

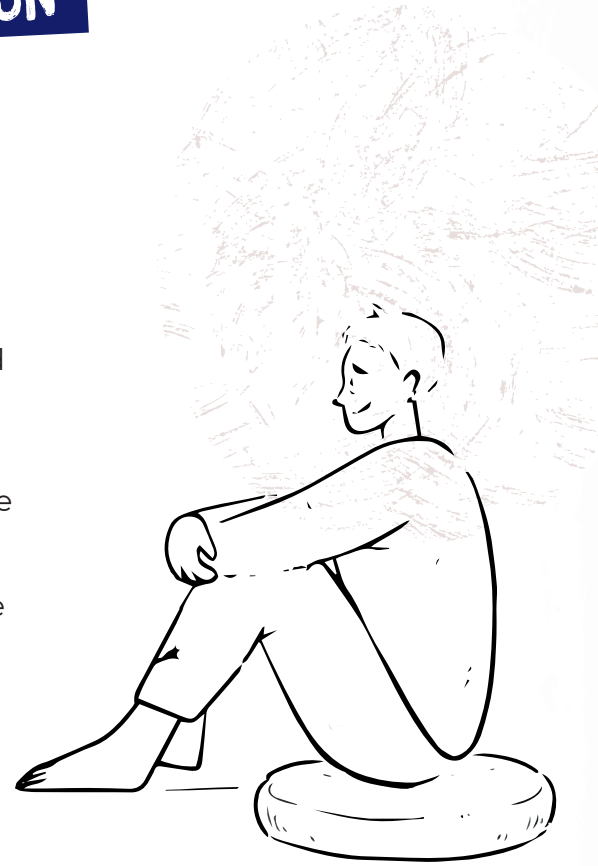
COULD YOU SPOT A YOUNG PERSON AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS?

A free World Homeless Day toolkit for anyone who supports or cares about young people.

Youth homelessness is often hidden. The first warning signs can appear in classrooms, corridors, youth clubs, pastoral conversations and everyday interactions, long before a young person reaches crisis point.

This **World Homeless Day**, Depaul UK is encouraging people to learn how to

spot the signs and respond early. This checklist helps you notice possible signs, start a conversation and decide what to do if you are worried. Some signs may already raise safeguarding concerns. As you follow the appropriate safeguarding route, consider whether the young person also has a safe place to stay.



Spot the signs

No single sign proves that a young person is at risk of homelessness. Noticing patterns and combinations of concerns, especially when they are out of character, unexplained or escalating, could be important.

- ❑ **Attendance and daily life:** repeated lateness, unexplained absence, tiredness, or a drop-off in concentration, participation at school, work or activities..
- ❑ **Appearance and belongings:** noticeable changes in clothing, hygiene, access to essentials or what a young person is carrying with them.
- ❑ **Behaviour and wellbeing:** withdrawal, anxiety, conflict, low mood or changes in confidence that feel unusual for that young person.
- ❑ **Home and family pressures:** references to arguments, being asked to leave, avoiding home or feeling worried about returning home.
- ❑ **Practical pressures:** difficulty getting food, travel, equipment, appointments or paperwork sorted.
- ❑ **Unclear or changing living arrangements:** vague answers about where they are staying, moving between places or spending extended time away from home.

Start the conversation

I've noticed things seem difficult at the moment. Is there anything you want to talk about?

Do you feel safe where you are staying?

Who may be at higher risk

A young person's risk of homelessness may increase when the following are present: Pressures at home, poverty, conflict, discrimination, poor mental

health, care experience, exclusion from education or a lack of trusted support. Consider these pressures alongside what you notice, without making assumptions.

Would you like help speaking to someone who can support you?

If you are worried, take action

- > **Notice and record.** If you support young people in a professional role, record what you have seen or heard using factual language and follow your organisation's procedures.
 - > **Start with care.** If it is appropriate and safe, open up a conversation, listen without making assumptions and consider whether the young person has somewhere safe to stay.
 - > **Do not investigate alone.** Your role is to listen, reassure and seek help through the right route.
 - > **Do not promise confidentiality.** Explain that if you are worried about their safety, you may need to share information with someone who can help.
 - > **Follow safeguarding routes.** If you work with young people, follow your organisation's procedures and speak to its safeguarding lead or contact the children's social care team at their local council. They can help find the right support.
- Share this checklist with anyone who supports and cares for young people.**

See Our Workshop Options

Depaul UK's workshops build on safeguarding with specialist knowledge of youth homelessness, housing rights and routes to support. They also

help young people to recognise risks and know where to turn for support. Find out more:

depaul.org.uk/education