YPARC
Youth Participatory Action Research for Change

LOVE AND CARE FOR PEOPLE

Co-funded by the European Union

A Place to Belong: How the Housing Crisis Affects Young People

The housing crisis is a serious concern for young people in Mallow, County Cork, Ireland.

20th October 2026

A youth-led research project by ***Love and Care for People*** explored how the crisis affects young people with migrant backgrounds.



Photo 1: Youth participation in activities exploring the housing crisis in Mallow under the YPARC project.

The research asked:

To what extent does the housing crisis disproportionately affect young migrants living in Mallow?

The findings show a serious concern about affordability, housing insecurity and belonging. They also suggest that some groups may be more vulnerable than others. However, the research does not measure the difference between migrants and non-migrants.

What the Numbers Say

YPARC supports young people from non-dominant social groups and marginalised communities to investigate challenges they identify themselves. In Ireland, Love and Care for People places housing, security and belonging at the centre of that enquiry.

The questionnaire received 37 responses. Of these, **33 respondents (89.2%) said there is a housing crisis in Mallow**, while 4 (10.8%) said there is not.

When asked about the biggest consequences of the housing crisis, young people most often selected **high rent prices and difficulty buying a home.**

• **High rent prices**	22 people (59.5%)
• **Difficulty buying a home**	19 people (51.4%)
• **Homelessness**	12 people (32.4%)
• **Stress and mental health**	9 people (24.3%)
• **Moving away from the area**	5 people (13.5%)
• **Other consequences**	5 people (13.5%)

Figure 1. Perceived consequences of the housing crisis, based on 37 respondents. Participants could select more than one answer. The results show their perceptions, not their personal housing situations.

One anonymous questionnaire response explained the uncertainty clearly:

"People don't know if their stay in Mallow is permanent."



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Listening to Young People

The project used a Google Forms questionnaire, focus groups and interviews. It aimed to involve 37 young people aged 13 to 17 with fewer opportunities. Participants included migrants, Irish young people from migrant backgrounds, refugees and asylum seekers.

Young people from Mallow, Millstreet, Carrigtwohill and Midleton took part. Through group dialogue and small-group work, participants were given space to listen, exchange perspectives and investigate challenges that matter to them.

The open answers described **high housing costs, too few homes, stress, uncertainty and barriers to independence.** Some participants said that **immigrants, Black people, young adults and lower-income households may be especially affected.** These statements show participants' perceptions, but they are not verified comparisons between groups.

The housing crisis in rural Cork

The housing crisis in rural Cork disproportionately burdens young migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees exacerbated by systemic delays, structural exclusion, and profound psychological harm.

Data from **58 focus group participants, 76 interviews, and 37 questionnaire responses** reveals stark disparities.

While Irish-born youth face affordability pressures, migrant-background young people endure compounded barriers: slow Cork County Council housing processes, intense competition, and a supply crisis where remote rural properties lack public transport, schools, and work opportunities. For those without secure residential status, risk is drastically higher lacking an address blocks employment, bank accounts, and basic social inclusion.

Psychological impacts are severe: participants reported low self-esteem, feelings of powerlessness, and shame. One shared: "I don't want friends to know where I sleep no one wants a homeless or poor friend." Many felt "less European," wore unkempt clothing, and spent hours in strangers' homes for shelter with no privacy. Sadness, self-pity, and anger were pervasive; goals became impossible to pursue. Socioeconomic disadvantage intersects with migration status: families with limited resources cannot compete in a market of high demand, low availability, and soaring inflation.

The crisis is not just housing it is dignity, opportunity, and belonging being systematically denied.





Photos 2–3: Young people exploring Ireland's housing crisis through creative workshops.



Photo 4: Silent walk in Mallow highlighting Ireland's housing crisis.

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Mallow, Co. Cork, Ireland



Photo 5: Young people creatively portraying Ireland's housing crisis at Mallow Castle.

From Evidence to Action

The findings suggest that housing insecurity is a serious concern within this youth network. They also identify strong reasons to investigate whether the crisis affects young migrants and other groups unequally.

Young people called for three main areas of action:

Homes: Affordable housing, fairer rents and the renovation of existing homes.

Support: More help for low-income families and better support for youth mental health.

Accountability: Young researchers should present their priorities locally, ask for a written response and track progress through a follow-up survey.



Photo 6: Analysing YPARC's Focus group, questionnaires and survey data.

This youth-led research creates a starting point for further investigation and action. It shows that young people are concerned about housing, security and belonging. Most importantly, it gives them a voice in discussions about the places where they live and the futures they hope to build.

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