clean. Other young people also commented that they would like help with budgeting and information about household management.

Lack of necessary credentials

- 5.26 Accessing housing requires young people to have a set of credentials, including a record as a good tenant and a good credit history. Most landlords require references from prospective tenants. The first big hurdle for someone starting out is to get the necessary references. Some landlords will accept references from relatives whom the young person has flatbed or boarded with, however others will not.
- 5.27 Young people themselves likened their lack of a rental history with their lack of a work history. They described being unable to get a job because they had no work history. As one young man queried, "How can I get work experience if I can't get work". Others commented that the same goes for housing: how can they get a rental history if they cannot get a flat.

When you're just starting out, how can you have a reference? They wouldn't even accept a reference from my parents who I boarded with (young mother).

A character reference from a teacher or WINZ should be able to be used as a first reference (young mother).

- 5.28 It is also common for young people to be subjected to credit checks and police checks. Many of the young people indicated that they have a poor credit record, which severely limits their ability to get accommodation and retain accommodation. They recounted a history of debt through court fines, hire purchase and 'instant' cash loans. The highest number of fringe lenders are located in Manukau City with West Auckland not far behind.¹⁷

If you're in debt, that's it. Falling into the debt spiral. Loan sharks, a lot of young people are in debt (focus group).

Yeah big debts, court debts, \$80,000 (young person in recovery programme).

¹⁷ Research New Zealand (2006) Fringe Lenders in New Zealand. Report prepared for Ministry of Consumer Affairs.

Signing contracts

- 5.29 The young people we spoke to commented on their difficulties in renting when they were under 18. In particular, they considered that there are problems in their gaining a tenancy contract. There appears to be a widespread perception that young people under 18 cannot sign a contract. This is incorrect. Under New Zealand law, young people can sign a contract and are legally bound by it, if the other party can show that the contract is fair and reasonable. Most landlords use the standard tenancy agreement provided by Tenancy Services, and this has been ruled a fair and reasonable agreement by the Tenancy Tribunal.¹⁸
- 5.30 Despite their legal ability to enter into a contract and be bound by it (provided it is fair and reasonable), those under 18 who had got a tenancy agreement, said they had done so with a guarantor, as landlords tend to insist a person over 18 signs the contract as a guarantor. One young woman said that even though she and her partner were over 18, they were still required by the landlord to get a guarantor.
- 5.31 In some cases, young people can avoid the need to sign up to a lease by flatting with other older people and not becoming a signatory. In other cases, the young people end up having no access to stable housing – they drift from house to house without having any renting status. A few young people renting from private landlords also said that did not have a tenancy agreement; they did not know why and were unclear what their status was.

Lack of suitable stock

- 5.32 The young people emphasised the lack of rental housing stock available to them. Housing New Zealand Corporation stock is generally not available to young people, unless they have children and are in desperate housing need.
- 5.33 Furthermore, there is very little affordable private rental accommodation available. In particular, one and two bedroom places are very difficult to get, yet they are ideal for young people wanting or needing to live on their own, young mothers and young people who do not want to live with several other flatmates. Those with mental health issues often feel a need to live on their own as part of their recovery. Some others, such as young students and young people in addiction services indicated that they would rather live on their own than risk living with flatmates that would jeopardise their recovery and habilitation.
- 5.34 Often private accommodation has insecure tenure – many of the young people have experienced situations where the place they have been living in has been sold, or the landlord has wanted to take the property off the rental market. There is also a lack of affordable accommodation that is easily accessible to public transport and employment, education/training and facilities such as shops, health centres and for young mothers, facilities for early childhood education.

¹⁸ Citizens Advice Bureau (2006). What You Want to Know about Tenancy. Information Sheet for Youth. Youthinfo 4.

Personal circumstances and histories

- 5.36 Those with offending histories described how that dogged them. They felt like they could not get away from these histories and start again. For those who had been in a large number of home placements, they felt like their histories were inescapable no matter where they went. One young man who had lived in more than seventy-five homes in his lifetime felt like his reputation was known in every corner of the country. Even though he had turned his life around, he felt that his past made getting a home difficult. He hoped his girlfriend (with her children) might be able to help them access housing but he would like to be able to access housing for her. All the young people who had offended felt their past would remain a barrier to accessing housing.
- 5.37 Young people with addictions and/or mental health issues also found accessing housing very difficult. Both groups experience stigma, which makes obtaining suitable accommodation more difficult. These young people need affordable, independent housing where they have a choice about with whom they live.

Impacts of Not Having Appropriate Housing

How important is housing?

If the house is good, that's one less thing to worry about (focus group)

It's very important to have housing that is stable and affordable. If I don't have that, I will go back to doing crime (young person in recovery)

It's really important to have a place that's your own (young disabled)

Extremely important stepping stone to building my own life (young disabled)

I would like to be in a house, comfortable, with no trouble, I don't have to worry (young refugee)

- 5.38 Regardless of their living situations, most of the young people saw their current housing as unsuitable. The main reasons given related to poor dwelling conditions, high housing and living costs, overcrowding, lack of privacy, conflict and concerns about safety of the home or neighbourhood.
- 5.39 Not having affordable, safe and comfortable housing affects young people in many adverse ways. Most identified unaffordable housing costs, difficulties of finding accommodation, insecure tenancy and continual moving as huge stressors. Poor and insecure housing affect ability to study and decisions about where to work. Some said that their health or the health of their children has been affected by cold, damp and mould in their houses.
- 5.40 A lot of those interviewed commented on problems with the condition or performances of the houses they currently lived in. This included cold houses, those needing repairs, and problems with pests.

Cold damp, made us sick. Cockroaches (focus group).

I don't like where we live, needs things fixed. Scared of falling down the steps. It's cold (young refugee living with family).

- 5.41 Others, particularly young women, young mothers and refugees, were very concerned about their own and their family's safety and identified problems with neighbourhoods that they had lived in, or were currently in.

Don't like this area ... It's no good for girls living by themselves. I was so scared ... maybe people stealing from the letterbox (young refugee).

- 5.42 The negative impacts of poor housing are similar across all the groups, but there are specific impacts that each group identified.

Disabled young people

- 5.43 Young disabled people are very vulnerable to not having their housing needs met, particularly when they wish to move out of their parental home into independent living.
- 5.44 Current policy and funding settings make it difficult for accommodating the changing housing needs of a young person who needs home modifications. As they grow and mature, they may need further alterations within their current home, or if they wish to shift for education or employment, modifications to another dwelling. Those who have access to family funding or ACC funding are likely to be advantaged over those funded through the Ministry of Health, as there is a policy of funding only one set of modifications except when there are extenuating circumstances. This can make it very difficult for young people with physical disabilities accessing housing, as they make transitions to adult roles and independent living.¹⁹

Twenty four year old Susan has a learning disability. One outcome of that is that she left school at 14, with no qualification, so her earning capacity is low. She has lived in various places and now wants to live in Auckland for the long term. But she has found that rents are very high and fears that she will have to live with incompatible people. Her parents have helped her at times by topping up her income so that she can afford a better flat. Sometimes she goes home for a period, so that she can pay off debts and save a little. She is worried about housing in the long term and she feels she cannot retrain (she cannot afford time off work and is too young for a student allowance). She sees her current situation as a cycle she cannot escape from – no qualifications, therefore low pay, therefore inability to save, therefore no opportunity to escape from low quality rental housing interspersed with periods of time back at her parents' home.

- 5.45 Many agencies appear to be unaware of the possibility of young disabled wanting or needing their own, independent accommodation, and there also appears to be little understanding of the range of housing needs among disabled young people. These needs relate not only to the nature of their disability, but also relate to their family circumstances, and their level of support needed. For some young disabled people to live independently requires not only accommodation adapted to physical needs, but also often support with daily living tasks and personal care. Furthermore, there is a limited supply of accessible housing that is modified to cater for the mobility needs of people with physical and sensory disabilities.

¹⁹ Saville-Smith, K., James, B., Fraser, R., Ryan, B., and Travaglia, S. (2007) *Housing and Disability Future Proofing New Zealand's Housing Stock for an Inclusive Society*. Report prepared for the Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand www.chranz.org.nz.

- 5.46 Several people commented on the range of housing needs and identified difficulties in accessing the type of housing needed:

I want to live on my own. I need someone to help with cleaning, need someone to help with personal care. This would need to carry on happening if I am to live on my own ... in the future I'm hoping to get a liveable house that I can do everything in. if it's not a liveable house it's impossible, wider doors and so on.

There is a tendency to fit a disabled person into what is there rather than 'fit for purpose'.

Not enough places for people with wheelchairs, cerebral palsy etc and not enough places for respite care when their parents need a break. If you are 13-18 there is nowhere for you to stay often.

- 5.47 While the nature of disability itself generates specific housing needs, such as the need for accessible features, a small dwelling, a safe environment and proximity to services and public transport, access to affordable housing is a fundamental requirement, as many young disabled have limited incomes. Like other young people, young disabled are also confronted not only with problems of unaffordable housing, but also poor housing conditions and unstable tenancies. They can find that moving out of home involves trial and error, and is not always successful:

So difficult to find accessible accommodation in Auckland. Like, there's quite simply nothing. I went flatting last year and I looked for months to find something wheelchair friendly and I found zilch. And even more disappointingly, no organisation dedicated to such a provision. Except of course Housing NZ [sic], but they have restrictions around income, number of occupants, area etc. We ended up getting a flat which was just that – nothing more, limiting my independence considerably. It got too much in the end and I moved back home.

- 5.48 For those young people who remain at home, gaining more independence within the family home may require more house modifications or alterations. However, funding for house modifications is very difficult to get, particularly for those funded through the Ministry of Health. Most young people have had modifications done to their homes that do not easily accommodate their maturation and development through childhood to young adulthood. Sometimes families make extensive alternations to the home to make it more flexible as the young person grows and desires more independence. Examples were given of a 17 year old who has a specially modified floor of the house for his use, and another young man whose family has built him a unit on their section. However, not all families have the financial ability to provide purpose-built accommodation, and other young people have very limited family support.

- 5.49 If young disabled people do not have access to decent housing, this has significant flow on effects for their ability to form relationships with others, participate in their communities and take up tertiary education and employment. Notably, those over 25 who participated in the Future Proofing research commented on difficulties they have experienced in pursuing employment, further education or training, their ability to live independently, the ability to choose whom to live with, and where to live, because of on-going problems in getting suitable housing.²⁰

²⁰ Saville-Smith, K., James, B., Fraser, R., Ryan, B., and Travaglia, S. (2007) *Housing and Disability Future Proofing New Zealand's Housing Stock for an Inclusive Society*. Report prepared for the Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand www.chranz.org.nz.

Young mothers

Erana (19) lives with her baby in a three-bedroom house privately rented house that she shares with a friend and her child. Together they pay \$330 per week rent. Erana finds this 'just' manageable because she is able to share expenses with her friend. As a young mum, Erana's main concern is to live in a safe area. Previously she lived with her sister in Housing New Zealand Corporation accommodation where they experienced some break-ins and clothes were stolen off the line. In the last two years Erana has lived in six places, including a room in a hostel with shared facilities. It was cold, damp and mouldy and she felt unsafe for herself and her baby.

Karina is 24 years old, with a 15 month old child. She lived in a caravan park until her baby was six months old, and then got a private rental house with a relative, where they pay \$300 per week. Karina is struggling to pay off rent arrears. She has paid off about half and is paying off the rest at a few dollars a week, but is fearful of being evicted. Furthermore, the house is not ideal as it is unfenced and sited on a busy road, which she considers dangerous for her baby. Karina has no transport. The house is a kilometre away from the nearest dairy and a considerable distance from any early childhood centre. Karina has recently applied for a Housing New Zealand Corporation house, but at the moment they haven't anything to offer her. Karina wants to settle into secure accommodation as she is concerned that her housing difficulties are affecting her baby's wellbeing and development.

- 5.50 Safe accommodation, particularly the safety of neighbourhoods, was a major issue raised by young people. A few young people indicated that they are currently living in unsafe living situations, including overcrowded accommodation, unsafe neighbourhoods and exposure to violence and substance abuse. Although they want to move out, they are finding it difficult because they cannot afford to, or cannot find any other accommodation. Several young people cited unsafe housing that they had experienced in the past, including living in hostel accommodation and camping grounds.

- 5.51 The need for safe accommodation was especially raised by young mothers, some of whom have felt constrained to take Housing New Zealand Corporation accommodation in what they considered to be unsafe areas, simply because they cannot see any other option. Other young mothers have chosen to take up private rental accommodation because they feel safer.

Housing New Zealand [sic], you don't get to choose, often it's not safe ... doesn't take into account that families should be in safe environments.

I didn't even think of going to Housing New Zealand [sic] because I needed a house immediately and didn't want to go into an unsafe area. So I went private, but it's more expensive.

- 5.52 Young mothers are also concerned about the impacts of poor housing on their child's and their own health.

The house has cockroaches. It's been fumigated but they won't go away, so we're moving.

It's cold in the sleep out and there's not enough room for baby. The section is not suitable for baby.

Young people leaving state care

- 5.53 For most of the young people coming out of care, their whole lives have been characterised by what they see as unsuitable housing.

Tracey has been in and out of care for the last 5-7 years. She is now 17. Her memory of school years is one of shifting on a frequent basis, either because she was moved between foster and whanau homes or because her mother had to move. In secondary school she remembers 'always arriving half way through a year' and moving again before exams at the end of the year. She regrets the learning she missed out on, had to repeat one year, and left school with no qualifications. She also remembers feeling homesick a lot of the time, but did not know which home she missed. Now she is working towards independence. She thinks getting a job is a first priority and is excited about her prospects because she has just completed a computer-skills course. She would like a house, but knows she will have to settle for a room in a flat. What worries her is she believes she won't be able to afford a 'good' flat. She expects to end up having to live with people she describes as 'rough'. She has not thought about the future.

- 5.54 One young man was clear: unsuitable housing had meant he has had a 'shit life'. He estimated that he has been in 50 different home placements over his life. Others talked about feelings of homesickness because of the frequent shifts, poor school outcomes and, therefore, poor employment and income earning prospects, and feelings of instability. One young man, who had been in care since he was 13 years old, concluded that his recent experience (frequent shifts and housemates not of his choice) made him more determined to seek stability in his later life.

"When I get married and have children I want to own my own house."

- 5.55 Young people who have been in care for long periods often lack the skills to address problems independently. As some caseworkers describe it, they are institutionalised. If things go wrong, they are used to calling a social worker to sort things out. Once they reach 17 years of age, however, there are few service providers they can call unless they have mental health or other problems. For most young people in care, their custody order expires when they reach 17 years (in some cases these orders are extended). Few of them have families they can call on.
- 5.56 In some cases, young people stay on in home placements (e.g., foster homes) beyond the age of 17 because there is nowhere else for them to go and they have built a rapport with the foster parents and feel settled. Often foster parents feel responsible for these young people and recognise that they are not equipped to live independently (financially, emotionally or practically). They allow them to stay on even though payment for their up-keep will have ceased when they reached 17 years. While such arrangements might meet the needs of the young people at the time, because they are not ready to come out of care, there are repercussions down the line, including lack of bed-spaces in these foster homes for other younger people and risks for the caregivers that they will lose their caregiver status.

Young offenders

Sam has been in the care of CYF since he was 13, with dual status under Youth Justice and Care and Protection. He is now 17 and moving towards independent living. He is participating in a programme that provides support and advice as he makes that transition. He craves stability, explaining that he has been in more than 50 homes over his lifetime. He admits that some of his previous behaviour was 'pretty bad' but says he is now over that and wants to settle down with his girlfriend and her children. Finding a home is hard. Although he has a job, it is on a casual basis and he has no control over the number of hours available to work, so his income varies week by week. He may be able to pay rent one week but couldn't guarantee that he would be able to the next. Also, his past haunts him. Even though he is proud that he has 'turned over a new leaf', people in areas where he has lived before remember his past (and he has lived in a number of areas over the city). He wants a full-time job, a house with 3 bedrooms and room for a garden. Sam says he doesn't plan for more than 6 months into the future.

- 5.57 Often young offenders cannot live at home as their families cannot cope with their behaviour. But it is difficult for them to find suitable housing of their own, both because landlords are reluctant to rent to them and because obtaining employment (and therefore a steady income stream) is difficult. In their experience, employers are also reluctant to take them on. For some young offenders, the effects are considerable. Young women will often end up living with their boyfriends because they see that as their only option. Early pregnancies are a common result, which also means there is a growing number of children born to immature, inexperienced parents. Some young men end up living in 'tinny houses' where accommodation is provided in exchange for assisting in drug deals, and some join gangs because accommodation and protection are offered, and also get dragged into the drug culture. Some live on the street, some increase their offending, and some end up in prison. And, because all their energy goes into finding somewhere to sleep or addressing issues that arise from poor housing choices, little attention is given to building skills and finding work, which may resolve their problems in the long-term.
- 5.58 Young offenders' expectations of assistance often reflects their childhood and adolescent home situations. For those who have been under CYF care for much of their lives (and that is the case for a large proportion) they are doubly disadvantaged. They both suffer from the stigma of being an offender (e.g., limited employment opportunities and wary landlords) and share characteristics of institutionalised people, including a lack of initiative, a lack of independence and limited family and community links. Those who have not been under CYF care are more independent. However, both groups tend to lack family support, either because families have been unable to provide support for some time or are unsafe (hence their CYF Care and Protection history) or because families are unable to cope with the behaviour.

- 5.59 The lack of family support compounds offenders' housing problems. They cannot call on parents to help them find accommodation, act as guarantor, negotiate with landlords, provide furniture and other household goods, take around food parcels, and provide temporary refuge if the living arrangements becomes unaffordable or otherwise untenable. These young people are often left to cope on their own.

Young refugees and asylum seekers

Jefferson arrived from a refugee camp in Tanzania to the Mangere Settlement Centre in 2005. With his father, he was housed in a Housing New Zealand Corporation house after leaving the Centre and enrolled in tertiary education and then acquired a job as a cleaner. He stayed with his father for two years, but at the age of 22 found that his father's constant abuse of alcohol and violence too difficult and dangerous to live with. Jefferson asked many agencies for help. He sought alternative Housing New Zealand Corporation accommodation but was declined because he is a single, young man. As a consequence, Jefferson left the house which he shared with his father and looked for private rental accommodation. He could not find any affordable accommodation and does not realise he could get assistance through the Accommodation Supplement. He spent the first month sleeping on the floor of a friend's bedroom. Currently, he has been given accommodation at another refugee's small two-bedroom unit. He frequently has to sleep on the floor in the sitting room when his host's daughter comes to stay.

Aisha is an 18 year old asylum seeker who has been in New Zealand for less than a year. Shortly after her arrival at Auckland airport, she was found wandering along a road in South Auckland, with no idea where she was. Currently Aisha is waiting for her case for refugee status to be heard. If she gains refugee status, she will be able to apply for a work permit, for income support and a community services card. Until she gets a work permit she cannot take up employment or training, or find accommodation. With no relatives in New Zealand and no means of support, Aisha relies on a charitable organisation that provides her with accommodation, food, clothing and other assistance.

- 5.60 Some young refugees have families that they can live with, and want to remain living with. Families provide important social and cultural support. It is increasingly common for young single refugees, especially if they are students, to live with family well into their 20s, partly because of the support, and partly because of the difficulties of finding accommodation as young single people and the costs of establishing their own household. However, continuing to live with family is not a viable option for all young refugees, especially if their home is crowded or there is family conflict.
- 5.61 Whether some young people wish to live independently of their relatives, or are forced into finding their own accommodation, their options are very limited. Young refugees and asylum seekers often have language difficulties and cultural requirements that make it difficult for them to share accommodation with those of other cultures or religious beliefs. For example, the majority of practising Muslims follow food rules which mean that if they live with those who do not follow the same practices, they cannot share cooking equipment and utensils, or food storage areas. Consequently they faced additional expenditure on household equipment. It is also desirable that they live close to shops that sell halal food.

- 5.62 Young refugees and asylum seekers are also aware of negative attitudes towards them due to their colour, cultural and religious differences. Indeed, some of the young people in the focus groups voiced a perception that refugees have priority access to Housing New Zealand Corporation housing. The young women refugees in particular had concerns about threats to their personal safety in neighbourhoods where they live.
- 5.63 For young refugees seeking independence, boarding with families of the same cultural background may be possible, although sometimes this is not ideal as it contributes to household crowding. For example, typical household sizes amongst the Somali community are anything between 5 and 12 members. One study identified unavailability of affordable large family homes in Auckland resulting in overcrowding and noted that refugee groups tend to have larger households than others. In 2004, 45 percent of Family Sponsored households contained 5-7 people, with some three-bedroom state houses containing up to 12 people.²¹ The consequences are that young people seek other alternatives, although this may be very different for men as compared to women.
- 5.64 Some young single male refugees pursue seasonal work where this not only provides employment, but also offers the opportunity to stay in accommodation with other workers of the same cultural background. Still other young refugees go to Australia because they cannot find appropriate housing in New Zealand. For young women, their housing options may be more limited and depend on their cultural role within the family. For example, it is common for young unmarried Somali women to stay living with family and take up family responsibilities including caring for grandparents and younger siblings.
- 5.65 Young asylum seekers generally have no family in New Zealand, and consequently no-one that they can stay with. They have come into the country under false passports and have been abandoned by agents. They are not eligible for any state assistance and must apply for refugee status, which may take years. If successful, they are awarded refugee status, however they are not incorporated into the formal refugee resettlement programme and therefore receive the least formal resettlement support of any migrant group. Once asylum seekers gain refugee status they must provide their own accommodation.²² Their options for accommodation are extremely limited while waiting for status. They are very reliant on help from non-government agencies. The Auckland Refugee Council is the only organisation offering support and short-term accommodation for asylum seekers. If they are granted status, they generally get very little formal resettlement support, which suggests their housing needs may not be adequately met.
- 5.66 The young refugees and asylum seekers see housing as critical to their overall wellbeing and necessary to them doing well in their new country. Often their decisions about work and education are dependent on whether they have appropriate accommodation. Getting stable housing is essential for them getting into steady employment and tertiary education.

²¹ Meager, Z. (2005) *The Home of Exile: Housing The Auckland Ethiopian Refugee Population*. Master of Arts in Sociology Thesis. University of Auckland.

²² Ibid

- 5.67 The asylum seekers feel very dislocated and dispirited. They are in limbo. Those without even temporary work permits cannot do anything but wait. Even achieving basic accommodation appears unobtainable:

I am under stress, feel forgotten. You are not anyone in this world. We are not treated as human beings. Housing is just one thing, but it would be a big thing to have.

If they would just give you some course, give you a chance to study, then you can do something for yourself. Just staying at the hostel all day, doing nothing. I want to live like normal people. It's too hard, you don't know what is going to happen in your life.

Young people in recovery

- 5.68 Some of the young people who have used mental health or addictions services also have a history of inadequate housing in environments that have exacerbated their addictions or mental illness. Flattening with others in unsatisfactory and unsafe situations is common because of the need for shelter. However, they know that getting into a supportive and stable housing situation is critical to their recovery, to their ability to function well, to getting work and participating in the community. Often the services available appear fragmented and do not address individual needs. As one young person observed, 'once the benefit is sorted out, the agencies think that your problems are solved'.

Twenty one year old Ben is on a sickness benefit and does voluntary work. He has lived in many places. As a child, he moved frequently with his mother. Later, he had times living on the street, a short period in emergency accommodation and residence in a therapeutic programme that did not work for him. He has no contact with any of his family, and although he would like to re-establish contact with them, he has no idea where they are. Now boarding with others, he is not sure how long he will stay, as he feels 'out of place'. Although fearful of being on the street again, he feels this may be inevitable if he cannot find a place where he feels comfortable and able to deal with his mental health issues – 'it's hard to live with other people who are new to you and don't understand you. You get to the point where you don't fit in anywhere but you want to'. His ambition is to 'stop and settle'. Ideally Ben would like a place to himself, but considers this unachievable because of the cost of renting on his own.

Colin is about to leave a residential therapeutic community. In his early 20s, he wants to move into a situation where he can start afresh and not fall back into old ways. He needs accommodation with flatmates that 'aren't dodgy' as these are very important to help him re-build his life. In particular, he's looking to avoid neighbourhoods where drug dealing and crime are commonplace. He has already experienced housing difficulties with moving around numerous flats and a stint of living in a car. In the past he has also failed credit checks for rental accommodation because of debts. Before entering the programme Colin figured he was shifting every four months.

- 5.69 These young people often encounter stigma, which makes it difficult to deal with landlords. This can result in them taking unsuitable, unsafe housing or choosing to live with others who do not help their recovery, or choosing to sleep rough:

Names like schizo or depression are put on people and doesn't help them in any way.

[labelling] follows us forever.

I want to leave because of getting hassled.

It's high risk to go back to living with the people I knew. Falling into the old ways, drinking, doing crime.

- 5.70 Young people in recovery often have a reduced earning capacity and uncertainty over future earnings. The nature of their condition may also make living with others undesirable, which places further drain on their finances.
- 5.71 Current housing services do not meet the changing needs of young people with addictions or mental health issues. Some of their housing needs are directly related to treatment. Other housing needs are related to making the transition from treatment to recovery. There are also housing needs related to achieving safe, secure long term housing that contributes to recovery and wellbeing. Lack of appropriate housing support at different stages of treatment and recovery jeopardises their ability to lead successful lives.
- 5.72 Overseas, the relationship between suitable housing and recovery is well recognised. The provision of affordable, adequate housing with secure tenure is critical to recovery, continued wellbeing and maintaining independence.²³

Homeless young people

- 5.73 Some of the young people talked about times when they have been homeless, literally without a roof over their head, or drifting from one dwelling to another. Examples given included one 14 year old whose parent had left the country, who was found living in the laundry of a neighbour; young people living on the street because of family violence; and young people who are evicted and have no place to go.
- 5.74 Some young people prefer an itinerant lifestyle. One young man has been dossing down in a house where a group of his mates live. He likes to move around a lot and estimated that he has moved 17 times over the last year. He likes travelling and his current temporary living arrangement.
- 5.75 However, lack of stable accommodation has huge impacts for young people. Those who have no physical or postal address, and no identification cannot access a benefit or open a bank account. Their lack of housing affects their ability to access any income. A number of church and community organisations assist these young people with food, temporary accommodation and with getting a statutory declaration so they can then seek assistance from Work and Income. Often they are very stressed, and suffer depression and ill health due to sleeping rough.

²³ Mental Health Commission 1999. Housing and Mental Health. *Reducing Housing Difficulties for People with Mental Illness*. A Discussion Paper.

How I felt whilst on the streets²⁴

Less care for others, to the extent of feeling you need to fend for yourself.
Not enough support to be able to get the right support.
Cold to the point where you have to handle it.
In the corner of my mind I can't help but wonder what the world thinks about paupers.
Feel unworthy.
Like the world you know is against you.
Hungry and un-needed.
Lost, angry at yourself as well as all the people who ever done wrong to your life
thinking I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them.
Hurt with not enough energy to even think about doing something good for yourself.
Worn out.

What Housing Assistance Have They Had?

- 5.76 Many of the young people, especially those 16-18 years of age and those living at home have not received any housing assistance. The exceptions are some young people leaving state care, young offenders and those in addictions or mental health programmes, who may have received some assistance such as advocacy, mentoring, advice, and skill development, particularly in living skills and job seeking skills. Some have lived in transition housing after completing a programme, although this accommodation does not necessarily include any assistance with moving on to more permanent accommodation.
- 5.77 Young people reported feeling intimidated by Work and Income and Housing New Zealand Corporation staff. Some young people have received monetary assistance from Work and Income such as a rent advance to cover a bond, and assistance to buy household goods. A few, mainly young mothers, receive the Accommodation Supplement, however almost all of the young single people flatting or boarding were unaware of the Accommodation Supplement. The experiences of young people with Work and Income varied considerably, from reports of helpful service, to comments about delays and lack of information. Common experiences were:
- Having to attend several appointments to work through related housing matters, such as accessing the Accommodation Supplement, assistance with bond money, and other financial assistance, rather than having all housing needs dealt with in one meeting.
 - Long delays of several weeks in getting appointments, which often means that the prospective rental is no longer available.
 - Difficulties in getting rent reassignment deductions stopped when shifting accommodation.
 - Being told to enter into a tenancy agreement for a house before being told what financial assistance would be available.

²⁴ This description of sleeping rough was written for the researchers by a young man who has lived on the streets off and on since his early teens.

- 5.78 Few of the young people we spoke to have had any direct experience of renting from Housing New Zealand Corporation. The experience that most of the young people have had with Housing New Zealand Corporation is through living in Housing New Zealand Corporation stock rented by relatives. Two or three of the young people talked about contacting Housing New Zealand Corporation to enquire about accommodation, but the response was that they were not eligible for assistance. Only a few, all young mothers, were currently renting a Housing New Zealand Corporation property. A couple of young people knew that Housing New Zealand Corporation runs seminars about accessing their services and provide a list of real estate properties. No-one had attended a seminar. A couple of young people had used the property lists, although they had found that properties were still listed when they had already been rented and suggested that property lists needed to be up-dated more frequently.
- 5.79 Most would not consider going to Housing New Zealand Corporation for housing assistance. This is not because they are aware that young single people are low priority on the allocation system, but because of a general assumption that there are long waiting lists and a perception that it would be a waste of time. There is also a widespread perception that Housing New Zealand Corporation stock are in unsafe neighbourhoods.
- 5.80 A lot of the young people have dealt with real estate agents, again their experiences have varied a lot. A few have had good experiences, but most felt they are low priority for real estate agents and get poor service from them.
- 5.81 Those young people who have had good experiences finding accommodation generally said this has been due to the help received from church or community social service organisations that have worked on their behalf, helping them access income support and deal with real estate agents and landlords.

What Assistance is Needed?

- 5.82 The young people's ability to articulate the assistance they needed varied considerably. All identified financial assistance as paramount. Added to that, many said that they needed information and advice about housing, and practical assistance with accommodation searching.
- 5.83 Young disabled people were very clear and precise about the types of assistance they need, from modifications and equipment to make their living environment work for them, through to greater awareness among housing providers of their needs, and supported accommodation and support services. They said they want support to live independently, including help with finding suitable housing, help to deal with letting agents and landlords and help with household management and personal care.
- 5.84 The priority for young mothers is help to access safe and healthy housing for themselves and their children.
- 5.85 Young refugees and asylum seekers said they need help in finding safe and suitable accommodation. This may include help with language and unfamiliar agency processes and help in finding people to live with who are compatible. Some said that if they could have assistance that combined access to tertiary education, employment and housing, this would contribute enormously to their successful settlement.

- 5.86 In general, the young people leaving state care and young offenders found it hard to anticipate the help they needed to get into the housing they wanted. Their immediate needs were monetary, other than finding a suitable home and a landlord that would accept them. So, they tended to focus on financial help and support to get into regular and reasonably rewarded employment. Financial help they identified included assistance to pull together enough money to pay the bond and rent in advance and assistance to purchase household goods. Most of those young people focused on work. They saw this as the pathway to suitable housing, so variously wanted financial help to even out earnings in a casual job market, help to build skills and qualifications, and funding to get work gear such as boots and safety equipment.
- 5.87 Young mental health and addictions service users identified similar needs to many other young people, particularly for financial assistance with housing costs, help with finding accommodation, help to find compatible flatmates and housing in safe neighbourhoods.
- 5.88 Apart from assistance with housing affordability, the main supports and services identified as needed were:
- Housing information and advisory services
 - Housing advocacy for young people
 - Housing specifically for young people
 - Improved existing services.

Housing information and advisory services

Needing help to prepare a budget. It's encouraging young people to be independent (young mother).

Services need to go into the community, have a look, get more understanding of us (focus group).

- 5.89 Young people experience confusion and difficulties in getting housing information and advice. Most have not accessed housing information and do not know where to get it from. Information about available housing services appears to be fragmented and scattered. Many of the young people do not know who to go to for housing advice, although some have had contact with Work and Income. Several suggested that Work and Income, Housing New Zealand Corporation and the Tenancy Tribunal go out and meet with young people, explain their role and give information about services available.
- 5.90 Young people acknowledged they needed to know a lot more about the housing market. The specific information needs identified were:
- What their rights and responsibilities as tenants are, including the role of the Tenancy Tribunal.
 - Help to understand a tenancy agreement.
 - Information about financial assistance that might be available, including the Accommodation Supplement.
 - The costs associated with renting and running a household, including how to draw up a budget.

- 5.91 Several of the disabled young people emphasised that it was important to be able to independently access information about housing without needing help from others. As well, information should be in the appropriate format and medium. Other young people also suggested that publicising housing information needs to happen through a wide range of channels, including pamphlets, youth radio, the internet and local libraries. Free phone numbers are useful, but need to be supplemented by text or local numbers as free phone numbers cannot be accessed by cell phone, which most young people rely on.

Housing advocacy

There needs to be more people to help you with housing. Some landlords are pretty shifty (young mother).

They would drive you around to houses and help you to look at it, point out problems, e.g. if it's a damp house, which is not good if you have an asthmatic baby (young mother).

There needs to be an organisation specifically set up to help young people get into a place of their own. I've really just tried WINZ but they haven't been helpful at all – a lot of my friends say the same thing (young disabled).

Who do I turn to? (young person in recovery programme).

- 5.92 A lot of the young people came up with the idea of a person with a dedicated role to help young people access housing. Some called this role an advocate, others a broker or mentor. They envisaged a free service that works on behalf of young people to help them navigate the processes and organisations involved in house hunting. These include dealing with Work and Income, landlords, letting agents and Housing New Zealand Corporation. Some young people gave specific examples of help from which they could benefit:

- Help with accessing computers, newspapers, real estate agents and travelling to look at houses. These activities incur costs, which often young people cannot afford. Many young people do not have access to private transport or the internet.
- How to find out what the condition of the house is, and how to identify if anything needs fixing before moving in. This was a general information need, but most specifically mentioned by young disabled.
- Help in understanding the tenancy agreement.
- Help from a housing broker who could work with private landlords, including possibly providing incentives, so that they would take on at-risk young people for an agreed period of time as an aid to the young people making the transition to independent living.

- 5.93 Suggestions for where such a service could be located varied from location within government agencies, such as Work and Income, Housing New Zealand Corporation and Courts, to community locations such as CAB, community houses, council recreational centre, community social service providers, iwi, church groups and a mobile service (similar to mobile banking). Above all, young people emphasised that services had to be easily accessible and friendly to young people. Some were not sure that it would be effective if situated within Housing New Zealand Corporation or Work and Income.

Housing specifically for young people

- 5.94 Several young people made the point that, for information and advocacy services to be useful, there has to be accommodation available – neither information nor advocacy will help on their own, there must be suitable housing options for young people. These young people identified needs for:
- Affordable, smaller sized housing (one and two-bedroom) that is close to public transport and facilities. Some suggested that such housing could be mixed with older people’s accommodation.
 - More affordable accommodation for students and programmes that combine the provision of housing with tertiary education or training.
 - A programme where young people could be involved in constructing their own accommodation. This was not only seen as way of getting a house, but also as a way of gaining skills and possibly a qualification²⁵.
 - A shift in Housing New Zealand Corporation’s priorities, so that young people could become eligible for assistance. In two focus groups, some participants laughingly suggested they could offend sufficiently to go to prison, because they believed they could then get housing assistance from Housing New Zealand Corporation on their release.
 - More supported living options especially for young disabled, young people with addiction and/or mental health issues and young refugees.

Improved existing services

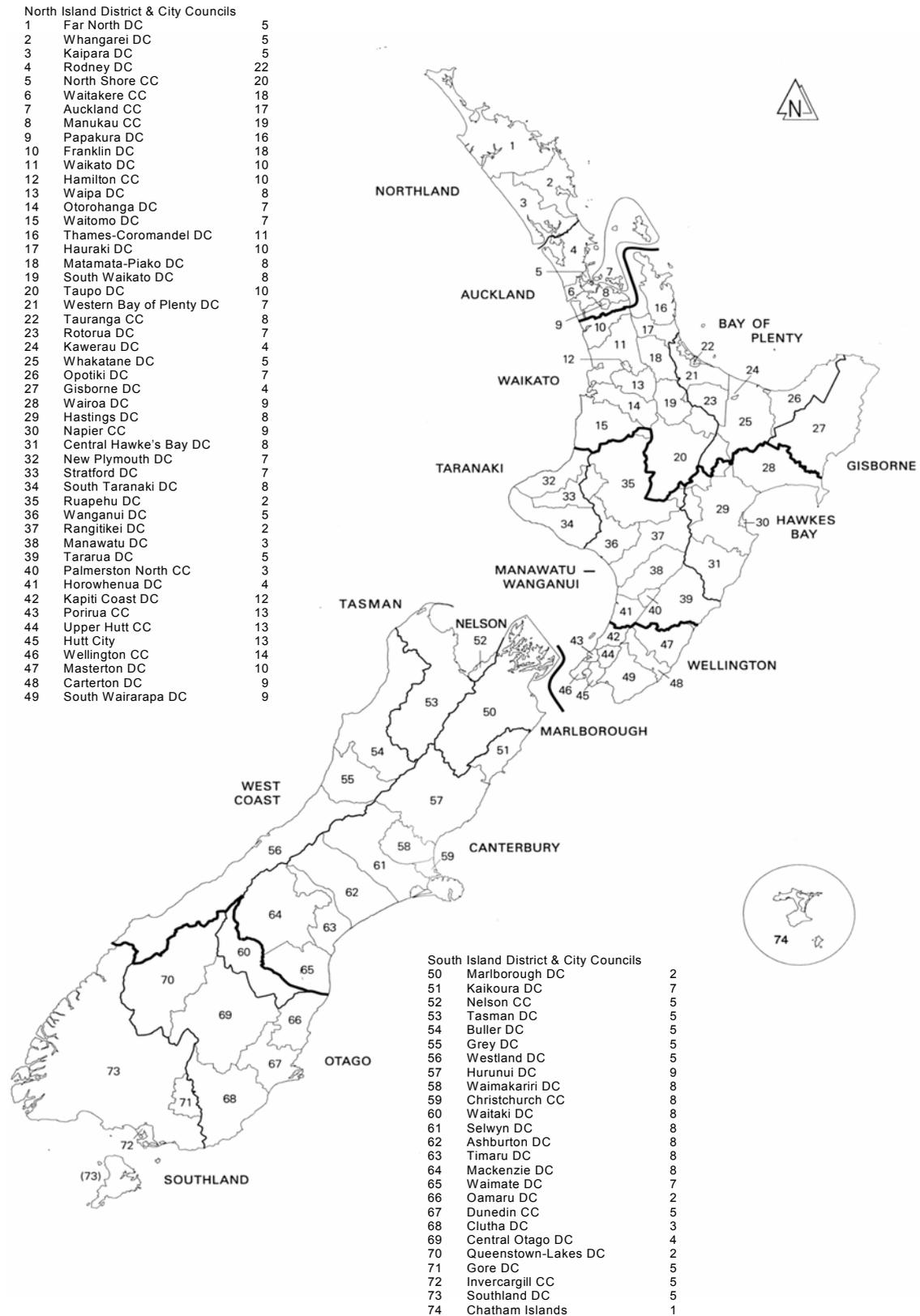
- 5.95 The young people called for a range of improvements to existing services. There was a desire for more positive attitudes towards young people that do not stigmatise them. Improvements in service delivery included:
- Better coordination between services, including provision of wrap around services that combine income support, accommodation search, budgeting, access to education/training, and employment.
 - More informative, prompt and responsive services.
 - More flexible services open to alternative references, and a willingness to assist young people to gradually pay off arrears.
 - Better training of staff to understand young people’s needs.

6. SERVICE AND HOUSING PROVIDERS’ EXPERIENCES

- 6.1 147 providers participated in the National Service Provider Survey. Figure 6.1 shows their geographic coverage. Most of the participants in the National Service Provider Survey and the National Housing Provider Survey were located in the Auckland, Wellington, Waikato and Canterbury regions. This is consistent with population distributions. Valuable information on the housing needs and experiences of at risk and vulnerable young people throughout the country was presented by these service providers and housing providers participating in the national surveys.

²⁵ New Zealand had some experience in self-build programmes. These are reviewed in Saville-Smith, K., and Thorns, D., 2001, *Community-based Solutions for Sustainable Housing*, Wellington, Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment. In addition, there is a strong tradition of self-build programmes in other jurisdictions, many of which are reviewed in Saville-Smith, K., and Campbell, S., 2000, *Self-built Housing on the Internet: An International Overview of Self-Build Housing Projects and Programmes*. Wellington, Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment.

Figure 6.1: Numbers of Service Providers Reporting Services Provision for At Risk & Vulnerable Young People in Council Areas



6.2 This section presents those providers' information and perspectives on the provision of housing assistance to at risk and vulnerable young people, including their own role and their relationships with other agencies in housing-related services. It identifies gaps in housing provision and discusses the extent to which service providers consider secure and safe housing provision is an important part of the recovery, habilitation, and/or integration of at risk and vulnerable young people.

Housing Related Services

6.3 Only 31 providers described themselves as having both a service and a housing provision function, but over half (55.1 percent, 81 providers) reported delivering housing-related assistance to clients (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Housing-related Support Delivered by Service Providers (n=81)*

Housing Service Support	Service Providers	% Service Providers
Assistance to access benefits	54	66.7
General housing advice and information	45	55.6
Liaison/mediation with landlords	42	51.9
Support networks	42	51.9
House search	40	49.4
Budget advice	31	38.3
Housing advocacy	25	30.9
Advice on tenancies	24	29.6
Assisting with service connections	22	27.2
Residential therapeutic programme	16	19.8
Women's refuge	15	18.1
Furniture shifting	12	14.8
Furniture pool	11	13.9
Respite housing	9	11.1
Cleaning	9	11.1
Lawn and garden services	8	9.9
Long-term rental accommodation	7	8.6
Emergency housing	7	8.6
Rubbish removal	6	7.4
Advice on home ownership finance	4	4.9
Insulation/retrofit	4	4.9
Papakainga housing	4	4.9
Fire safety	4	4.9
Home maintenance	2	2.5
Transitional rental housing	2	2.5
Night shelters	2	2.5
Boarding houses	1	1.2
Mortgage lending	1	1.2

*Multiple Response

6.4 The housing-related assistance provided by service providers tends to concentrate on what might be described as 'soft' assistance. Two thirds of service providers reported giving assistance to clients to help them access housing related benefits. Over half (55.6 percent) give general housing advice and information. Around a half (51.9 percent) reported assisting at risk and vulnerable young people in their liaison and relationship with landlords. A similar proportion of service providers (49.4 percent) assist at risk and vulnerable young people with accommodation search.

- 6.5 As Table 6.1 shows, however, there are only very small numbers assisting with 'bricks and mortar' housing such as night shelters (2 providers), emergency housing (7 providers), boarding houses (1 provider), rental accommodation or transitional rental housing (2 providers). Only one service provider assisted clients with housing finance.
- 6.6 Notably, housing related services were often an addendum to their usual service delivery. Providers that were contacted in the course of interviews and focus groups with young people commented that the work that they do to help young people access housing is outside of their existing funding streams, yet some of these find much of their time is taken up with housing assistance. It is also significant that some community services for mental health service users and women's refuges find that young people come to them for housing, even though they are not clients, because they have a reputation of successfully helping young people to get accommodation.

Adequacy of the Range of Housing Assistance and Coverage

- 6.7 It is clear from Table 6.1 that the predominant form of housing assistance delivered by service providers is generic and directed to:
- generalised housing and budget advice
 - search support
 - developing living skills, and
 - advocacy with landlords and with Work and Income.
- 6.8 Relatively few service providers deliver what might be described as 'hard' housing delivery. That is, the supply of housing units. This was the case even among those organisations that identified themselves as primarily housing service providers.
- 6.9 The service providers reported providing housing assistance or support to about 2,160 clients. At best, this suggests that less than two thirds (63.8 percent) of at risk and vulnerable young people were assisted. At worst, the proportion of clients in unsafe or insecure housing who were assisted in 2007 could be less than a fifth of those in need (15.3 percent).
- 6.10 There were 45 providers that described themselves as targeting housing services. They completed the questionnaire on housing provision. Of those 45 providers only fourteen are housing providers that provide only housing assistance. Of that fourteen, only six specifically deliver housing to at risk and vulnerable young people. They tend to deliver short term housing solutions such as refuge, transitional, emergency housing or night shelters to a mix of target groups with only 19 of the 45 dedicated housing providers explicitly targeting young people (Table 6.2).
- 6.11 Even among these housing providers, however, the delivery of housing units is relatively low. Less than a third (31.1 percent) provide rental accommodation and only two provide lending to assist people into owner occupation.

Table 6.2: Target Groups for Housing Providers*

Housing Target Group	Housing Providers	% Housing Providers (n=45)
Youth	19	42.2
Women	18	40.0
Maori	18	40.0
Low income single people	17	37.8
Low income families	14	31.1
Pacific peoples	11	24.4
Older people	9	22.0
Disabled people	9	22.0
Refugees	6	13.3
Ex-prisoners	5	11.1
New migrants	3	6.7

*Multiple Response

6.12 Fourteen providers identified themselves as dedicated housing providers who do not provide other services. Of those, only six reported that they specifically provided housing services to at risk and vulnerable young people. The profile of the young people those providers cater for is set out in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Housing Providers Delivering to Clients with Specified Problems

Characteristic of Young Clients	Housing Providers
Mental health problems	3
Refugee or migrant	2
Need of protection from physical abuse	1
Need of protection from sexual abuse	1
Young mother with baby	1
Physically disabled	1
Behavioural problems	-
Criminal offending	-
Substance abuse/addiction	-
Persistent anti-social behaviour	-
Need of protection from neglect	-
Unemployment	-
Literacy and reading recovery	-
Severe conduct disorder	-
Transition from foster/state care	-
Sight impaired	-
Deaf	-

*Multiple response

6.13 The numbers of at risk and vulnerable young people assisted by these housing providers are small. Five of the six housing providers that targeted at risk and vulnerable young people reported on numbers assisted in the year ending 31 December 2007. Between them they reported assisting 84 at risk or vulnerable young people. This constitutes only 9.8 percent of the total numbers assisted by the 14 dedicated housing service providers that participated in the survey.

Housing Provision by Other Providers

- 6.14 The low level of housing service is hardly surprising. Only a few of the service providers are funded to deliver housing support. In addition, service providers report that their housing search support is inhibited by an under-supply of dwellings targeted to young people either in social housing or in the private rental market.
- 6.15 Other housing research undertaken in recent years illuminates the difficulties that service providers with at risk and vulnerable young clients face in relation to finding safe and secure housing. The National Landlord Survey undertaken in 2003, for instance, shows that young people in general, let alone at risk or vulnerable young people, are simply not seen as attractive as tenants by private landlords.
- 6.16 Table 6.4 shows the preferred and non-preferred tenants identified by private landlords participating in the 2003 National Landlord Survey. Among those populations explicitly identified by landlords as 'not preferred' are students. Similarly, only small proportions of landlords explicitly identify any group of young people as 'preferred' as a tenant.

Table 6.4: Tenants Explicitly Identified as Preferred and Not Preferred by Landlords (National Landlord Survey 2003 n=818)*²⁶

	Tenant Group	% Landlord
Tenants Explicitly Identified as Preferred	Professional Couple	70.3
	Retired Couple	51.1
	Professional Single	45.2
	Retired Single	39.7
	Young Single Female	30.3
Tenants Explicitly Identified as Not Preferred	Large Families	67.4
	Students	62.8
	Sole Parent Family	32.4
	Refugee/Migrant Family	30.0

* Multiple Response

- 6.17 Similarly, young people's access to Housing New Zealand Corporation housing is limited because of the social allocation method of prioritising access to the public housing stock.
- 6.18 Research undertaken in 2007 also shows that the local government housing stock of around 14,000 units is almost entirely targeted to older people. No local authority reported targeting their housing assistance to young people in housing need (Table 6.5). Similarly, 2007 research on housing provision in the community housing sector found that their top three areas of focus are low income families and individuals and mental health services clients. Young people under 20 years are one of the groups least catered for.²⁷

²⁶ Saville-Smith, K. and Fraser, R. (2004) *National Landlords Survey: Preliminary Analysis of Data*, CRESA Wellington.

²⁷ Capital Strategy/SGS Economics and Planning (2007). *Affordable Housing: The Community Housing Sector in New Zealand*. Report prepared for CHRANZ.

Table 6.5: Targeting of Council Owned Housing (Local Authority Survey 2007)²⁸

Target Group	Councils	% Councils (n=64)
Older people	61	95.3
People with disabilities	19	29.7
Low income single people	12	18.8
No targeting for a portion of housing	8	12.5
Low income families	4	6.3
Refugees	3	4.7
New immigrants	3	4.7
Young people	0	0.0

* Multiple Response

- 6.19 Given the lack of housing provision to young people by Central Government, Local Government, the private sector and the community sector, it is hardly surprising that service providers to at risk and vulnerable young people overwhelmingly (93.7 percent) report that getting housing solutions for their young people is 'hard' or 'very hard'.
- 6.20 Almost a quarter of service providers (23.1 percent) report that there was no organisation that assisted their at risk and vulnerable young people into safe and secure housing. The organisation cited most often by service providers as assisting at risk and vulnerable young people in housing need is Work and Income. Almost half (47.6 percent) of providers report that some of their at risk and vulnerable young people had received housing-related financial support from Work and Income.
- 6.21 As Table 6.6 shows, the other most cited organisation providing assistance is Housing New Zealand Corporation. Private landlords are also a notably large source of housing. Over a third (36.1 percent) of service providers cited the private rental market as the main source of housing for their young people. By way of contrast, however, only 8.8 percent of providers cited local authorities as delivering housing solutions, and 14.3 percent of service providers cited the community housing sector as a source of housing solutions for at risk and vulnerable young people.

Table 6.6: Other Organisations Providing Housing to Service Providers' Young People*

Organisations	Service Providers	% Service Providers (n=147)
Work and Income	70	47.6
Housing New Zealand Corporation	61	41.5
Private landlords	53	36.1
No organisations providing housing assistance	34	23.1
Community Housing Organisations	21	14.3
Local authority	13	8.8
District Health Board/Ministry of Health	11	7.5
ACC	2	1.4

*Multiple Response

²⁸ CRESA and Public Policy and Research (2007) *Local Government and Affordable Housing*. Report prepared for CHRANZ

6.22 The service providers reported that housing assistance or support was provided to 536 of their at risk or vulnerable young clients. That data should be treated with caution. Many service providers involved in the Service Provider Survey acknowledged that their information about the housing situation of their clients was fragmentary. It is, consequently, possible that the reported assistance was lower than that actually provided by other organisations.

Housing Service Gaps

6.23 Service providers overwhelmingly report (91.8 percent) that the localities in which they work require increased housing services for at risk and vulnerable young people. Table 6.7 sets out the housing service needs identified by service providers.

Table 6.7: Housing-related Support Needs Identified by Service Providers*

Housing Service Support	Service Providers	% Service Providers (n=135)
Assistance to access benefits	116	85.9
House search	104	77.0
Liaison/mediation with landlords	100	74.1
Budget advice	90	66.7
General housing advice and information	85	62.9
Support networks	73	54.1
Long-term rental accommodation	69	51.1
Emergency housing	67	49.6
Housing advocacy	67	49.6
Advice on tenancies	67	49.6
Respite housing	61	45.2
Assisting with service connections	57	42.2
Transitional rental housing	52	38.5
Furniture pool	45	33.3
Boarding houses	34	25.2
Furniture shifting	30	22.2
Residential therapeutic programme	28	20.7
Women's refuge	28	20.7
Night shelters	25	18.5
Cleaning	24	17.8
Fire safety	23	17.0
Rubbish removal	17	12.6
Mortgage lending	16	11.9
Lawn and garden services	16	11.9
Home maintenance	15	11.1
Self-build and sweat equity housing	15	11.1
Insulation/retrofit	14	10.4
Advice on home ownership finance	13	9.6
Papakainga housing	12	8.9

*Multiple Response

6.24 Table 6.8 shows the significant gap between the housing services provided to at risk and vulnerable young people and the services that are needed. 'Hard' housing provision – the delivery of dwellings such as long-term rented accommodation, emergency housing, and transitional rental housing – are identified as needed but are among the least provided housing services.

6.25 For example, 51.1 percent of providers report that long term rental accommodation is required by at risk and vulnerable young people but only 8.6 percent of service providers offer long term rental accommodation. Similarly, almost half the service providers identify emergency housing as needed by at risk and vulnerable young people, but, again, only 8.6 percent of service providers deliver emergency housing opportunities.

Table 6.8: Gap Between Housing Services Needed and Services Provided

Housing Assistance	% of Service Providers	
	Identified as Needed by Service Providers	Reported as Provided by Service Providers
Assistance to access benefits	85.9	66.7
House search	77.0	49.4
Liaison/mediation with landlords	74.1	51.9
Budget advice	66.7	38.3
General housing advice and information	62.9	55.6
Support networks	54.1	51.9
Long-term rental accommodation	51.1	8.6
Emergency housing	49.6	8.6
Housing advocacy	49.6	30.9
Advice on tenancies	49.6	29.6
Respite housing	45.2	11.1
Assisting with service connections	42.2	27.2
Transitional rental housing	38.5	2.5
Furniture pool	33.3	13.9
Boarding houses	25.2	1.2
Furniture shifting	22.2	14.8
Residential therapeutic programme	20.7	19.8
Women's refuge	20.7	18.1
Night shelters	18.5	2.5
Cleaning	17.8	11.1
Fire safety	17.0	4.9
Rubbish removal	12.6	7.4
Mortgage lending	11.9	1.2
Lawn and garden services	11.9	9.9
Home maintenance	11.1	2.5
Self-build and sweat equity housing	11.1	0
Insulation/retrofit	10.4	4.9
Advice on home ownership finance	9.6	4.9
Papakainga housing	8.9	4.9

6.26 Service providers and dedicated housing providers are clear that housing provision is multi-faceted; that it is not enough to provide life-skills and other supports to at risk and vulnerable young people unless young people can access affordable and suitable housing stock. Similarly, the provision of a dwelling or benefit assistance in isolation from other support or without providing a pro-social housing environment can also be inadequate and/or ineffective.

Many young people think that their "mates" will be the best people to live with - but they often discover that the problems are compounded because they all suffer from the same issues, poor financial management skills, poor self care - including nutrition and sleep, alcohol, tobacco or drug use and therefore the consequences become even greater when the flat breaks up and someone is left with mess and the rent to pay. The arrangements are often very unstable and someone is left with the 'baby' figuratively and literally! Hard learning!

This is a complex issue and certainly no a "one size fits all". There is a definite gap in housing needs for our younger clients - especially those who have been in residential care to meet short term needs. There is a need to provide something for the 17+ group around long term housing where they can have parenting, budgeting, etc skills, role modeled to them while they find their feet financially or move into further training. I think it is important to engage wider agencies (schools, churches, sports clubs) around these issues as many offer short term support (or longer) to many people.

- 6.27 Service providers working with young offenders and young people in care identified young people's lack of housekeeping and budgeting skills as a major problem. They felt that young people who had spent time in home placements (usually multiple home placements) had little opportunity to learn basic skills like cooking, cleaning and shopping. Often their families also lacked these skills.
- 6.28 Service providers also talked about problems arising because the young people did not have social skills that allowed them to live easily alongside others. Some of the young people also admitted, sometimes reluctantly, that they were not necessarily easy to live with. One young man talked about his temper and said he would be unprepared to live with strangers. He wants to always be able to live with friends.
- 6.29 Many young people are typified as coming from violent family situations over which they have little control. At the same time they have few housing choices except those that perpetuate a young person's exposure to violence.

Housing of youth leaving [state] care is a crucial area of work for our service. These young people are compromised by their histories in any case, and frequently have experienced abuse and disrupted family life. They frequently have challenging behaviour poor social skills, mental health difficulties and limited support networks. Unlike other countries this group of young people are not seen as a priority in relation to housing. Once discharged from CYF at 17 years old they are hugely vulnerable and not ready for independent living (on the whole).

- 6.30 Emergency housing and night shelters are seen as very unsafe. Service providers also talked about the risk, especially for young women, of living in mixed hostels. They described young women being accosted by older men and having little refuge in rooms they could not lock. Other alternatives are seen as limited.

We have had feedback that overnight homeless shelters in Auckland City are not meeting the needs of young homeless women due to women not feeling safe to sleep there - not enough physical space within current facilities to set up segregated accommodation, no locks on shower doors and toilet doors. Current plans from the homeless women's action group are to research the needs of young homeless women to ascertain the extent of the problem for females.

There is a high need for all kinds of housing in Canterbury. Emergency Housing is often not a safe environment, young people under 18 can not access it.

Housing is limited on the Coast. No funder will fund housing for at risk youth.

Predominantly we see a need for safe, stable and healthy accommodation options for our clients. There appears to be an insufficient supply of affordable, comfortable homes. We also see the vital need for our clients to not be subject to housing transience. In my personal capacity I have provided accommodation for around 6 young people who have had no place to live as a result of violent/unsafe home environments. Adolescents in particular are hard pressed to find accommodation despite being victims of crime. Often emergency accommodation is very limited for this group.

There is a distinct lack of emergency accommodation for vulnerable young people. This includes young people who may be caught short and just need short term lodging. Many charities have ceased providing night shelter or crisis accommodation we believe through increased regulatory compliance costs. Particularly acute when violence/family or care/protection issues not an issue. Eligibility for housing corp [sic] accommodation is minimal! Young people find it very difficult to meet rental criteria.

Desperately need more emergency housing/City Mission type organisation which caters not only with the housing furniture needs etc... (the whole well being of young person in need). This point I have made time and time again over the last 10 years. North Shore has nothing suitable under the one umbrella and doesn't want to even entertain the idea that there is such a need. Try looking at the Takapuna Boat Ramp on a night or Internet Cafes especially winter time.

- 6.31 Service providers are particularly concerned with the situation of 14-17 year-olds. They perceive the lack of housing solutions for those young people as placing them in environments which are not only unsuitable but likely to drive them from a position of being victims of anti-social behaviour into becoming perpetrators of it.

With the age and type of young person we work with - it is extremely difficult to access caregivers who are willing to take these young people on. At 14-16 years when they have nowhere to live - no one wants them in their home. We have no residential accommodation that they can stay in (even as emergency or short - term). Our young people we work with that are in S101 custody (with CYFS) are in a terrible situation - often being sent to youth justice residence because of care and protection issues (rather than offending being serious enough to justify it). In the past CYFS have had young people they can't place - staying in local motel rooms - with resource workers monitoring them! We are in a bad way here in Southland in terms of housing for our at risk young people.

The majority of the young people are 'at risk' – the majority have lived through physical and sexual abuse as well as witnessing high levels of family violence. The majority of young people are young parents who due to their age, generally are excluded from accessing their own income (benefit) or own housing and therefore remain in housing with mum/dad/aunty/uncle or grandparents. It is extremely difficult to access benefits and/or housing that supports their independence.

- 6.32 Accessing benefits was seen as problematic. So too was repeated use of the benefit system by young people in a way in which chaotic lifestyles and practices – often learnt from their family of origin – were maintained. One service provider described some young people using Work and Income rental advances on a rotational basis, moving into a flat, staying on until the rent in advance was used up, camping with friends or family until they were eligible for a rent advance again and then going through the same cycle. They suggested that this pattern of 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' was one that young people saw at home.

- 6.33 Young people moving out of state care through Child Youth and Family are repeatedly identified by service providers as vulnerable, particularly because of their problems with entering tenancy agreements. There also appears to be some misapprehension among some providers about the legal ability of individuals under 18 being able to sign contracts.²⁹

Young people aged 15-17 years are able to apply for the Independent Youth Benefit and Accommodation Supplement through Work & Income NZ [sic]. If they have experienced family violence their family is not involved in this process. However, finding accommodation for these young people is very difficult. They are unable to sign a tenancy agreement until they are 18 yrs, and flatting opportunities are hard to find as many stipulate an older age requirement. These young people have also come from adverse backgrounds and therefore few have the life skills required to live independently. CYF will work with 15 yr old (+) youth around what their wishes are, many would rather live independently than go into foster care. These young people are not however eligible for the "Pathways to Independence" programme CYF refer their youth (who have been in foster care) which supports them until they are 21 yrs. These young people have a social worker (outside CYF) who works with them i.e.: life skills, budgeting, housing etc.

Another issue is the difficulty of finding housing for 16 and 17 year old young women with babies as they are not covered by the Tenancy Act. These young women often go into short term shared flatting.

- 6.34 Service providers helping young people transition to independent living note the difficulties many young people under 18 have in obtaining a rental agreement without a guarantor. In some cases, they report, CYF will act as guarantor. Most of the at-risk young people they are working with do not have families that are willing or able to support their young people through acting as guarantors.
- 6.35 Young people with certain behavioural problems are particularly difficult to house because of both the skills and the facilities needed to manage them.

Most of the children and youth we deal with are in ok housing but their fire setting behaviours threaten continued tenancy, damages property. Parents of children with fire setting behaviours pose problems for placing them into safe respite care, foster care etc because those behaviours can endanger their own and others lives. Any accommodation with at risk children and youth who set fires and have unsafe fire behaviours need to have appropriate alarms, fire suppression and escape planning done to protect the property and lives.

Our clients (the young person) have engaged in sexually harmful behaviour and are referred via CYFS, so they're responsible for the young persons housing needs, however, there is a shortage of accommodation for young people and skilled caregivers.

- 6.36 Most service providers (60.8 percent) report that they believed that both young women and young men were exposed to unmet housing need and equally difficult to find solutions for. However, almost a quarter (23.8 percent) of service providers believed that young men were more likely to have difficulties resolving unmet housing need. That compares to only 15.4 percent of service providers reporting that young women are more likely to have difficulties resolving housing need.

²⁹ Young people are able to sign tenancy agreements, see Citizens Advice Bureau (2006). What You Want to Know about Tenancy. Information Sheet for Youth. Youthinfo 4.

6.37 Service providers see young people aged 17-20 years as most affected by unmet housing need (Table 6.9). About two-fifths (42.9 percent) of service providers considered that 17-20 year olds are most likely to be in unmet housing need. However, over a quarter (27.9 percent) identified 12-16 year olds to be most affected. Only 10.2 percent of service providers considered that at risk and vulnerable young people in the older age range of 21-24 years were most exposed to unmet housing need.

Table 6.9: Ages of At Risk and Vulnerable Young People Most Exposed to Unmet Housing Need (n=147)

Age	Service Providers	% Service Providers
All age groups	1	0.7
Mainly 12-16 years	41	27.9
Mainly 17-20 years	63	42.9
Mainly 21-24 years	15	10.2
Not stated/Don't Know	27	18.4
Total	147	100.0

6.38 Irrespective of age, however, all young people without 'housing credentials' found getting housing difficult to the extent that one of the service providers advised young clients that it might be worth their while accepting poor quality rental accommodation that others rejected because that would give them a chance to demonstrate that they could pay their rent on time, leave the place in the same condition they found it, and behave responsibly (e.g., not annoy the neighbours by having regular parties). By doing so they started to build up a rental history.

6.39 The service providers had some ideas about what could be done to help young people access housing. As well as agreeing that Housing New Zealand Corporation needs to focus on youth needs, some felt that the local government focus on pensioner housing could be extended to include youth housing. They also noted the overall problem, in Auckland, of resolving housing problems for families and felt the housing needs of the two client groups (families and youth) needed to be addressed in tandem.

6.40 Assisted housing was also seen as important as at-risk young people made the transition to independent living. Such assisted housing, for instance in the form of hostels, family homes, flatting situations and housing complexes, need to account for young people's lack of family support, lack of funds and lack of living skills. Other providers noted that students get such supervision and guidance in university hostels, but the same facilities are not available for other young people, whose needs are greater. The previously provided hostels for those in apprenticeship training is another model that could be useful to resurrect. As part of the housing provision, these deficiencies need to be addressed, for instance by providing young people with some training and supervision as they learn to budget, cook, clean and share tasks, responsibilities and living spaces with their peers.

6.41 Service providers also identified some general principles to guide service and housing provision for young people, so that they can make a durable transition to independent living:

- Young people need to be able to stay in any assisted living until they are ready to leave. Such a principle is reflective of the encouragement that families in general are given to provide a supportive environment for their children until they are ready to leave.
- There needs to be a range of options available, especially for young people who have been in care, so that they can move from supervised to unsupervised independent living.
- Young people who lack family support need to be able to withdraw from independent living for short periods of time, just as other young people do as they return home to, for instance, save money or organise a new living arrangement.

Impacts of Unmet Housing Need

- 6.42 Despite many providers being unable to report on the housing situations of their young clients, there was substantial agreement that their clients' outcomes are affected by their housing situation.
- 6.43 Over half the service providers (58.1 percent) reported that they believed that meeting housing need was an essential part of clients achieving positive outcomes. A further 29.4 percent reported that meeting housing need mattered a lot to achieving positive outcomes. Similarly, 85.1 percent of the providers reported that unmet housing need presented a barrier to or inhibited at risk and vulnerable young people from achieving positive outcomes (Table 6.10).

Table 6.10: Impacts of Meeting and Not Meeting Housing Needs of At Risk and Vulnerable Young People

Impacts	Service Providers	% Service Providers
Meeting Housing Need (n=136)		
Is essential to achieve positive outcomes	79	58.1
Matters a lot in achieving positive outcomes	40	29.4
Matters a little in achieving positive outcomes	15	11.0
Does not matter to achieving positive outcomes	2	1.5
Unmet Housing (n=134)		
Significant barrier to positive outcomes	75	56.0
Inhibits positive outcomes a lot	39	29.1
Inhibits positive outcomes a little	17	12.7
Does not inhibit positive outcomes	3	2.2

- 6.44 The providers we spoke to often find that a large component of their work with young people consists of helping them to sort out their housing problems, including providing advice to them and linking them to services that may be able to assist.
- 6.45 According to service providers, unmet housing need in their experience frequently contributes to and exacerbates the vulnerability of young people and their likelihood of engaging in undesirable behaviours.
- 6.46 For those young people coming from dysfunctional families, being in housing need recreates and perpetuates a history of chaotic lifestyles.

Many families that I work with, struggle to survive financially and their aim is to feed the kids. WINZ is usually part of the problem, not part of the solution, with obstacles often put in the way that prevents people getting benefits they are entitled to. As a result, their home degenerate into squalor and later into hopelessness about the future. Typically there will be low socio-economic Pakeha, Maori or Pacific Island families, who may find it hard to ask in the first place, so they give up easily.

The young people we work with are incredibly affected by having no stable living environment, not getting adequate sleep, transition between home and flatting, unacceptable activity at night shelters, inability to obtain rental agreements, supervised day and night accommodation all of which affect their ability to become positive outcomes, raise healthy children and gain meaningful employment. Some young people require a positive home environment due to age, some require simply accommodation.

- 6.47 For other young people, service providers suggest unmet housing need cements young people into prostitution, criminality and makes gang affiliations rational, albeit undesirable choices.

I have concerns about the numbers of young people on our roll who live in substandard, dangerous environments. They have been alienated from schools and are put onto our distance learning roll, but have very poor environments for undertaking learning at home, anecdotally. Students live in 'gang' houses or have families with gang affiliates. I also have concerns about the young parents we have on our roll. Again, many of those students come to my attention through Form Teachers as they are living in poor conditions, or living with older partners (even though the student may be underage).

Actually it's easier to make and sell P than to get money out of WINZ: Historically I have worked with children in both drug producing homes and gang houses. In both cases, placement would have been useful, but it is very hard to find.

[Accommodation is necessary for] young sex workers, offenders and in care and protection. Accommodation, warmth and food being the motivator for much offending behaviours and sex working.

- 6.48 Finally, in the experience of service providers, unmet housing need among vulnerable and at risk young people tends to become a vicious cycle in which poor housing becomes an embedded experience.

We are concerned about the lack of affordable housing for single young women with babies. Private landlords have been very slow or in some cases refused to fix faults such as dampness and mould.

They are unable to live comfortably and struggle to put food on the table. Many of our clients are living in inadequate housing and with other family members to help meet their cost of living.

Gisborne has a very high need for housing for young people and their families and we are constantly looking for housing issues to be resolved. Many of the young people I work with live in sub-standard conditions and overcrowding. The costs of renting here are just ridiculous and a large number of young people and families are living below the poverty line for NZ. Any assistance would be much appreciated.

There is an extreme shortage of rental housing in Westport and Buller in general and young people are forced to resort to inadequate and poor housing choices. Landlords supply dirty and inappropriate accommodation here and get away with it as we are rurally isolated and many of the young do not have any other experience of adequate housing.

- 6.49 Frequently, young people were confronted with exclusion from accessing the rental stock or having to pay premiums to access accommodation. One provider considered that young people seeking housing through agents rather than directly through landlords were better off, as agents tend to be less picky than the landlords themselves about selecting tenants. Another provider confirmed that young people do have difficulties with landlords who are wary of renting to young people. To help young people, that organisation has established relationships with certain real estate agents, and in effect acts as a broker to get young people into accommodation. Although the real estate agent charges a premium on their rents (because they are regarded as risky clients), those young people assisted are able to be housed promptly and in reasonable accommodation.

7. INTERNATIONAL TRENDS IN YOUTH HOUSING

- 7.1 Access to housing has long been recognised internationally as a basic human need.³⁰ It is only recently, however, that the housing needs of young people have become a focus of attention. This section is based on a review of the responses of selected countries – the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada and Australia – to young people and housing.
- 7.2 It considers the factors that have prompted this evolving focus on youth housing. It summarises the policy settings and the range of programmes being developed in overseas jurisdictions in relation to both young people in general and at risk and vulnerable young people in particular. The section also includes a series of vignettes of specific programmes that illustrate different approaches or components of housing for at risk and vulnerable young people.

Prompts for Change

- 7.3 Internationally, there is a recognition that all young people tend to be marginal to housing markets simply by virtue of their life stage. They are, consequently, vulnerable to housing stress and the burdens of poor housing quality, unaffordable rentals and difficulties in entering home ownership fall disproportionately on young people. Where housing stress generates homelessness, homelessness is seen, in and of itself, as contributing to poor health, social and economic outcomes and inhibits young people's transitions to productive and independent adulthood.³¹ In Britain, this has prompted a strong commitment to supplying more dwellings, to increasing housing affordability, and promoting home ownership. The importance of ensuring that young people are not excluded from positive housing careers is an emerging feature of policy debate in western societies, not only about homelessness but also about the need for affordable housing.³²

³⁰ General Assembly of the United Nations, (1948), Article 25(1) Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

³¹ Fernandes, A., (2007) *Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics, Programmes and Emerging Issues*. CRS Report for Congress, Domestic Social Policy Division, Congressional Research Service; Community and Local Government, (2006) Homelessness Research Summary No.4: *An International Review of Homelessness and Related Aspects of Housing Policy: Preliminary Findings*. London, Communities and Local Government www.odpm.gov.uk; Social Exclusion Unit (2005) *Transitions: Young Adults with Complex Needs. A Social Exclusion Unit Final Report*. London, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

³² Leginski, W. (2007) Historical and Contextual Influences on the U.S. Response to Contemporary Homelessness. Report presented at *Toward Understanding Homelessness: The 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research*. <http://ospe.hhs.gov/hsp/homelessness/symposium07/leginski/>

- 7.4 In addition, however, there is now a strong body of research that:
- Identifies the following at risk and vulnerable young people as particularly in danger of unmet housing need and particularly susceptible to the negative impacts of insecure and/or unsafe housing:
 - Young people leaving foster or state care.³³
 - Young refugees and asylum seekers.³⁴
 - Young people with mental health problems.³⁵
 - Young people who misuse alcohol or drugs.³⁶
 - Young people in the criminal justice system.³⁷
 - Young people exposed to family violence, neglect, physical or sexual abuse.³⁸
 - Establishes that housing stabilisation is an important pathway for integration, habilitation and recovery for at risk and vulnerable young people.
- 7.5 The latter is consistent with ecological approaches that have merged in both clinical and social work practice over the last two decades in which individuals are seen as embedded in a complex and interactive environment.³⁹

Policy Settings

- 7.6 In the countries reviewed, three changes in policy settings have evolved over the last two decades. They are:
- Recognition of young people as having separate eligibility and units of entitlement for housing assistance.
 - Allocation of funding specifically to fund programmes targeted to the housing needs of younger people.
 - Development of housing strategies, programmes and practices designed to meet the particular needs of young people.

³³ Toro. P., (2007) Homeless Youth in the United States: Recent Research Findings and Intervention Approaches. Report presented at *Toward Understanding Homelessness: The 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research*. <http://ospe.hhs.gov/hsp/homelessness/symposium07/toro/>; Casey Family Services, (2001) *The Road to Independence: Transitioning Youth in Foster Care to Independence*. New Haven Connecticut, Casey Family Services.

³⁴ www.cmyi.net.au; National Youth Commission (2008) *Australia's Homeless Youth: a report of the National Youth Commission Inquiry into Youth Homelessness*. Victoria, National Youth Commission. www.nyc.net.au

³⁵ Toro. P., (2007) Homeless Youth in the United States: Recent Research Findings and Intervention Approaches. Report presented at *Toward Understanding Homelessness: The 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research*. <http://ospe.hhs.gov/hsp/homelessness/symposium07/toro/>; National Youth Commission (2008) *Australia's Homeless Youth: a report of the National Youth Commission Inquiry into Youth Homelessness*. Victoria, National Youth Commission. www.nyc.net.au

³⁶ National Youth Commission (2008) *Australia's Homeless Youth: a report of the National Youth Commission Inquiry into Youth Homelessness*. Victoria, National Youth Commission. www.nyc.net.au

³⁷ Toro. P., (2007) Homeless Youth in the United States: Recent Research Findings and Intervention Approaches. Report presented at *Toward Understanding Homelessness: The 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research*. <http://ospe.hhs.gov/hsp/homelessness/symposium07/toro/>; Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (2006) *Suitable, Sustainable, Supported: A Strategy to ensure provision of accommodation for children and young people who offend*. London, Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. www.yjb.gov.uk

³⁸ Communities and Local Government (2007) *Tackling Youth Homelessness*. Policy Briefing 18. London, Communities and Local Government. www.odpm.gov.uk; National Alliance to End Homelessness (2006) Fundamental Issues to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness Series BRIEF No.1. www.endhomelessness.org/files/1058_file_youth_brief_one.pdf

³⁹ Saville-Smith, K., 1999. Familial Caregivers' Physical Abuse and Neglect of Children: A Literature Review, Wellington, Ministry of Social Policy.

- 7.7 Those changes have generally emerged out of attempts to address homelessness. The rapidity with which homelessness responses have been developed and taken up has varied from country to country. So too has the extent which young people have been targeted in homelessness policy. The United Kingdom, North America and Australia show considerable diversity but also some commonalities in relation to youth housing.

The United Kingdom

- 7.8 Addressing youth homelessness has been a critical part of the United Kingdom's homelessness response. The United Kingdom is unique in Europe in so far as there are statutory obligations to take responsibility for the homeless.
- 7.9 The Homelessness Act 2002 in England and Wales and, in Scotland, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 have prompted national strategies and action plans to address homelessness. Devolution has meant that there are different emphases in each country's policies. Nevertheless, in relation to young people, they consistently:
- Identify young people's homelessness as a priority.
 - Have a preventative focus.
 - Promote inter-sectoral co-ordination as a critical pathway to develop and deliver effective housing services to young people.
 - Promote the delivery of a full range of housing services and interventions.
 - Require initiatives and policies that specifically target at risk and vulnerable people in housing need.
- 7.10 United Kingdom policy recognises homelessness as encompassing a broad range of experience for young people from being roofless to living in accommodation that is unsafe and/or insecure. In the last few years, young people who are not intentionally homeless have been accepted as statutorily homeless because the priority need definitions in statute have been extended to include:
- 16-17 year olds (England, Wales and Scotland).
 - State care leavers aged 18-20 years (Wales and Scotland) and care leavers 18-21 years (England).
 - Young people at risk of financial or sexual exploitation (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).
 - Young people aged 18-20 years involved in substance misuse.
- 7.11 In addition, in 2001 entitlement to temporary accommodation was extended in Scotland to all single, non-priority homeless. Those statutory extensions have been supported by the establishment of non-statutory targets for youth housing in a variety of strategies. Those include targets to reduce housing young people in temporary accommodation and in Bed & Breakfast accommodation.
- 7.12 Those policy changes have been implemented by way of:
- Place-based housing strategies for young people centred on local authorities.
 - Targeted programmes and pathway planning for young people leaving state care at the age of 21 years (or 24 years when a young person is in education).

- Targeted programmes for housing young offenders.
- Developing a continuum of housing services based on the principle of early intervention. Those services include:
 - Housing-support services.
 - Housing advice services.
 - Rent deposit guarantee schemes.
 - Mediation services.
 - Tenancy 'containment' programmes.

7.13 Subsequent to the expansion of the priority need category, there was an increase in the numbers of young people assisted as statutorily homeless. However, since 2006, the prevalence of homelessness among young people has decreased.⁴⁰ Commentators suggest that this reflects the expansion of housing services and early intervention housing programmes for young people.⁴¹

Canada

7.14 The Government of Canada provides housing assistance through the Homeless Partnering Strategy,⁴² which provides funding to assist provincial and territorial governments, local authorities and community organisations to partner in social housing initiatives. Funding is provided to communities that identify their own housing priorities and needs. Many of those communities have gained funding for youth housing initiatives. Programmes developed for young people under the Strategy and the former National Homeless Initiative include:

- In Winnipeg, programmes and services to meet the immediate needs of young people facing multiple barriers and respond effectively to homelessness through street outreach, safe overnight shelter and counselling and referral.⁴³
- In Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the construction of independent living units for vulnerable young women aged 18-23 years. The accommodation includes support services to link the young women into education, training, employment and other community services. This initiative is based on a successful Saskatoon youth housing facility that caters for young people aged 12-17.⁴⁴
- A 2008 initiative for supportive housing units in St John's Newfoundland and Labrador for young people. The facility operates a pre-employment programme and maths and literacy skills programme. The young people are involved in construction of the facility, thus gaining trade-related skills and employment opportunities.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Quilgars, D. Johnsen, S. and Pleace, N (2008). *Youth Homelessness in the UK. A decade of progress?* Joseph Rowntree Foundation

⁴¹ Pawson, H. Davidson, E, and Netto G. (2007) *Evaluation of Homelessness prevention activities in Scotland*. Scottish Executive Social Research.

⁴² Human Resources and Social Development Canada www.homelessness.gc.ca

⁴³ www.winnipeg.ca/cao

⁴⁴ www.canequity.com

⁴⁵ <http://news.gc.ca>

- Various new housing projects in Saskatchewan in 2008 including a supportive housing project for homeless and high-risk youth with substance abuse issues in Moose Jaw, supportive housing units in Regina for single homeless young women aged 15-24 years, a facility in Prince Albert for single homeless women aged 16-30 who have been sexually exploited, and in North Battleford a facility for Aboriginal youth aged 10-15 who have run away from their family home, or from foster care, and are living on the street or couch surfing.⁴⁶

The United States

- 7.15 In 2003, the United States Congress reauthorised the Runaway and Homeless Act (RHYA). That Act defines homeless youth as people “not more than 21 years of age... for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and who have no other safe alternative living arrangement.”⁴⁷
- 7.16 The RHYA provides funding for three programmes:
- Basic Center [sic] Program – This programme provides temporary accommodation of up to fifteen days for young people under 18 years. It also provides support services including family counselling and family reunification services as well as referrals to alternative supervised housing placements.
 - Street Outreach Program – This programme provides outreach services and referral for young people aged under 21 years experienced or are at-risk of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and/or prostitution. Services include education and health prevention as well as housing referral.
 - Transitional Living Program – Programme funding is available to young people 16-21 years for around 18 months. The programme is targeted to young people who cannot be re-united with their families and encompasses housing and food provision. Since 2003 it has also been targeted at maternity group homes for pregnant youth and young mothers of 16-21 years. The programme includes parenting and support programmes as well as life skills, education and employment.⁴⁸
- 7.17 There are longstanding programmes directed to ensuring that young people in care, particularly foster care, can transit into adulthood. The Foster Care Independence Act 1999 established funding streams for a variety of transitional services. The States are required to provide follow-up services for young people who have aged out of care. States are enabled, but not required, to use funding to provide for housing of 18-21 year olds who have left foster care. There are a number of States that are using those funds for housing.⁴⁹ However, few States are co-ordinating their assistance with that available from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or State housing agencies⁵⁰ including the former’s Family Unification Programme and Section 8 vouchers.

⁴⁶ <http://news.gc.ca>

⁴⁷ Toro, P., et al (2007) *Homeless Youth in the United States: Recent Findings and Intervention Approaches*. Report presented at Towards Understanding Homelessness: The 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research <http://ospe.hhs.gov/hsp/homelessness/symposium07/toro/>

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2007. *Promising Strategies to End Youth Homelessness*. Report to Congress: 5-6

⁴⁹ *Ibid*

⁵⁰ *Ibid*: 39

- 7.18 The transitional programme for young people moving out of foster care is mirrored for young offenders by programmes funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Those funds consist of block grants to the States and the provision of integrated housing and support services varies significantly nationwide.⁵¹

Australia

- 7.19 Despite recent criticism that Australia's investment into resolving youth homelessness has stagnated, Australia has had a long history of service provision to homeless young people. In the late 1990s, the Commonwealth Government made a \$60 million budget allocation over four years to implement a Reconnect programme.
- 7.20 Around that time also, a number of state-based initiatives against homelessness in general were implemented, frequently as coordinated, cross-sectoral strategies. Those include:
- The New South Wales Partnership against Homelessness (PAH), which recognises young people as at risk of homelessness.
 - The Victorian Homelessness Strategy, which has developed new service models through the Youth Homelessness Action Plan.
 - Queensland's Responding to Homelessness Strategy has been a pathway for addressing the needs of homeless young people with substance abuse problems and the provision of other support programmes.
 - South Australia made homelessness a priority of its Social Exclusion Unit and has addressed young people's homeless within that general framework.
 - Western Australia has actively invested in both support services and housing delivery and assistance to young people including short- and long-term social housing for young people and private rental market assistance.
 - Northern Territory has developed a range of responses as part of a renewed focus of familial violence. Those responses are designed to protect young people but also to prevent homelessness generated by family breakdown and dysfunction.
 - Australian Capital Territory has developed a homelessness strategy within the framework of which a Youth Homelessness Action Plan was developed. This action plan has involved providing both accommodation and support services to homeless young people.⁵²
- 7.21 Notably, many of the initiatives in relation to the homeless do not actually involve housing assistance or housing services. Western Australia is one state that has taken a supply-side approach to homelessness.

⁵¹ Ibid: 69

⁵² National Youth Commission of Inquiry, (2008) *Australia's Homeless Youth: a report on the National Youth Commission Inquiry into Homelessness*. Victoria, National Youth Commission. pp41-52. www.nyc.net.au

Delivering Housing to At Risk and Vulnerable Young People

- 7.22 International jurisdictions inevitably show some diversity in the way in which they address the housing needs of at risk and vulnerable young people. Despite this, there are among practitioners and policy makers across those jurisdictions convergence around some key aspects of delivering better housing outcomes.
- 7.23 Firstly, there is broad agreement that the housing needs of at risk and vulnerable young people are both diverse and dynamic. That is, that different groups of young people have different housing service requirements, and an individual young person's housing requirements and service needs will legitimately change over time.
- 7.24 Second, and as a consequence, there is agreement that there must be a range of housing alternatives which provide at risk and vulnerable young people choice and, possibly more importantly, match the specific housing requirement of a young person at a particular point in time.
- 7.25 Third, that for some young people, the provision of housing needs to be embedded in the provision of other support services. Those services will include those directed to establishing housing solutions, but they should also include co-ordinated services directed to the health, welfare, life skills and educational needs of at risk and vulnerable young people.

Principles for Housing Responses for At Risk and Vulnerable Young People

- 7.26 This convergence of views has become articulated overseas in core principles that inform both the development of a service framework and the programmes delivered within them. Sometimes these principles are expressed as key elements of best practice. While they may differ slightly from country to country, they generally encompass:
- Supporting positive youth development – recognising strengths and resilience, empowering young people to plan, set goals and make decisions, and providing them with opportunities to develop skills and leadership.
 - Prevention and early intervention – addressing structural and situational factors that may be contributors or precursors to unmet housing need, and early identification of young people at risk of poor housing outcomes.
 - Multiple responses to at risk and vulnerable young people's housing needs – a network of services and programmes designed to assist them at different points.
 - Integrated services – at risk and vulnerable young people are beset by a range of problems. Multiple providers and programmes may be needed to meet young people's multiple needs. Accordingly, there needs to be effective coordination, linkages and referrals operating between agencies and integrated service strategies.
 - Tailoring services to individual needs – individual clients' needs and priorities change over time, and young people's needs vary both across and within sub-groups of the youth population.
 - Respecting and responding to cultural diversity – services must be safe and comfortable, non-judgemental and take into account differences whether they be ethnic, cultural, religious, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle or age.

- Strengthening and supporting families – strengthening families’ abilities to support their young people, and supporting young people to develop their own parenting skills.⁵³

A Comprehensive Service Framework

7.27 Overseas, a reasonably consistent view has emerged of what constitutes a comprehensive and effective service framework that provides the necessary ‘bundles’ of services. Those bundles of services can be broadly summarised as:

- Youth development programmes – housing programmes incorporate youth development components, and/or housing programmes are part of wider youth development initiatives.
- Prevention and early intervention services – focused on preventing the emergence of housing problems and addressing housing problems in their early stages. Often such services are focused on young people living in the home of parents/caregivers. Two common types of programmes are family mediation and school-based programmes.
- Social housing provision – establishing young people as a priority for access to social housing stock.
- Temporary, emergency and transitional accommodation – providing support for a limited time. This encompasses a diverse range of services to cater for varying levels of need and to give young people some choices. They are differentiated by length of stay and level of support. Increasingly, the need to incorporate ‘move on’ strategies in the provision of temporary and transition services in order to develop independent living skills and motivation is acknowledged. However, the lack of suitable housing for youth on the open market that they can ‘move on’ to remains a significant problem in many areas.
- Tenancy sustainment services – helping young people to establish and sustain tenancies through support networks and services. Often these services include financial assistance, developing relationships with landlords, and supporting young people to share accommodation.
- Combining housing and other services – enabling young people to access the range of services they need. Such services include health services, mental health services, addiction services, employment, training and education. Sometimes such services are configured as ‘gateway’ services that include drop in centres and street outreach programmes, which enable young people to access more formalised housing assistance.
- Transition to independence – assisting young people to achieve longer-term housing options. These encompass a wide variety including life skills programmes, supported housing and provision of other support services. For some disabled young people independent living will require both support provision and housing modifications or specialised housing design.

⁵³ O’Connell, M. (2003) ‘Responding to Homelessness: An Overview of US and UK Policy Interventions’ *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 13:158-170.; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2007) *Promising Strategies to End Youth Homelessness*. Report to Congress; Communities and Local Government (2007). *Tackling Youth Homelessness Policy Briefing 18*. London, Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. www.yjb.gov.uk; National Youth Commission (2008). *Australia’s Homeless Youth: a report on the National Youth Commission Inquiry into Homelessness*. Victoria, National Youth Commission. www.nyc.net.au

- Affordable housing – includes a range of models of long-term housing such as subsidised housing, voucher schemes and self-build. Often these programmes have been developed in response to a lack of safe, quality, affordable housing to which young people can transition.

Getting an Effective System

7.28 The international experience also shows that establishing this web or mosaic of integrated services requires inter-sectoral, planned and funded action as follows:

- Local strategic plans – providing guidance and direction to engage the community in addressing youth housing problems. These are place-based plans that provide a consistent, structured approach that responds to the key issues and priorities in an area. These have been found to be particularly effective when linked to and consistent with other locally-based strategic planning, such as education, employment, health and transport.
- Joint working together – statutory service providers, local authorities, community organisations, private landlords and other stakeholders working together on youth housing. This occurs through a variety of mechanisms such as forums, partnerships, joint protocols, joint monitoring and programme assessment.
- New funding – the provision of additional resources to improve and extend existing services and introduce new services. This includes implementing longer funding streams for initiatives.
- Monitoring and measuring outcomes – this provides for an agreed and shared informational base necessary to evaluation, continuous improvement, and resource allocation.
- Building capacity – improving the ability of providers to implement and deliver services. This involves staff training and development of effective and efficient delivery systems and processes. This also involves improving the ability of communities – young people, families, schools, local organisations and networks – to increase awareness of, recognise and develop skills to deal with youth housing issues.

7.29 The National Partnership to End Youth Homelessness has developed a checklist to guide communities to address youth homelessness. The Ten Essentials Your Community Needs to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness sets out minimum requirements for effective, permanent solutions. They are:

- Plan – develop a community strategy that commits a wide range of local organisations to funding and actions.
- Data – an information system to assess causes of homelessness, youth needs, effectiveness of interventions and number of homeless youth.
- Emergency Prevention – programmes that prevent young people falling into homelessness.
- Systems Prevention – mainstream programmes in welfare, youth justice, health etc that consistently assess and respond to youth housing needs.
- Out Reach – initiatives that reduce barriers and encourage homeless youth to enter appropriate housing that is linked with appropriate services.
- Youth Housing Continuum – consisting of temporary shelter, transitional housing, housing search and housing placement services; all geared to reducing the length of time youth remain homeless and number of times they become homeless.

- Services – the range of services young people need can be easily accessed.
- Youth Development – youth participate in programme development, delivery and evaluation.
- Permanent Housing – a sufficient supply of permanent housing to meet youth needs, particularly those who are chronically homeless and on very low incomes.
- Income – assistance for young people to secure enough income (through employment, education/training or benefits) to access housing.⁵⁴

7.30 The following vignettes of programmes in different countries indicate the sort of programmes and service configurations that emerge from an active focus on housing for at risk and vulnerable young people.

Canada

7.31 **Eva's Phoenix, Toronto** – Operating since 2000, Eva's Phoenix provides transitional housing for up to one year for 50 homeless and at risk young people in Toronto. The shared accommodation facility uses an integrated, holistic approach to provide the young people with support in the areas of housing, employment, training and social support to enable them to achieve self-sufficiency. Training and employment programmes run by the facility for their residents and other youth include paid work placements with local employers, and work in an in-house print shop. Young people can also get counselling and mentoring. The construction of the facility itself is the result of a successful training programme that involved homeless and at risk youth in employment-focused life skills training and on-site employment training. On site the facility contains shared townhouse-style units, common areas, a kitchen, grocery shop, laundry and computer facilities. Evaluation of this project showed that after graduation high proportions of youth had positive employment and education outcomes, and improvements in their housing conditions. Stakeholders have a high regard for the programme.⁵⁵

7.32 **Pape Adolescent Resource Centre (PARC), Toronto** – PARC is a supportive housing project that helps youth 15-24, many of whom are coming out of care, in their transition to independence and self-sufficiency. Some have mental health problems and are catered for in small apartments, while there are also larger houses that young people share. PARC is a partnership between three child protection agencies, the City of Toronto and two non-profit housing providers. Accommodation is leased by PARC from the City of Toronto and the non-profit housing providers. The young people can stay until they are ready to leave, and usually stay anything from 3-10 years. PARC is responsible for day-to-day management of the properties and support of the tenants. PARC also operates the One-Stop Housing Program, which helps young people find private sector rental accommodation. One-Stop's clients come on referral from other agencies or they self-refer. Core funding comes from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, with other funding from other government agencies, and charitable organisations and private donations.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ National Alliance to End Homelessness (2006) Fundamental Issues to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness Series BRIEF No.1. www.endhomelessness.org/files/1058_file_youth_brief_one.pdf

⁵⁵ www.evasinitiatives.com

⁵⁶ Eberle Planning and Research et al (2007) *Vancouver Youth Housing Options Study*. Prepared for the Vancouver Youth Funders Table.

- 7.33 **Supporting Our Youth (SOY), Toronto** – this is a community development programme designed to improve the lives of marginalised youth, particularly lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgendered youth. The programme for 16-29 year olds includes supportive housing, along with employment opportunities, mentoring, and arts, culture and recreational spaces. Many of the young people assisted have a history of unstable housing and have been in and out of shelters. SOY partners with service agencies and non-profit and co-operative housing providers to provide subsidised housing for their clients. Housing providers include a multi-faith organisation, an agency serving refugees and new migrants, and an agency working with Aboriginal people. All units are self-contained ‘bachelor’ and one-bedroom units. SOY helps the young people with moving into their units, including finding furniture. After settling, SOY is in contact once a month and the young people can call anytime they need support. SOY has a policy of tenants paying rent direct to the landlord to help them develop money management skills. There is no maximum length of stay in the units, however SOY finds there is a much greater demand for the service than can be met. SOY has also had difficulty accessing units from housing providers because of the large number of community agencies seeking housing. The programme has gained a reputation as a safe and supportive place for young people.⁵⁷

United States

- 7.34 **Larkin Street Youth Services, San Francisco** – Larkin Street provides integrated services and a continuum of housing options. Starting as a youth drop-in centre in 1984, the centre has developed a full spectrum of services to help San Francisco’s most vulnerable youth to move beyond the street. The services provided not only include a safe haven drop-in centre, but also outreach workers, case management, scattered site housing, specialised services for youth sub-populations, peer support and mentorship, education programmes, job training, medical care and HIV prevention. Young people are offered a range of housing options, from emergency shelter, transitional housing, to permanent housing on the private market. Young people ranging in age from 12-24 are catered for, with different approaches for the 12-17 year olds compared to the older youth. Some of the young people have special needs. Support can continue until the young person is 25. Over the years Larkin Street has received numerous awards. It is seen as a model of innovative and effective service provision.⁵⁸
- 7.35 **Chelsea Youth Foyer, New York** – Chelsea Youth Foyer is a housing-based career development programme for 18-24 year olds who are leaving foster care, homeless or at risk of homelessness. The programme is based in a large accommodation building that provides permanent supportive housing for low-income or formerly homeless adults. The facilities manager, a major non-profit organisation, leases 25 units to the project for 40 young people. Chelsea Youth Foyer has developed a partnership with the Columbia University School of Social Work to create a vocational service curriculum tailored to the needs of the young adult population. The vocational programme has three components: a career club that provides information, support and networking; assessment and career planning; and labour market liaison with local employers to match youth and employer needs. The young

⁵⁷ Eberle Planning and Research et al (2007) *Vancouver Youth Housing Options Study*. Prepared for the Vancouver Youth Funders Table.

⁵⁸ Ibid

people must participate in a personalised programme for 18-24 months. After graduation, the young people are followed up for one year. The project has only been going a few years, but evidence shows that the majority of graduates obtain their own housing on the private rental market and a few have found subsidised housing. The young people are very positive about the vocational training aspect of the programme.⁵⁹

- 7.36 **Lighthouse Youth Services Transitional and Supportive Housing, Cincinnati** – Lighthouse provides comprehensive services to children and families in crisis. On any one day, Lighthouse is providing residential care for more than 250 children and young people in foster homes, group homes, boarding homes, residential treatment centres, shared homes, supervised scattered apartments and other residential programmes. Lighthouse believes that offering a full range of housing allows them to respond to young people with a range of needs and abilities. Young people can have a choice about the type of housing they have, move on to less supervised housing as their self-sufficiency increases, or return to a more supported situation if needed. Lighthouse also provides Shelter Care Plus, a supportive housing programme that provides rental assistance to homeless youth with mental health and addiction issues. For the supervised scattered apartments, Lighthouse has lease arrangements with 30-40 landlords and rental agencies to provide apartments. These landlords provide references for their tenants, which enables them to move on to other housing. Over time Lighthouse has built up a core group of landlords who understand the programme and are willing to give the young people a chance. Landlords benefit because Lighthouse ensures the rent comes on time, there is support for the young tenants and the landlord can call for assistance anytime. Lighthouse also covers damage (recouping payment from the tenant), handles conflict between tenant and landlord, cleans up if necessary, evicts if necessary and generally keeps an eye on tenants. Lighthouse has its own tenancy rules, which are often stricter than the landlord's. A high proportion of the young people who graduate from the scattered site housing increase their self-sufficiency goals, arrange their own rental accommodation, progress in their education and get a job.⁶⁰

England

- 7.37 **Telford and Wrekin Council (TWC) and the STAY project** – TWC contracts with a church social service provider for the STAY project to provide housing options advice for 16-25 year olds. Two full-time workers deliver a 'prevention of homelessness' service and consider applications for housing assistance on behalf of the council. The two organisations have a number of processes for working together in place, including close working relationships between the staff of the two organisations, team meetings, shared training and information protocols. The two workers running the service use council facilities. The project has been in place for four years, and a key to its success is considered to be the recognition that young people need a different approach if youth homelessness is to be tackled.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ Communities and Local Government (2007), *Tackling Youth Homelessness Policy Briefing* 18

- 7.38 **South Gloucestershire Youth Housing Partnership** – This multi-agency approach that has been in place over six years, consisting of the South Gloucestershire Council, government agencies, housing associations, youth housing providers, registered social landlords and other organisations. The partnership is a strategic and service development forum to resolve the housing needs of care leavers or young homeless people who are vulnerable or who have complex needs. The crux of the partnership is the Post-16 Panel, which agrees packages of housing and/or support. This process also identifies the lead delivery agencies. The partnership has been successful in aligning local strategies, services and funding streams, with the driving aim of getting good outcomes for young people. There has been commitment of partner organisations, a performance-oriented culture, a readiness to test out new ways of working, and positive attitudes to collaborating. The partnership has produced a series of practice guidelines for multi-agency working together.⁶²
- 7.39 **Community Campus 87** – A local organisation operating in Middlesbrough, Stockton on Thornaby for 16-25 year olds. It provides housing, support, personal development and training opportunities, including a mix of rental housing provided without a bond supported by a team of Tenant Support workers. The Key Skills Project was started by Community Campus 87 in 1991 as a property renovation project that linked housing and training needs of young people to addressing vacant and dilapidated properties in the area. The scheme now provides renovation services to the voluntary, community, public and private sectors.⁶³

Scotland

- 7.40 **'Flatmates' Project and Amber Project, Edinburgh** – Both projects are run by the Cyrenians, a charitable organisation. The Flatmates Project is a three year pilot that aims to increase the affordability of private sector rentals for young people with low or no support needs, by offering them opportunities for sharing with others. The project offers a rent deposit guarantee for landlords and involves an intensive flatmate matching process, which includes consideration of where young people want to live, proximity to work, education and support networks, and any common interests. Once matched, tenants participate in 'prepare to share' sessions to discuss potential problems and come to agreed solutions before the tenancy starts. The flatmates are given separate tenancy agreements so if one person moves on, the security of other tenants is not jeopardised. The Cyrenians provides support such as budgeting advice, help with benefits and mediation if necessary for one year. The project has the capacity to house 40 young people.
- 7.41 Another pilot, the Amber Project is a mediation service for young people aged 14-24 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. When a young person is referred to the project (by the council, other agencies or self-referral), they are assessed and then if they and their parent(s) agree to mediation, a mediation process gets underway. On average the service is provided for 6-8 weeks. The outcome is regarded as successful if the young person decides to return to or remain in the parental home, or moves out in a planned way with the ongoing support of the family.

⁶² www.communities.gov.uk.

⁶³ www.communitycampus87.co.uk

- 7.42 The Cyrenians also offer other housing services including tenancy support, which provides five hours a week help with practical tasks. The team helps with finding a flat, setting up a bank account, budgeting, dealing with landlords and neighbours and provides personal development opportunities. The Cyrenians also provide employment and training programmes for young people.⁶⁴
- 7.43 **Drumchapel Supported Youth Housing Project** – based in Glasgow, this multi-agency project provides services to young vulnerable people aged 16-25 with a range of support needs who are attempting to live independently. Some of the young people have significant health and emotional support needs. The project has the following key components: housing provided by local registered social landlords, packages of new furniture at no costs to the tenant, visiting support to tenants for as long as needed and holistic support including education, employment and training. The project is funded to support up to 32 tenants. The project is managed by Quarriers, a voluntary organisation, which works in partnership on the project with statutory agencies, the city council and other voluntary organisations. Evaluation found the project provides a valuable local service. However, it has been difficult to ensure sustainable funding, staffing and practice frameworks to meet the demands of this level and type of support.⁶⁵

Australia

- 7.44 **Reconnect Program** - The Reconnect Program is the main early intervention programme for young people and their families to prevent youth homelessness. The programme targets 12-18 year olds and focuses on reconnecting young people to family, education, employment and the community. The programme has been instrumental in changing ways of responding to young people in the early stages of homelessness, and evaluation has found the programme effective. One example is Regional Extended Family services (REFS) in Eastern Melbourne. REFS offers mediation and family support. It includes a young volunteer mediator who works alongside the adult mediator. This has been found to encourage young people to engage with the service. REFS also refers young people to other services as required and works with schools, runs support groups for parents with adolescents and provides long-term supported accommodation for homeless students where it is not appropriate or possible for them to live at home. This provides a supportive environment where they can complete their studies. Another Reconnect programme is Vinnies Reconnect, working in rural and isolated southwestern New South Wales. Services include counselling, assistance with education, training, health, income support benefits and mediation services. Vinnies arose out of an emergency accommodation service and operates from the same premises.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Quilgars, D, Johnsen, S and Pleace, N (2008) *Youth Homelessness in the U.K. A Decade of Progress*. York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation; www.cyrenians.org.nz

⁶⁵ www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk; www.quarriers.org.uk

⁶⁶ National Youth Commission (2008). *Australia's Homeless Youth: a report on the National Youth Commission Inquiry into Homelessness*. Victoria, National Youth Commission. www.nyc.net.au; Evans, G and Shaver, S (2001). *Youth Homelessness: Case Studies of the Reconnect Program*. Final Report prepared for the Department of Community and Family Services. SPRC Report 2/01, University of South Wales.

- 7.45 **Reconnect Young Refugees Program** – Covering the cities of Greater Dandenong and Hume, this is an early intervention and support service for refugee and newly arrived migrant young people 12-18 years old and their families. Its aims are to improve the connections of the young people with family, peers, school and the community, while reducing family conflict and the risk of homelessness. Workers provide outreach support, counselling, family mediation, referral and information. The service works with young people still at home and those who have left home.⁶⁷

8. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

- 8.1 Establishing a robust estimate of the prevalence of at risk and vulnerable young people living in insecure or unsafe housing is a significant challenge. The difficulties of doing so are in themselves indicative of one of the fundamental problems in New Zealand. Because young people are not identified as a priority for housing assistance and because it is assumed that their housing needs will be addressed if their parents' needs are addressed, very little data is collected about young people's housing situations. The assessment processes that many at risk and vulnerable young people are so often subject to, largely leave unexplored the young person's housing status.
- 8.2 What is clear from this research is that while the majority of at risk and vulnerable young people are likely to be in adequate housing, a significant proportion is not. This research suggests that up to 30 percent of our already vulnerable and at risk young people may have their chances of healthy and productive lives further compromised by living in unsafe, insecure housing. Among the clients of the providers that participated in this research, that may constitute over 14,000 young people. Another estimate, based on CHDS data, suggests that over 20,000 at risk young people aged 12-24 may be in unsafe and/or insecure housing situations.
- 8.3 It is even more difficult to establish the regional distribution of unmet housing need among at risk and vulnerable young people. The providers participating in this research were drawn from all over the country. They overwhelmingly reported difficulties housing at risk and vulnerable young people. Throughout the country, providers reported housing service gaps.
- 8.4 At risk and vulnerable young people exposed to unsafe and insecure housing are predominantly those who can no longer live within their own families and those who are denied the usual transition into independent living. For disabled young people, it is often the latter which is the primary problem. Young mothers also confront that problem and it is notable that many get temporary accommodation from relatives. For many others, however, violence, abuse, crime and addiction in their families push young people out. For some young people, mental health problems, offending or substance abuse lead to them becoming detached from family and community support.
- 8.5 Many of the problems faced by at risk and vulnerable young people are faced by other young people. The problems of relatively low incomes, high house prices and debt loading are endemic. However, those problems are compounded for at risk and vulnerable young people. Their exclusion from safe and secure housing is driven by a combination of:

⁶⁷ www.cmyi.net.au

- Persistent and longstanding resource deficits. These are young people who have few others, if anyone, to whom they can turn, no savings, little information, no credentials on the housing market and poor life skills.
 - Vulnerability to stigmatisation.
 - Difficulties in entering contracts.
 - A homogenous housing stock largely designed for nuclear families, often in neighbourhoods poorly served by public transport and deficient in amenities catering for young people.
 - Policy settings that fail to recognise their (often complex) needs, provide inadequate protection, largely exclude them from housing provision, and offer limited assistance through the benefit system.
 - Under-servicing by housing providers.
- 8.6 Both at risk and vulnerable young people and those that provide services to them see housing as critical to improving young people's opportunities and life chances. There is a significant gap between the housing services provided to at risk and vulnerable young people and the services that are needed. 'Hard' housing services are among the services identified as most needed, but least provided.
- 8.7 For at risk and vulnerable young people, there is a housing crisis. Sometimes this is manifest in the reports we received of young people running out of their entitlements to income assistance to access housing, and of young people appearing at community-based social service providers with no means of support and no place to live. Often the crisis is hidden because young people stay with relatives, circulate around households or take up shelter that is unsafe.
- 8.8 This research has found that young people face a myriad of barriers to getting the housing they need. Those include the prohibitive costs of housing; their lack of knowledge about how to access the right housing; landlords' reluctance to let to young people; their lack of skills at running a household; their lack of necessary credentials and renting histories; and difficulties (if under 18 years), in getting tenancy agreements. That is in addition to a lack of suitable housing stock for young people. Movement from house to house is commonplace and an expected part of most at-risk young people's lives. Some of the young people we spoke to have experienced homelessness and more have been subject to insecure tenure. Reasons for moving range from unaffordable rents to overcrowding to family or flatmate conflict to breaking up with a partner. For some of those who have been in care, their whole lives have been characterised by frequent moves.
- 8.9 While most of the young people contributing to this research rely on relatives for housing, there is another group of young people (particularly those coming out of care, some young offenders and some young refugees and asylum seekers) who do not have any family back-up or contact. For other young people, living with relatives may be unsatisfactory, where there is household crowding, poor dwelling conditions and family conflict or violence.

- 8.10 For many of the young people we talked with, especially those 16-18 years of age and those living at home, housing assistance has not been accessed or is not available. Young people often make choices simply to get a roof over their heads, without thought of other consequences. For example, it is common for young women and young men to resolve their housing problems by forming a sexual relationship with someone who can provide them accommodation. Other young people find themselves living with undesirable house mates, in situations where their tenure is not protected, or in unsafe neighbourhoods.
- 8.11 Current policy settings in New Zealand do not address young people's housing problems. In the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and, to a lesser extent, Australia, both youth and housing policy acknowledge the critical role of affordable, safe and suitable housing in securing the best outcomes for young people. Youth housing is addressed through strategic approaches that deal holistically with young people's needs. Programmes that connect up housing services with employment search, education and training, and social support services have been developed in those countries because it is well understood that poor housing leads to poor health, education, and employment outcomes, dislocates young people from communities and contributes to their falling into offending. For young people who are struggling with addictions, mental health problems or with offending histories, good housing has proven to be essential for their re-integration into the community and their recovery. In those countries multi-agency initiatives and partnerships between central government, local government and non-profit community organisations to tackle the lack of housing options for youth are common.
- 8.12 Extensive changes are needed to New Zealand's current housing policies so that a holistic, strategic approach is taken to addressing young people's housing needs. New housing services and programmes need to be developed especially for young people as they are not catered for by existing policy and funding frameworks. This will require significant new funding, including increased funding to community-based housing and social service providers. Many community-based non-profit social service organisations currently provide considerable housing-related assistance to young people that is not funded.
- 8.13 To direct these investments, a strategic approach is required that sets out a framework for incentives and partnerships between public, private and community organisations to provide for young people's housing needs. Such a strategy should be based on a 'wrap-around' service model that anchors youth housing services and programmes within employment, education, training, and social support services.
- 8.14 Multiple approaches are required, including housing information and advisory services targeted to young people, youth housing advocates, direct financial assistance to young people to access housing, an increase in housing stock available to young people, improvements in current agencies' service delivery to young people, providing incentives for private landlords to let to young people and development of best practice approaches in housing services to young people.

- 8.15 In summary, New Zealand needs to consider policy changes that:
- Recognise young people as having eligibility and units of entitlement for housing assistance that are separate from family entitlements.
 - Allocate funding specifically for programmes targeted to the housing needs of young people.
 - Develop housing strategies, programmes and practices that are designed to meet the particular needs and circumstances of young people.
- 8.16 To be effective, those policy responses will need to:
- Embody internationally accepted principles of youth housing:
 - Supporting youth development.
 - Prevention and early intervention to stop youth homelessness.
 - Multiple responses and multiple entry to assistance.
 - Integrated services.
 - Services tailored to individual needs.
 - Services responsive to cultural imperatives and identities.
 - Strengthening and supporting families.
 - Provide a comprehensive service framework that:
 - Contributes to and supports youth development.
 - Includes prevention and early intervention services.
 - Enables young people to access social housing.
 - Provides temporary, emergency, transitional housing as part of a network of housing services.
 - Assists young people to sustain their tenancies.
 - Combines access to housing with access to other services.
 - Helps young people to transition to independence.
 - Enables young people to access affordable housing for long-term housing solutions.
 - Encompass inter-sectoral planned and funded action that involves central and local government agencies, non-government service providers and the housing and construction sectors.
- 8.17 At the local level, achieving effective responses to meet the housing needs of at risk and vulnerable young people will require:
- Local strategic and action plans.
 - Joint working together.
 - New funding.
 - Monitoring and measuring outcomes.
 - Building capacity of young people to engage with the housing market, providers to meet youth housing needs, and communities to embrace housing solutions.

- 8.18 Effective change must be underpinned by robust information and research. The research on which this report is based is a preliminary contribution to developing a strong evidence base for youth housing policies and programmes. What is needed is more robust evidence on the number of at risk and vulnerable young people in the population. At present there does not appear to be an agreed definition of at risk and vulnerable young people among government agencies, or any estimates of the at risk and vulnerable youth population. Government agencies were unable to provide such information for this research.
- 8.19 The housing needs of at risk and vulnerable young people also need to be routinely assessed and their housing situations monitored over time. This information is essential for the effective provision of housing and other services. Equally important, such information would contribute to a more systematic understanding of housing need and barriers to access experienced by these groups, and assist in establishing robust estimates of the prevalence of housing need among at risk and vulnerable young people.
- 8.20 In addition, there are research gaps. In particular, investigation of the dynamics of housing for the youth population in general, and the extent to which those dynamics are similar or different for at risk and vulnerable young people. Our research suggests that while at risk and vulnerable young people share many housing experiences and barriers with young people in general, there are specific housing difficulties that they are exposed to. Apart from the findings in this report, there appears to be very little research on the housing needs of at risk and vulnerable youth. It has already been pointed out that there appears to be no research on homelessness among young refugees in New Zealand or on their needs for services such as housing.⁶⁸ Finally, there is a pressing need to establish youth housing initiatives and evaluate them.

⁶⁸ Higgins, J (2008) *Annotated Bibliography of New Zealand Literature on Migrant and Refugee Youth*. Department of Labour, Wellington.

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ANNEX A

FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINES

The following provides a guideline for the key themes/issues to be discussed with vulnerable and at risk young people as part of the CHRANZ Access to Safe and Secure Housing for Vulnerable and At Risk Young People Research. We do not necessarily expect to go through these key issues one-by-one or in any particular order. The use of guidelines enables flexibility in the discussion as well as the ability to focus on issues of particular interest/importance to individual focus groups.

1. How common do you think housing difficulties are among young people?

Housing difficulties include such things as:

- Substandard physical conditions e.g. poor state of repair, dampness, dilapidation, inadequate sunlight, and/or pest infestations which cause discomfort
- Lack of privacy
- Lack of choice about housing options
- Lack of personal safety
- Exposure to excessive noise
- Unsuitable location relative to support and/or family/whanau
- Overcrowding
- Insecurity of housing tenure
- Unaffordability of housing relative to income and medical costs
- Loss of independent accommodation during episodes of acute care or hospitalisation
- Discrimination in finding and retaining housing.

2. What impact has housing difficulties had on your life in the past?

3. How important is housing to your future?

4. What are the barriers to you achieving a good housing future?

5. What help do you need to get a good housing future?

6. What do you think you can do yourself to get a good housing future?

ANNEX B

A Survey of Service Providers for Vulnerable and/or At Risk Young People

The Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment (CRESA) has been contracted by The Centre for Housing Research (CHRANZ) to undertake research about youth and housing.

Understanding the activities and perceptions of organisations and groups who are providing services to young people is an important part of the research.

In particular, we are interested in:

- *Whether the young people you serve face unmet housing needs and are in housing stress.*
- *How unmet housing need and housing stress impacts on the wellbeing of vulnerable and at risk young people.*
- *To what extent the housing situation of vulnerable and at risk young people affects the efficacy of your programmes with young people and your ability to assist vulnerable and at risk young people.*

Every completed questionnaire returned to us will have the opportunity to be selected for a \$20 petrol voucher.

All the data we collect will be used for statistical purposes only. The name of your organisation/group will not be identified to CHRANZ or any other party.

Please return the survey in the pre-paid return address envelope enclosed by 23 April 2008

If you have any queries about the research or completing the survey please contact Kay Saville-Smith (Project leader) or Sam Mortlock at CRESA on free phone

0508 4CRESA (0508 427372)

or

kay@cresa.co.nz or sam@cresa.co.nz or ruth@cresa.co.nz



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1. **How would you describe the primary reason that young people are involved in your programmes or services? Please tick (✓) all boxes that apply**

- ₁ Criminal offending
 - ₂ Need of protection from physical abuse
 - ₃ Need of protection from sexual abuse
 - ₄ Need of protection from neglect
 - ₅ Behavioural problems
 - ₆ Substance abuse/addiction
 - ₇ Mental health problems/disorders
 - ₈ Physically disabled
 - ₉ Sight impaired
 - ₁₀ Deaf
 - ₁₁ In need of literacy assistance/reading recovery
 - ₁₂ Persistent antisocial behaviour
 - ₁₃ Unemployment
 - ₁₄ Severe conduct disorder
 - ₁₅ Young mother with baby
 - ₁₆ Refugee or migrant
 - ₁₇ Transition from foster/state care
 - ₁₈ Other
-

2. **Are the youth services you provide provided as part of a larger organisation?**

- ₁ Yes
- ₂ No

3. **How long has your organisation been in operation?**
_____ years

4. **What geographical area(s) do your services cover?**

Please state: _____

5. **What are your TWO main funding sources? Please tick (✓) two boxes only**

- ₁ Client fees
- ₂ District Health Board (DHB) or Ministry of Health
- ₃ Ministry of Justice
- ₄ Ministry of Social Development (including Child, Youth and Family)
- ₅ ACC
- ₆ Public fund raising
- ₇ Other. *Please specify* _____

6. Please fill in the Table below about your programmes and the young people that use them.

Programme Name	Target Group	Number of Young People (Year end 31 Dec 2007)	Current Number of Young People	Number on Waiting List	Does the Programme have a Residential Component?

7. Of the young people in your programmes for the year ended 31 December 2007, what proportion of your clients are ...? Provide a proportion for each ethnicity, an estimate is fine.

Ethnicity	%
a. Maori	
b. Pacific	
c. NZ European/Pakeha	
d. Asian	
e. Other (please specify below)	

Please specify 'other' _____

8. Of the young people in your programmes for the year ended 31 December 2007, how many would fall into the following housing situations? Choose ONE situation that BEST FITS individuals' circumstances

Housing Situation	Number
1. Adequate, long-term, housing with family	
2. Adequate, long-term, housing with other carers	
3. Adequate, long-term, supported housing	
4. Adequate, long-term, independent housing	
5. Emergency housing	
6. No fixed abode – Dossing down, moving from house to house	
7. Using night shelters	
8. Living on streets	
9. Adequate short-term housing – but in need of long-term housing solution	
10. Residential care	
11. Living in over-crowded accommodation	
12. Living in hotel/motel	
13. Backpackers	
14. Living in Camping Ground	
15. Living in dilapidated housing	
16. Living in accommodation likely to expose them to physical abuse or sexual abuse	
17. Living in unaffordable housing	
18. Living in accommodation likely to expose them to criminality	
19. Living in a 'gang house'	
20. Living in a house used for drug dealing or making	
21. House not adapted to deal adequately with disability	
22. Other (please specify) _____	
Total Number of Young People in the Year Ended 31 December	

9. Of the young people in housing need in the year ended 31 December 2007, what proportion do you estimate have had their housing needs resolved satisfactorily?

Please state the percentage: _____%

10. How much does meeting housing need matter to your clients achieving positive outcomes?

Please tick (✓) one box only

- ₁ It doesn't matter at all ₂ It matters a little ₃ It matters a lot ₄ It is essential

11. How much does unmet housing need inhibit your clients achieving positive outcomes?

Please tick (✓) one box only

- ₁ Doesn't inhibit positive outcomes at all ₃ Inhibits getting positive outcomes a lot
₂ Inhibits getting positive outcomes a little ₄ Is a very significant barrier to positive needs

12. Does your organisation provide any type of accommodation services?

₁ No – Go to Question 13 ₂ Yes – Please tick (✓) all boxes below that apply

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ General housing advice/information | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₀ Assistance to find a place to live |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Advice on tenancies | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₁ Assistance with establishing support networks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Housing advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₂ Budget advice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Liaison and mediation with landlords | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₃ Fire safety equipment (provision and/or maintenance e.g. smoke alarms) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Advice on home-ownership finance | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₄ Furniture pool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Long-term rental accommodation | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₅ Help with accessing benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Transitional rental housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₆ Help with organising power and phone connections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₈ Emergency housing (not Women's Refuge) | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₇ Help with accessing DWI re-establishment grant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₉ Women's Refuge housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₈ Landlord liaison |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀ Night Shelters | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₉ Laundry service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₁ Boarding Houses | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₀ Lawn mowing and gardening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₂ Shared-ownership housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₁ Rubbish removal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₃ Papakainga housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₂ Shifting household goods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₄ Self-build housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₃ Spring cleaning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₅ Provision of home-ownership lending finance | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₄ Residential therapeutic programme |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₆ Home maintenance services | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₅ Other <i>please specify</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₇ Insulation/retrofit services | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₈ Training related to housing (e.g. construction, maintenance) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₉ Respite housing | |

13. In the year ended 31 December 2007, how many young people did you assist with housing services?

Number : _____

14. How easy is it to get housing solutions for your young people in housing need?

Please tick (✓) one box only

- ₁ Very Hard ₂ Hard ₃ Easy ₄ Very Easy

15. Are young men or young women most exposed to unmet housing need?

Please tick (✓) one box only

- ₁ Mainly young men ₂ Mainly young women ₃ No difference

16. Among your clients, what age group is most seriously affected by unmet housing need

Please tick (✓) one box only

- ₁ Mainly 12-16 years ₂ Mainly 17-20 years ₃ Mainly 21-24 years

17. Which organisations have assisted your young people to meet their housing needs?

Please tick (✓) all boxes that apply

- ₁ None – **Go to Question 19**
₂ Housing New Zealand Corporation
₃ Local Council
₄ District Health Board or Ministry of Health
₅ ACC
₆ Work and Income/ Ministry of Social Development
₇ Private landlords
₈ Local community housing orgs. (*Please specify*) _____
₉ Other (*Please specify*) _____

18. In the year ended 31 December 2007, how many of your young people were assisted with housing services by other organisations?

Number: _____

19. In the year ended 31 December 2007, which organisations assisted with housing services most? Please tick (✓) all boxes that apply

- ₁ Housing New Zealand Corporation
₂ Local Council
₃ District Health Board or Ministry of Health
₄ ACC
₅ Work and Income/ Ministry of Social Development
₆ Private landlords
₇ Local community housing orgs. (*Please specify*) _____
₈ Other (*Please specify*) _____

20. In your locality, is there a need for more accommodation support services and housing provision for at risk and vulnerable young people?

- ₁ No – *Go to Question 22* ₂ Yes – *Go to Question 21*

21. What sort of housing support do your young clients need? Tick (✓) all boxes that apply

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ General housing advice/information | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₀ Assistance to find a place to live |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Advice on tenancies | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₁ Assistance with establishing support networks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Housing advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₂ Budget advice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Liaison and mediation with landlords | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₃ Fire safety equipment (provision and/or maintenance e.g. smoke alarms) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Advice on home-ownership finance | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₄ Furniture pool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Long-term rental accommodation | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₅ Help with accessing benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Transitional rental housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₆ Help with organising power and phone connections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₈ Emergency housing (not Women's Refuge) | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₇ Help with accessing DWI re-establishment grant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₉ Women's Refuge housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₈ Landlord liaison |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀ Night Shelters | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₉ Laundry service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₁ Boarding Houses | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₀ Lawn mowing and gardening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₂ Shared-ownership housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₁ Rubbish removal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₃ Papakainga housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₂ Shifting household goods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₄ Self-build housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₃ Spring cleaning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₅ Provision of home-ownership lending finance | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₄ Residential therapeutic programme |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₆ Home maintenance services | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₅ Other <i>please specify</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₇ Insulation/retrofit services | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₈ Training related to housing (e.g. construction, maintenance) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₉ Respite housing | |

22. What are the THREE most critical housing support needs for your young clients?

Please tick (✓) THREE boxes that apply

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ General housing advice/information | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₀ Assistance to find a place to live |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Advice on tenancies | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₁ Assistance with establishing support networks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Housing advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₂ Budget advice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Liaison and mediation with landlords | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₃ Fire safety equipment (provision and/or maintenance e.g. smoke alarms) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Advice on home-ownership finance | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₄ Furniture pool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Long-term rental accommodation | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₅ Help with accessing benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Transitional rental housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₆ Help with organising power and phone connections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₈ Emergency housing (not Women's Refuge) | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₇ Help with accessing DWI re-establishment grant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₉ Women's Refuge housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₈ Landlord liaison |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀ Night Shelters | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₉ Laundry service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₁ Boarding Houses | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₀ Lawn mowing and gardening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₂ Shared-ownership housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₁ Rubbish removal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₃ Papakainga housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₂ Shifting household goods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₄ Self-build housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₃ Spring cleaning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₅ Provision of home-ownership lending finance | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₄ Residential therapeutic programme |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₆ Home maintenance services | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₅ Other <i>please specify</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₇ Insulation/retrofit services | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₈ Training related to housing (e.g. construction, maintenance) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₉ Respite housing | |

**Please turn over
to final page**

ANNEX C

Meeting the Housing Needs of At Risk and Vulnerable Young People

The Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment (CRESA) has been contracted by the Centre for Housing Research Aotearoa New Zealand (CHRANZ) to undertake research about youth and housing.

Understanding the activities and perceptions of organisations and groups that are providing housing to young people is an important part of the research.

In particular, we are interested in:

- *What housing services are delivered to vulnerable or at risk young people, and what groups of vulnerable or at risk young people are targeted.*
- *Whether the young people you provide housing services for face unmet housing needs and are in housing stress.*
- *How unmet housing need and housing stress impacts on the wellbeing of vulnerable and at risk young people.*

Every completed questionnaire returned to us will have the opportunity to be selected for a \$20 petrol voucher.

All the data we collect will be used for statistical purposes only. The name of your organisation/group will not be identified to CHRANZ or any other party.

Please return the survey in the pre-paid return address envelope enclosed by 23 April 2008

If you have any queries about the research or completing the survey please contact Kay Saville-Smith (Project leader) or Sam Mortlock or Ruth Fraser at CRESA on free phone

0508 4CRESA (0508 427372)

or

kay@cresa.co.nz or sam@cresa.co.nz or ruth@cresa.co.nz



Centre for
**RESEARCH,
EVALUATION
and
SOCIAL
ASSESSMENT**

PO Box 3538

Wellington, NZ

Telephone: (04) 473 3071

Fax: (04) 473 3087

1. How long has your organisation been providing housing or housing-related services?

_____ years

2. What housing services do you directly deliver? Please tick (✓) all boxes below that apply

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ General housing advice/information | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₀ Assistance to find a place to live |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Advice on tenancies | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₁ Assistance with establishing support networks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Housing advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₂ Budget advice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Liaison and mediation with landlords | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₃ Fire safety equipment (provision and/or maintenance e.g. smoke alarms) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Advice on home-ownership finance | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₄ Furniture pool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Long-term rental accommodation | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₅ Help with accessing benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Transitional rental housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₆ Help with organising power and phone connections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₈ Emergency housing (not Women's Refuge) | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₇ Help with accessing DWI re-establishment grant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₉ Women's Refuge housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₈ Landlord liaison |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀ Night Shelters | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₉ Laundry service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₁ Boarding Houses | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₀ Lawn mowing and gardening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₂ Shared-ownership housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₁ Rubbish removal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₃ Papakainga housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₂ Shifting household goods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₄ Self-build housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₃ Spring cleaning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₅ Provision of home-ownership lending finance | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₄ Residential therapeutic programme |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₆ Home maintenance services | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₅ Other <i>please specify</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₇ Insulation/retrofit services | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₈ Training related to housing (e.g. construction, maintenance) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₉ Respite housing | |

3. Which of the following groups are your housing services targeted to? Please tick (✓) all boxes below that apply

- ₁ Low income single people
- ₂ Refugees
- ₃ New immigrants
- ₄ Maori
- ₅ Pacific peoples
- ₆ Youth (24 years old or under)
- ₇ Women
- ₈ Ex-prisoners
- ₉ Older people (65+ years)
- ₁₀ People with disabilities
- ₁₁ Low income families
- ₁₂ Other (please describe) _____

4. In the year to 31 December 2007, how many people did you assist with housing services?

Number: _____

5. **Does your organisation manage rental accommodation?** *Please tick (✓) one box only*

- ₁ Yes ₂ No

6. **Does your organisation provide housing finance?** *Please tick (✓) one box only*

- ₁ Yes *Go to Question 7* ₂ No *Go to Question 10*

7. **How many new loans did you make in the year to 31 December 2007?**

Number _____

8. **How many loans in your total mortgage portfolio?** Number _____

9. **What is the total value of your mortgage portfolio?** Value \$ _____

10. **What is the source of your funding?** *Please tick (✓) all boxes below that apply*

- ₁ Income from tenants
₂ Income from mortgagors
₃ Central government
₄ Local government
₅ Trusts
₆ Private sector donations (individuals or businesses)
₇ Income from own business profits
₈ Other (please describe) _____

11. **Why do people seek housing services from your organisation?** *Please tick (✓) all boxes below that apply*

- ₁ Evicted from previous rental accommodation
₂ Loss of home through mortgagee sale
₃ Financial difficulty due to rent arrears
₄ Financial difficulty due to mortgage arrears
₅ Living in emergency/temporary accommodation
₆ No fixed abode
₇ House condemned
₈ Problems with landlord
₉ Accommodation in poor physical condition
₁₀ Health problems
₁₁ Lack of personal safety in accommodation
₁₂ Lack of personal safety in immediate neighbourhood
₁₃ Accommodation in location distant from employment, schools, services
₁₄ Overcrowded accommodation
₁₅ Relationship breakdown
₁₆ Discharged from hospital, respite care, residential care
₁₇ Released from prison
₁₈ Subject to racial or other forms of discrimination/harassment
₁₉ Lack of knowledge of housing options and opportunities
₂₀ Other (please describe) _____

12. Do you provide housing services to at risk or vulnerable young people with one or more of the following problems? Choose the categories that BEST MATCHES each of the young people you provide for.

₁ No – Go to Question 13

₂ Don't know – Go to Question 13

₃ Yes – Please specify number of young people

Problems/Issues	Number of Young People Assisted
1. Criminal offending	
2. In need of protection from physical abuse	
3. In need of protection from sexual abuse	
4. In need of protection from neglect	
5. Behavioural problems	
6. Substance abuse/addiction	
7. Mental health problems/disorders	
8. Physically disabled	
9. Sight impaired	
10. Deaf	
11. In need of literacy assistance/reading recovery	
12. Persistent antisocial behaviour	
13. Unemployment	
14. Severe conduct disorder	
15. Young mother with baby	
16. Refugee or migrant	
17. Transition from foster/state care	
18. Other (please specify)	
Total Number of Young People in the Year Ended 31 Dec 2007	

13. Of the young people you assisted with housing service for the year ended 31 December 2007, how many would fall into the following housing situations? For each young person select ONE situation that BEST FITS.

Housing Situation	Number of Young People
1. Adequate, long-term, housing with family	
2. Adequate, long-term, housing with other carers	
3. Adequate, long-term, supported housing	
4. Adequate, long-term, independent housing	
5. Emergency housing	
6. No fixed abode – Dossing down, moving from house to house	
7. Using night shelters	
8. Living on streets	
9. Adequate short-term housing – but in need of long-term housing solution	
10. Residential care	
11. Living in over-crowded accommodation	
12. Living in hotel/motel	
13. Backpackers	
14. Living in Camping Ground	
15. Living in dilapidated housing	
16. Living in accommodation likely to expose them to physical abuse or sexual abuse	
17. Living in unaffordable housing	
18. Living in accommodation likely to expose them to criminality	
19. Living in a ‘gang house’	
20. Living in a house used for drug dealing or making	
21. House not adapted to deal adequately with disability	
22. Other (please specify)	
Total Number of Young People in the Year Ended 31 Dec 2007	

14. Of the young people you provided housing services for in the year ended 31 December 2007, what proportion do you estimate have had their housing needs resolved satisfactorily?

Please state the percentage: _____%

15. How easy is it to get housing solutions for your young people in housing need?

Please tick (✓) one box only

₁ Very Hard ₂ Hard ₃ Easy ₄ Very Easy

16. Are young men or young women most exposed to unmet housing need? Please tick (✓) one box only

₁ Mainly young men ₂ Mainly young women ₃ No difference

17. What group of young people is most seriously affected by unmet housing need?

Please tick (✓) one box only

- ₁ Mainly 12-16 years ₂ Mainly 17-20 years ₃ Mainly 21-24 years

18. What are the THREE most critical housing support needs for your young clients?

Please tick (✓) THREE boxes that apply

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ General housing advice/information | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₀ Assistance to find a place to live |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Advice on tenancies | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₁ Assistance with establishing support networks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Housing advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₂ Budget advice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Liaison and mediation with landlords | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₃ Fire safety equipment (provision and/or maintenance e.g. smoke alarms) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Advice on home-ownership finance | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₄ Furniture pool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Long-term rental accommodation | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₅ Help with accessing benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Transitional rental housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₆ Help with organising power and phone connections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₈ Emergency housing (not Women's Refuge) | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₇ Help with accessing DWI re-establishment grant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₉ Women's Refuge housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₈ Landlord liaison |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀ Night Shelters | <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₉ Laundry service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₁ Boarding Houses | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₀ Lawn mowing and gardening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₂ Shared-ownership housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₁ Rubbish removal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₃ Papakainga housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₂ Shifting household goods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₄ Self-build housing | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₃ Spring cleaning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₅ Provision of home-ownership lending finance | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₄ Residential therapeutic programme |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₆ Home maintenance services | <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₅ Other <i>please specify</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₇ Insulation/retrofit services | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₈ Training related to housing (e.g. construction, maintenance) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₉ Respite housing | |

19. What geographical area(s) do your services cover?

Please state: _____

20. What are the barriers your organisation has experienced to delivering housing services? Please tick (✓) all boxes below that apply

- ₁ Not enough funding
- ₂ Uncertain funding
- ₃ Lack of suitably qualified staff
- ₄ Can not meet demand for services
- ₅ Local government rules and regulations
- ₆ Central government rules and regulations
- ₇ Other (please describe)

Please use this space to make any comments on barriers

21. Which of the following organisations do you work with on housing matters?

Please tick (✓) all boxes below that apply

- ₁ Housing New Zealand Corporation
- ₂ Local Council
- ₃ District Health Board or Ministry of Health
- ₄ ACC
- ₅ Work and Income/ Ministry of Social Development
- ₆ Private landlords
- ₇ Local community housing orgs. (*Please specify*) _____
- ₈ Other (*Please specify*) _____

22. Are you aware of any housing initiatives, in New Zealand or overseas, that have been successful for at risk or vulnerable young people?

- ₁ No
- ₂ Yes - *Please list country, programme name and/or any source of information we could access*

23. Your views are important so do feel free to make comments on any actions that you feel would contribute to ensuring that at risk and vulnerable young people have access to the housing they need?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

**Please place in the enclosed reply-paid envelope.
Remember return by 23 April 2008 to have the opportunity to be
selected for a \$20 petrol voucher.**

