

## Causes of Youth Homelessness

Adverse Childhood  
Experiences &  
Trauma

Family Breakdown  
- asked or forced  
to leave

Leaving care

Young people who  
identify as LGBTQ+

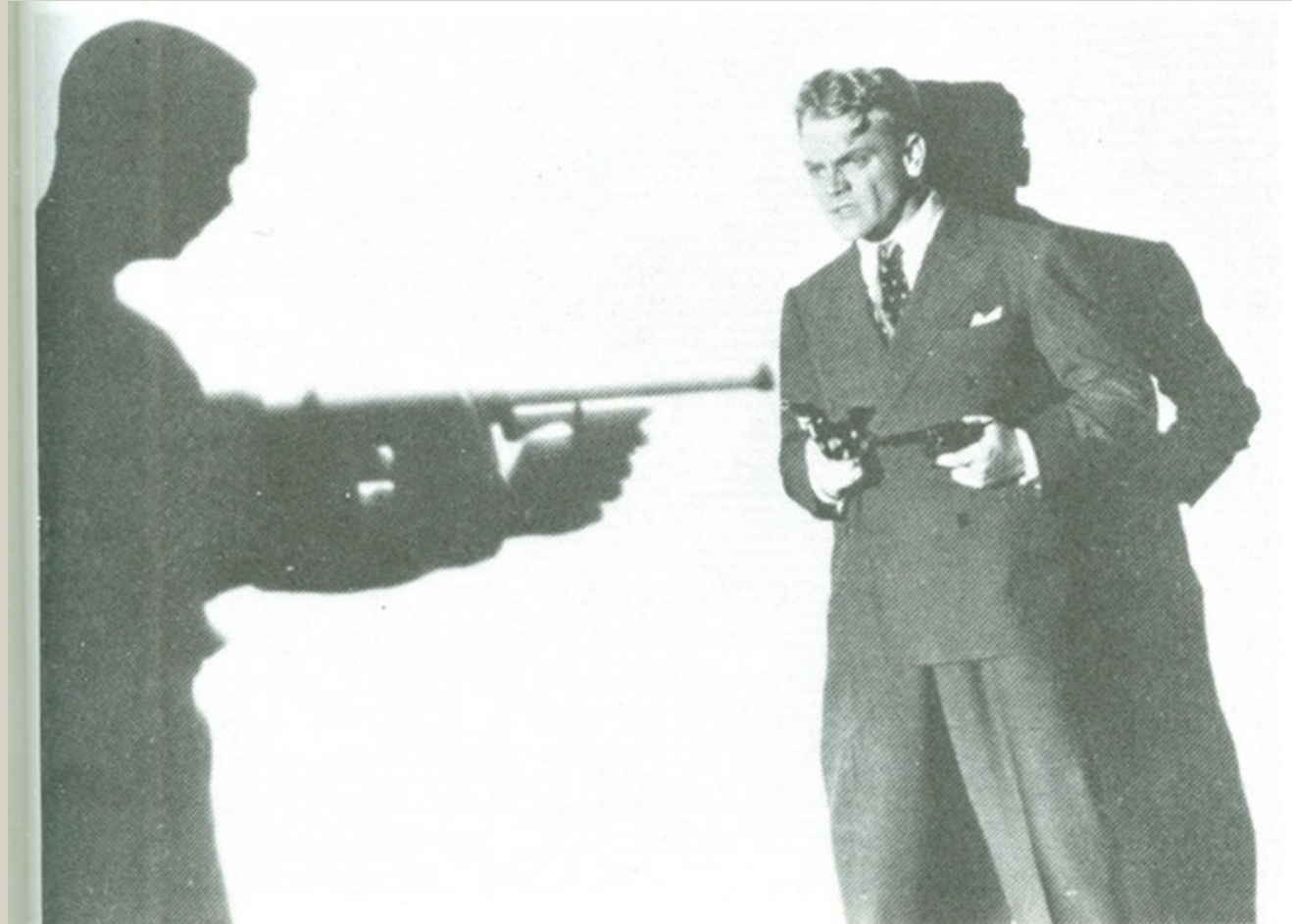
Mental/Physical  
health difficulties

Substance misuse

## Youth Homelessness is Distinct from Adult Homelessness

- Loss of homes and relationships
- A transition to housing must include a healthy transition to adulthood
- Recognition of age and stage of young people
- Negative experiences of services – lack of trust & fear of authority
- Discrimination

# Why are Youth Specific Services so Important?





- **Housing First Pathfinder for all ages in 5 Local Authorities across Scotland (2019 – 2021).**
- **Rock Trust asked to replicate West Lothian Pilot with 17 Care Experienced Young People**
- **Older demographic, most known to services and been homeless for several years**
- **Criteria – Only young people who had been identified as being unable to manage a tenancy without intensive, non-time limited Housing First support.**
- **Choice Based Lettings offered maximum choice but caused long delays from service commencement to allocation of a tenancy**

### Access to suitable housing was a huge challenge

- Backdated waiting points awarded but this wasn't enough to give Housing First participants priority over a large and growing homeless population with similar waiting times
- Large number of people competing against each other for the same, small number of homes each month.
- New Housing First participants were coming in to service each month – more than were being housed
- Pressure on housing providers, neighbours and participants as high volumes of Housing First tenants were being housed in the same street and often the same building
- Housing Officers were reluctant to house participants and were bypassing/withdrawing offers of housing without consulting their manager, participants and Housing First workers (as had been agreed)

- Encouraging participants to be less limited in their choices
- Allocating accommodation out with the mainstream letting system
- Providing training on Housing First and Trauma Informed Practice
- Greater transparency around decision making and improving communication before offers of housing were withdrawn
- Even with the wait for permanent housing, participants showed significant improvements in their lives that would not have been possible without Housing First

- **Sustainable Funding – without this we risk compromising on the principles of Housing First. In Edinburgh, funding was cut and a new provider brought in. The youth specific element of the service has been lost and there are questions on the fidelity of the new service to the HF principles.**
- **Many still see Housing First as a response to homelessness – Both our pilots showed that it can be a hugely successful preventative model for young people at increased risk of homelessness.**







“That’s amazing man. No one in my family has ever invited someone round to their house just to have a cup of tea”

Mary (age 21) – Housing First Participant, Edinburgh

“If it wasn’t for Housing First, I would have ended up dead. I was running away all the time. It was scary, I had nowhere to go. I couldn’t deal with everything going on, I went into a really bad place”

April (age 17), Housing First Participant, West Lothian

