



Housing Challenge Snapshot – Interim report 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This interim report contains the findings (to date) of the Young Islanders Network (YIN) ‘Housing Challenge’, which, throughout the second half of 2023 (and continuing) was shared with young people between the ages of 12-25 years old across all the island local authorities in Scotland to capture their views, concerns and ambitions for housing in Scotland’s Island communities.

The Housing Challenge was created by the YIN representative membership, some external stakeholders from our anchor youth groups in the islands and the YIN development team. Housing was decided upon as a key area of interest and concern by the young people involved in the YIN.

SAMPLE AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The data collected to date has been drawn from the 58 responses to the Housing Challenge. Larger numbers have taken part in sessions related to housing run by the YIN and partners it is anticipated the final number of responses to be greater than or equal to the previous [Transport Challenge](#) completed in Autumn 2023.

Island communities represented in the interim responses include: Uist, Skye, Lewis, Harris, Islay, Tiree, Benbecula, Barra, Mull, Coll, Yell (Shetland), Sanday and South Ronaldsay (Orkney).

Respondents have all been under 25 years old, with 91% being in secondary education and 33% in paid employment.

1. Which age group do you belong to:

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● 12-15 years	39
● 16-19 years	12
● 20-25 years	7



YOUNG ISLANDERS NETWORK

The Young Islanders Network (YIN) is a Scottish Government funded youth work programme, devised and delivered by Youth Scotland, the national charity for community-based youth work. The delivered in partnership with Scottish Government and the National Islands Plan, aims to build a network and community for young people to play a meaningful part in making the National Islands Plan work for young islanders. In 2021, the Young Islanders Challenge sought to identify key areas of interest and concern for young people in Scotland’s Island communities.

The challenge was created to give a voice to young people living in our island communities.

Following a successful pilot, the Young Islanders Network was officially launched in August 2021 by Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, Mairi Gougeon. Building on the Young Islanders Challenge, the newly-formed network consulted with young people on the most commonly-cited issue for young people – transportation – before releasing the [Transport Challenge Report](#) in September 2023.

After sending the report out to government officials and relevant public bodies, the YIN members have had productive meetings with Transport Scotland and the Ferries Community Board amongst others – with more information available on our [Transport Challenge Report](#).

Contextualising the YIN Housing Challenge and the Scottish Government Housing Aims

The YIN is delivered as a youth work programme, meaning that it uses a youth work approach in setting any agenda or in consulting with its members on priorities and the National Islands Plan.

It's useful to understand this through the definition of the nature and purpose of youth work which has three essential and definitive features:

1. Young people choose to participate

The young person takes part voluntarily. They choose to be involved, not least because they want to relax, meet friends and have fun. The young person decides whether to engage or to walk away.

2. Youth work must build from where young people are

Youth work meets young people where they are at. The young person's life experience is respected and forms the basis for shaping any agenda and development plan in partnership with peers and youth workers.

3. Youth work recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process; Youth work is an equal partnership.

The young person is recognised as an active partner who can, and should, have opportunities and resources to shape their lives. The relationship and dialogue between the young person and youth worker is central to the learning process.

We believe that the net result for the findings of this report is that they are authentic, credible and, given the context of the youth work approach, given by engaged young people who are motivated to participate. While the responses were given in the format set by the YIN membership, they align well to the Scottish Government Housing Aims.

INTERIM FINDINGS (OVERVIEW)

62% of the young people who have completed the Housing Challenge Survey have said they will have to **leave their island** when they are older due to a **lack of available/suitable housing**.

11. Do you think you will need to leave the island when you are older due to a lack of available or suitable housing?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Yes

36

● No

22



Some other key issues affecting their island that have been highlighted by respondents are:

- There are **little housing options** where the young people live.
- Housing options are **prohibitively expensive** for under 25's.
- Available housing is **not always suitable** – *garden access, transport links, close to family/shops/school & childcare, wheelchair/adapted access etc.*
- Overabundance of **holiday homes / empty houses**.
- **More houses need built**, affordable and of an appropriate size.
- **Excessive paperwork** involved in applying for social housing, **locality of applicant not sufficiently considered**.

DETAILED FINDINGS (DATA BREAKDOWN)

- FUTURE CONCERNS

The interim report shows young islander are concerned about their future housing needs.

Whilst 90% of respondents were currently living in secure accommodation at the time of answering, just 31%

4. Do you have a permanent residence at the moment?

[More Details](#)

• Yes	52
• No	6



5. Do you worry about housing?

[More Details](#)

• Yes	16
• No	18
• not yet	24



said they did not worry about housing in the future.

- HOUSING STOCK

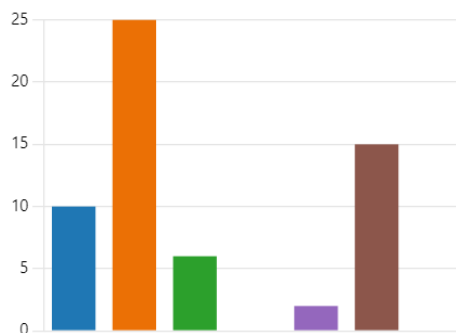
Young people have also said that the availability of housing where they live is an issue.

Only 17% of responses said they thought there was enough housing where they lived, whilst others suggested their only option would be to continue to live with their parents and 43% saying there were no housing options at all where they live.

7. Are there houses for young people available in your area where you want to live?

[More Details](#)

• Yes, there is enough choice	10
• No, there are no housing option...	25
• Buying only	6
• Renting only (private)	0
• Social Housing only	2
• Living with parents/ Carers only	15
• Shared accommodation only	0



- HOUSING NEEDS

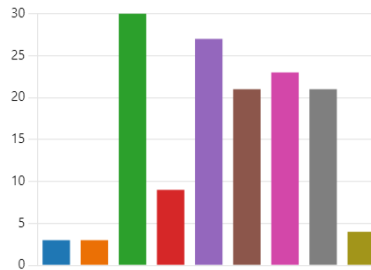
“Take a long time to get a Hhp house on the island, private rent is so expensive now so isn’t really an option, buying a house the prices are going way to high! Hhp don’t care about their tenants and house quality is poor” (20-25yr old, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis)

When young people were asked about their housing needs, the themes that are emerging are evident below, with access to outside space and to public transport being of particular importance.

6. Do your current housing needs include?

[More Details](#)

● Wheelchair or Adapted access a...	3
● more than 6 bedrooms	3
● a garden/ outside space	30
● Supported living (help from a tr...	9
● Access to bus/ public transport ...	27
● School or childcare nearby	21
● To be close to family members	23
● Access to shops (less than 1 mil...	21
● Other	4



- HOUSING OPTIONS

“I would rather not leave the island. If there are better opportunities available here I would happily stay on Barra as I am local and prefer to be at home.” (12-15yrs, Barra)

Over 60% of respondents suggested that there is no affordable housing in their area, compared to just 9% saying buying a house was affordable where they live.

8. On your island, Is it affordable for young People (under 25) to: (select the ones you agree with)

[More Details](#)

● Rent (privately)	9
● Buy	5
● Rent (social housing/ housing as...	20
● No, there are not any options	35



- GENERAL CONCERNS ON HOUSING

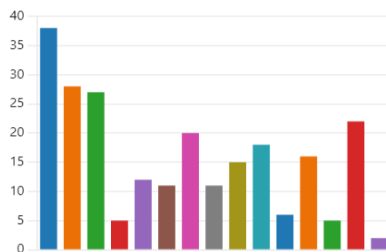
“There are so many B&Bs” (12-15, Skye)

Our data so far shows that 65% of young people think there are too many holiday homes on their island with 48% adding that they think there are too many empty homes, whilst 47% suggested that more homes needed to be built.

9. Select the statements you AGREE with:

[More Details](#)

- There are too many holiday ho... 38
- There are too many empty hom... 28
- More houses need to be built w... 27
- Less houses need to be built wh... 5
- Bigger houses need to be built ... 12
- Smaller houses are needed whe... 11
- There is too much paperwork in... 20
- There is not enough support wit... 11
- I feel school and home prepare... 15
- I do not feel school and home p... 18
- Hidden homelessness/ homeles... 6
- There are no concerns about hi... 16
- The housing allocation process i... 5
- The housing allocation should t... 22
- Other 2



CONCLUSION

Young people who have completed the YIN Housing Challenge survey have clearly identified issues that are of concern to them, as highlighted in the data above, ahead of the publication of the full report later in the year.

The Challenge will remain live as the YIN representatives and further network gather more information to present to the relevant authorities, where they hope for further engagement to seek answers and help to shape new solutions for their future.

For more information please visit: www.yin.scot

or

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