

the  
**FREE**  
mag for  
homeless  
people

# thePavement

February/March 2017: From the Ground Up special issue



# Missing



**Robert Pagan**

Robert is 22 years old and has been missing from Lambeth since November 2016.

Robert, we're here for you whenever you need us. We can talk through your options, send a message for you and help you be safe. Call/text 116 000. It's free, confidential and 24/7.



**Heather Thomson**

Heather was 27 years old when she went missing from Inverness on 19 January 1994.

Heather can call, our free, confidential and 24/7 helpline for support and advice without judgement and the opportunity to send a message to loved ones. Call/text 116 000 or email 116000@missingpeople.org.uk.

**If you think you may know something about Robert or Heather, you can contact our helpline anonymously on 116 000 or 116000@missingpeople.org.uk.**

**Alternatively, you can send a letter to 'Freepost Missing People'.**

**Free, confidential, 24/7.**

**A lifeline when someone disappears**



## From the Ground Up

This month, our special issue is brought to you by our 'From the Ground Up' team – citizen journalists who all have experience of homelessness. They are aiming to use their experiences to help make change happen and we're focussing our first call to action on the need for it to be easier for homeless people to get help when they have addiction and mental health problems. But we're also highlighting solutions. They report on how squatters are getting creative and the lessons we can learn from veteran charities. Enjoy.

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## the Pavement

[www.thepavement.org.uk](http://www.thepavement.org.uk)

London/Scotland:

Issue 108/ February–March 2017

Published by *The Pavement*, Registered Charity Number 1110656, [web@thepavement.org.uk](mailto:web@thepavement.org.uk).

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**Printed by:** [www.evonprint.co.uk](http://www.evonprint.co.uk) (West Sussex)

Cover image: *Mist* by Lucas Kowal of the 240 Project, which works with homeless and excluded artists. [www.240project.org.uk](http://www.240project.org.uk)

This issue is dedicated to Jimmy Carlson, OBE, 1947–2017. Rest in peace.

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*The Pavement* (print) ISSN 1757-0476  
*The Pavement* (online) ISSN 1757-0484

## The Pavement

### A magazine for homeless readers

*The Pavement* is a small charity founded in London in 2005. A combination of listings, news, views and cartoons, this little mag for a homelessness readership came into existence because it fulfilled a need.

Now we produce free magazines for homeless and insecurely housed readers in London, and Scotland.

In London alone, we deliver 5,000+ copies of *the Pavement* to over 70 hostels, day centres, homeless surgeries, soup-runs and libraries. We use volunteer journalists and photographers to create exclusive content that's written with our readers in mind.

We also train, support and encourage people with experience of homeless to contribute, and help find ways of taking their writing to wider audiences.

We believe that sleeping rough is physically and mentally harmful but reject the view that a one-size-fits-all approach to getting people off the streets works.

We are funded by a mixture of small trusts and grants, alongside donations, and we work hard to keep costs to a minimum. We are grateful to Fareshare for their help with distribution.

### Get involved

**Volunteer:** we are always looking for volunteer journalists with experience. We particularly welcome those who've been homeless, and we will and try to place you on a suitable programme offering training and support. We also urgently need volunteers to help us check listings and fundraise. Get in touch with [karin@thepavement.org.uk](mailto:karin@thepavement.org.uk) to find out more.

**Fundraise or donate:** we provide magazines free to homeless people to help them at moments of crisis, as well as giving them the information they need to move on. We value our independence and have no statutory funding. But we need your support. Please donate what you can: [www.thepavement.org.uk](http://www.thepavement.org.uk).

### From the Ground Up

This is a partner project between *the Pavement* and Groundswell, an award-winning charity that helps homeless people take control of our lives. It is funded by Comic Relief.

Our From the Ground Up participants receive support and training to help them create content for the magazine and website that tells the stories about homelessness that matter to them. They then raise these issues with policy makers and practitioners at our action days, aimed at driving change. This is their first special issue.

## Focus: round in circles

**When Jeremy Hayden ended up homeless, he also had mental health and addiction issues and couldn't get help. He investigates why, and finds his experience is worryingly common.**

"It's fucked up. I'm supposed to be looked after. I feel let down by most of the services I've approached."

Spending time in one of London's day centres, it didn't take me long to come across someone who'd struggled to get the help he needed when facing a combination of mental health and substance use problems. 'Sid' (as he asked to be called) was telling me about one of many times he'd been locked up in the police station. In desperation, he'd put his trousers around his neck. He told me he did it to get a glass of water, but the result was being left in his cell in his boxer shorts – no mental health assessment, no follow-up to see what help was needed.

The story was much the same when he found himself in A&E. "They ask 'Are you feeling suicidal?', but that's the question they have to ask so they can take everything off you," is the way he sees it.

Sid is a 33-year-old Polish national who's been an alcoholic for 20 years and who's dabbled with other drugs. He's also had issues with depression



From a human brain cell

and anxiety. Recently, the formerly "legal high" Spice has been giving him psychotic symptoms.

He's a qualified electrician and has worked most of his adult life. He came to the UK seven years ago hoping to get away from the monotony of his existence in Poland. Unfortunately, for one reason and another, he found himself homeless and living rough on the streets of London.

To be honest, from my own knowledge of "dual diagnosis", his story wasn't a surprise. That's the term used to describe someone who has both mental health issues and a drug or alcohol problem, and as I'm sure you already know, it's pretty common among people who are homeless.



Image ©Mat Amp

It's something I have first-hand of experience of. And as someone working with vulnerable adults, I've come across too many others in the same boat too.

According to the CHAIN database, where information about rough sleepers is collated by charity St Mungo's, over 40 per cent of rough sleepers have problems with alcohol, 31 per cent with drugs and 46 per cent with their mental health. Other reports suggest the true figures may be higher, and yet support is hard to come by.

Using a Freedom of Information request, St Mungo's asked health and local authority commissioners in 111 areas with 10 or more rough sleepers

on any one night to identify services providing mental health assessment, support and treatment for adults sleeping rough, and found that over two-thirds provide no specialist help.

Lee Murphy, manager of St Mungo's Lifeworks service, says many people's health needs are based on trauma, but few ever get either assessment or treatment.

Mental health issues, addictions and homelessness rolled into one: I've been there and done it. I'll acknowledge that we're not always the easiest group to work with.

Sometimes we miss appointments. Sometimes we get angry. Sometimes we find it hard to trust the services that are supposed to be helping us.

Back to Sid. Some may think his attempts to get help have been limited. He'd gone to a few appointments for drug and alcohol support, and missed a couple more. But, as he says, surviving life on the streets has been the priority. It's not easy getting help when just getting a shower is a challenge.

Others have found that even when you *really* try, it's still hard to get the help. I know that getting help to address my "personality disorder" has been a real struggle. Groundswell's peer researchers, who have been homeless themselves, asked people experiencing homelessness for their thoughts on dual diagnosis.

"I was told that I wouldn't be able to access any kind of [mental health] therapy until I'd got a handle on my drug and alcohol use," one said. "[But] that why I needed the support in the first place." People are facing a Catch-22 situation that's pushing them to breaking point.

I know how this feels. I've waited months for services, watching my condition moving towards crisis. And I know the frustration and desperation you feel due to having to jump hurdles and hoops just to get accepted on to the waiting list in the first place.

Dr Jenny Drife, consultant psychiatrist with the START homeless outreach team for people with mental health issues in Southwark and Lambeth, agrees separating treatment for addiction and mental

**Groundswell's peer researchers spoke to homeless people with dual diagnosis. Here's what they said:**

"I have stood there and screamed. That's happened a few times when I felt that I haven't been listened to or heard. I've been kicked out and banned from more places than I care to remember."

"The biggest problem for me is that of being bounced from one service to another."

"It's as if the system is almost designed to send you over the edge."

"Access criteria? What the fuck is that? I was desperate and needed a service but apparently, I didn't fit!"

"I was told that I wouldn't be able to access any kind of therapy until I'd got a handle on my drug and alcohol use... that why I needed the support in the first place."

"I thought that things were moving until I realised that I was on a waiting list of anything between six to eight months. In fact, after my assessment, it took a further 14 months before I was offered a service. My identified worker could barely look me in the eye, let alone relate to, or talk with, me."

health problems is causing real problems.

"I agree very much that it should be that everybody gets quality access and should be able to get their needs met wherever they present," she says. "But unfortunately, because of the way services are set up (and partially because of the way that they are funded at the moment), there is this split between drug and alcohol services and mental health services and it's difficult to get treatment all in the one place."

But she insists that work to improve things is being done. "I

feel strongly it should be up to us to provide the best service we can."

Let's hope that work pays off.

Guidelines from NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, the organisation that regulates the NHS) recommend both are treated at the same time. But in a recent report, it admits this has been a goal for many years and hasn't been achieved.

It's also something that all of us who have suffered from these issues know. We know help has to be there when you ask for it. And that a six-month waiting list just won't cut it.

### Dual diagnosis: the facts

- Issues that go along with dual diagnosis, as well as substance misuse, can include depression and bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, including panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and phobias, and other psychiatric disorders, such as schizophrenia and personality disorders.

- The symptoms of drug- and alcohol-induced psychosis and psychotic illness can overlap and mask each other, making an accurate diagnosis difficult. It is important that you get a mental health assessment by a doctor or psychiatrist so that can get the right treatment.

- Substance misuse and untreated mental ill health are associated with a greater risk of suicide: 16 per cent of all substance misusers will take their own lives.

- Having a mental health diagnosis significantly increases an individual's risk of misusing alcohol and drugs.

### Where to get help:

Ask your GP for a referral to your local Dual Diagnosis or Community Mental Health team.  
[www.rethink.org/diagnosis-treatment/conditions/drugs-alcohol-and-mental-health/getting-help](http://www.rethink.org/diagnosis-treatment/conditions/drugs-alcohol-and-mental-health/getting-help)



"It's enough to drive you to drink..."

# Squatters fight back

**Julz Watt has over 25 years' experience of squatting. But now, with residential squatting illegal and fewer housing options than ever, he hears from those who say it's essential to find creative solutions.**

The atmosphere in this large warehouse studio space in North London is lively as people of all ages mingle with curious faces around a variety of art installations and sculptures. Meanwhile, music blasts from the bands and musicians entertaining us on a stage at the back of the space.

These "Temporary Autonomous Art" (TAA) events are one way some squatters have been collectively staying active since the change in the law which made residential squatting a criminal offence in September 2012.

I speak to Jess, originally from Random Artists, who have been creating TAA spaces in large communal squats and warehouses for over 15 years. According to her, these events are about celebrating the good things that come from squatting; the ways that people transform derelict spaces into somewhere beautiful. "I think squatting's taught me [about] that DIY nature of the community and creating a space," she says.

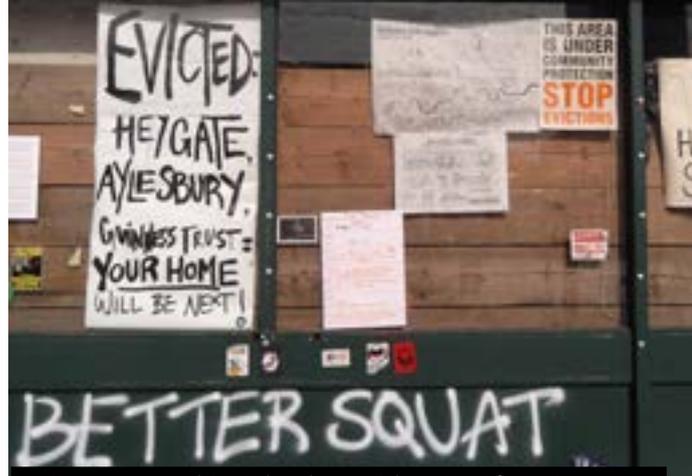
"When you give people that kind of autonomy and that power over their living environment, they actually give a shit."

It can be hard to see the positives in this change in the law, which has been a blow to squatters' rights. Since it was introduced in 2012, over 736 people have been arrested – 64 per cent of those charged are young men.

Meanwhile, the number of homeless people sleeping rough on the streets has increased, even though there are estimated to be over 200,000 empty residential properties across the country. In London alone there are over 22,000 including 7,500 empty council houses, according to an Freedom of Information Act request submitted by the *Guardian* last year.

It's a situation many in the squatting world can't understand. "There are so many empty houses that people should be living in," Jess explains. "We hear all the time this government's going to spend this or that much on new houses. Actually, what we need to do is take into public ownership the huge amount of empty houses that are already there."

Anthony, who works at Spectrum in Camden, one of the frontline services provided by ThamesReach, explains how the law change has



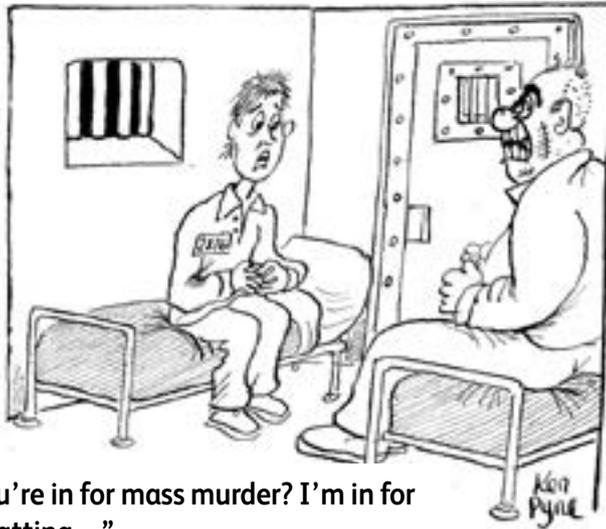
Squatting was once a solution to homelessness @themostinept for Creative Commons

affected the people he works with. "It's affecting people right across the board – male, female, indigenous people and Europeans," he says. "It has put more pressure on the resources that are available out there. It's forced people to look elsewhere, and the elsewhere is commercial properties. It takes a group of people with the necessary vibes to share and be one within that space to make it work. Because a lot of homeless people become entrenched in what they are doing, they want their own space, so joining up with a group to take over a commercial space isn't for everybody."

'River', who has been squatting for around six years, tells me about an eviction she witnessed of a commercial property where the

bailliffs broke down the door at 6am while the occupants were sleeping. Over 60 people were instantly evicted, two of them pregnant women. "The police feel justified in treating people worse and use LASPOA Sec 144 [the section of the law which makes squatting illegal] to evict whole buildings where only a part is actually residential." The police, of course, are responding to the law.

Since 2012, dozens of companies have sprung up acting as "landlords" on behalf of owners enabling, "property guardians" to rent rooms at reduced rental rate. One of their main goals is to prevent squatters from moving into properties. Yet many feel the schemes are problematic. The people acting as guardians don't have full tenancy



## “You’re in for mass murder? I’m in for squatting...”

Camelot Europe – one of the new breed of vacant property services whose policy means it can’t guarantee new premises to those occupiers at the point of moving out – had their former European HQ in Shoreditch squatted by activists. Protestors aimed to highlight the lack of homes for the most needy in society. This was an embarrassment for Camelot, which aims to deter buildings from being squatted.

“We are doing this on behalf of dispossessed, homeless people and guardians who are being exploited,” said one of the squatters in a news report last year.

Camelot, of course, sees it differently, claiming that the property guardian system actually helps provide low-cost accommodation for people who would otherwise be homeless.

Paul Lloyd, of Camelot Europe, told *the Pavement*: “Without guardians, most of these properties would be boarded up, secured and have security guards on them.

“Guardians get the chance to live in properties under licence with communal areas and their own bedrooms for a fraction of the usual rents in any area.

“When it works well, it is a win-win

situation for the property owners and previously homeless and low-income people. We have thousands of happy property guardians across Europe who fear that if current campaigns against the system are successful, they will not have a roof over their heads.”

He admits the downside is the short notice to move on and insists they always try to find alternative accommodation for the guardians.

Personally, I have squatted till recently for over 25 years, mainly in London. A group of us in Balham occupied a large property with consent and agreed with the new owners a peppercorn rent, a one month notice to leave and rolling tenancy, with each resident paying £1 per person.

With no more “affordable housing” available and evictions already on the rise, tightening the laws on squatting and evicting those who have found somewhere to stay seems perverse.

But there is hope, whether it’s ‘River’ persisting in the face of ever tougher laws, Jess and the TAA organising creative events, or the squatters occupying the Camelot offices. Increasingly, people coming together and resisting a law they know doesn’t help solve our homeless crisis.

As the calls for it to be repealed grow louder, the DIY spirit embraced by squatters mean new solutions must be found.

## Squatting and the law

In September 2012, it became a criminal offence to trespass in residential properties with the intention of living there. The law applies to England and Wales. In Scotland, squatting was already – and remains – illegal. If people are squatting in a clearly residential property, they risk arrest and losing their home.

This law does NOT apply if:

- the property is not residential (commercial/office space/warehouse etc)
- you are or were previously tenants (including sub-tenants) of the property
- you have (or had) an agreement with someone with a right to the property.

Commercial squatting is still a civil matter.

The property may be reclaimed if it is unoccupied at any time. Criminal damage is a charge that may apply. Take steps to avoid this.

## Where to get advice:

**The Advisory Service for Squatters:** 020 3216 0099 or [www.squatter.org.uk/about-ass/](http://www.squatter.org.uk/about-ass/)

**Squatters Action for Secure Housing:** go to [www.squashcampaign.org/](http://www.squashcampaign.org/)

# Veteran issue

**In the last 20 years there have been big changes to the help given to homeless veterans, finds Stephan Morrison. And maybe other homeless services can learn from those.**

Imagine serving your country, risking your life so others don't have to, only to return home to find your efforts have gone unnoticed, unappreciated and – in extreme cases – you're harshly criticised and judged by certain sections of society.

Back in 1973 for people like Jimmy and thousands of others leaving the army, they didn't have to imagine. For them this was their reality.

"I'd gone from being a part of a close-knit group where there was order, discipline, structure and a sense of belonging and purpose," recalled Jimmy, "to a world where I was unemployed, isolated and without support. It had taken all of 24 hours. To cope, I turned to alcohol and within weeks I was street homeless. The downward spiral had been quick. I was in the grip of something I didn't fully understand at the time and there was nobody around to help me see otherwise."

Over the next 20 years, similar stories would be repeated time and time again. It's not easy to get accurate numbers on homeless ex-services personnel, though many



*A veteran displays his medals with pride*

*@Dave Hillhouse on Creative Commons*

researchers have tried. When Randall and Brown undertook a research project on behalf of Crisis 23 years ago, they estimated that 25 per cent of all homeless people had been in the military.

Fast forward to 2015 and the CHAIN survey of rough sleepers in London found that only three per cent had served in the UK military. It seems as if something is working... I set out to explore what that might be.

Researching the work of charities like Soldiers Off the Street, Help for Heroes, SSAFA and The Veterans Mental Health Charity, I found

that there was better resettlement provision now in place and better support on offer from these organisations and other.

For instance, ex-Scots Guardsman William Anson had no home and no way to see his daughter after the breakdown of his relationship. SSAFA helped him secure a flat and furnishings so he was secure and his daughter could stay.

And David, who became homeless after having his house repossessed, was also helped to find a new home. He said: "Words and praise are not enough to thank Soldiers Off The Streets for what they do for our

forgotten veterans. When no one else was there, these guys reacted and did what they say they would do – helping rehome guys like myself and offering lots of support and assistance."

On 16 May 2011, the government published the Armed Forces Covenant, which was described as "an expression of the moral obligation that the government and the nation owe to those who serve or have served in our armed forces and to their families".

The document said that homeless veterans should be given housing priority.

The media have also played a part, campaigning against the Armed Force's sometimes "aggressive" approach to targeting school children from deprived areas. Last year the *Sunday Herald* ran a story about government plans to create military cadet units in state schools in Scotland's most deprived areas. These plans were attacked by MPs and critics alike and vigorously opposed by EIS, Scotland's largest teaching union. They didn't go ahead.

And housing has been built. The Armed Forces Covenant's annual report, released in December 2016, gave a commitment to deliver 18,500 single living accommodation bed spaces and 3,000 homes by 2021, to add to the 50,000 already delivered over the last 12 years. Over the last three years alone, 9,000

properties have been built.

It's not all working smoothly, of course. It is not currently a legal requirement for local councils to adopt the Armed Forces Covenant. Earlier this year, research showed that only nine London borough councils have a specific policy of making homeless veterans a housing priority.

Stoll 100, a veterans' charity and housing association in London, believes the covenant needs to be more consistently applied. Iain George, director of support, said: "All [London] boroughs sign up to the Covenant, but some will do some things, some will do others and others will do very little.

"It is being applied inconsistently (or sometimes not at all) in the local authorities and I think that is the sort of area that government should get across the board if we are going to help service personnel."

In Barking and Dagenham, roads are named after servicemen who have been killed in Afghanistan and Iraq, he noted, and service personnel get moved up the housing list very quickly. In Wandsworth, there are 10 properties a year for veterans. But it's far from across the board.

That notwithstanding, he thinks other homeless people could benefit from the services on offer to veterans. Stoll's own outreach team, for example, offers everyone a needs and risk assessment, employment advice, drug and alcohol counselling, runs mentoring and stress support groups.

"People who come here know that if they've got any issue at all, they've got somebody they can talk to and hopefully it can get resolved," he said. "But you put somebody into a housing association in the middle of London...do they have that support? Probably not, and I think that's what they do need. They're in the same sort of position as veterans, but they may not have the support to help them."

When I was homeless in the nineties, I met so many ex-soldiers sleeping rough in London. While it's an issue that has not been solved, it seems things are getting better.

Given the resources to increase understanding of the needs of particular groups of homeless people, then it's possible to address some of the problems. Offer a helping hand, and change is possible.

Check out Stoll's 100s Drop in every second Wednesday of the month 16:00–19:00, The Community Hall, Sir Oswald Stoll Mansions, 446 Fulham Road, London SW6 1DT

Get information and advice on housing, employment choices, service pensions, mental health issues, welfare benefits, debt advice and health & wellbeing. Any veteran can attend for free.

[www.stoll.org.uk](http://www.stoll.org.uk)



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## Never give up: A tribute to Jimmy Carlson OBE

"We should never give up on anybody." That was the view of Jimmy Carlson, a friend, colleague and inspiring force who was part of the 'From the Ground Up' team until he passed away in January.

As someone who spent nearly a quarter of a century as an alcoholic and rough sleeper, that was important to him. He used to say that if you had met him 20 years ago you'd have thought he was "just another homeless drunk". But Jimmy Carlson picked himself up and went on to devote his life to creating chances for other homeless people to do the same.

Born in Leeds in 1947, he was undoubtedly a nice guy. But he was much more than that too. In 1997 he started volunteering with Groundswell, a charity set up to help homeless people take more control of their lives and became a crucial part of the team. For the last five years of his life he served as one of its trustees.

He helped establish the Homeless People's Commission, which presented policy recommendations to the House of Lords in 2011 and was involved in setting up The Haven, a club which provides an alcohol and drug-free environment for those recovering from substance abuse.

Over the past two decades he was a man who fought hard to find himself by fighting for others.

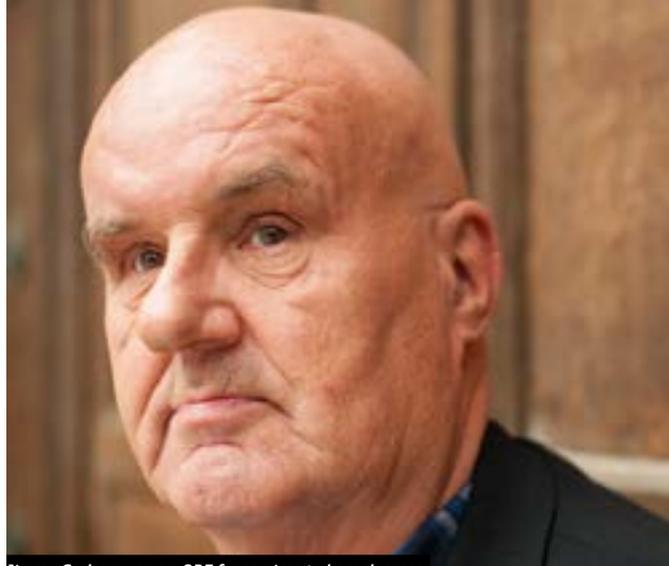
Among the many tributes to Jimmy, Groundswell's Athol Halle said: "Jimmy showed us that with passion and commitment you can achieve wonders – and that the best thing you can do for someone who is homeless is give them the opportunity to make a contribution."

He went on to be awarded an OBE for services to homeless people in 2012.

When he received the award he was, for once, gobsmacked. When he did finally manage to pick his jaw up off the floor Jimmy said: "You would have walked over me in the street 20 years ago and thought I was a lost cause. However I turned my life around and I have gone on to make a decent contribution to my community. Rough sleepers you see on the street today – with the right support they have a lot to offer too."

Those that knew Jimmy well said he was at his most impressive as an advocate – put a mic in his hand and he knew what to say to open people's minds, and their hearts as well.

He knew first hand about the difficulties faced by people whose lives had been affected by homelessness, addiction and mental health issues. And he used that experience to campaign on our behalf. His direct and fearless character made him a natural spokesman. He had an innate ability to connect to others through his empathy – he talked, people



Jimmy Carlson won an OBE for services to homelessness

listened. When they talked he listened to them.

Gerry Rolfe, case worker, at Groundswell said about him: "Jimmy was like a beacon to me. If you had a problem you could always talk to him about it. Seeing what Jimmy had achieved and how his past made him who he was made me realise that I could actually use my experience. This will be my sixth year at Groundswell, I'm now a paid worker and that comes from having advice from people like Jimmy. He'll be really missed."

While he was an inspiration to others, he was also an extremely effective campaigner for change. He had a finely tuned bullshit

detector, a nose for hypocrisy and the determination and courage to confront it.

We all owe him a debt of gratitude. He is no longer here for us to thank in person so perhaps a fitting tribute to Jimmy would be to go out of your way to help someone you normally wouldn't. I'm pretty sure he would have loved that idea.

He was one of those rare people whose put his money where his mouth was. He never forgot where he came from, who he was and who it was that he was representing. He was one of us. RIP Jimmy mate, you will indeed be missed.

Mat Amp

# News: Stop street deaths

Urgent action is needed to stop homeless people dying on the streets during winter, according to leading charities and campaigners.

Cold snaps have led to the tragic deaths of homeless people sleeping rough across the UK in recent months.

One man in his forties died in Liverpool after being rushed to hospital on the coldest night of the year. He was found sleeping rough in the city centre as temperatures plummeted to around -3°C. The *Liverpool Echo*, which reported on his death, said he was understood to have pre-existing medical issues.

His death happened despite the fact that in December the Mayor of Liverpool Joe Anderson had ordered the city's cold weather shelter, operated by The Whitechapel Centre, to open on any night where the temperature is forecast to drop below 2°C.

In Chatham, two homeless men died on the streets over the Christmas period within days of each other. Michael McCluskey, a father and grandfather in his forties, was found dead on Christmas Eve.

According to *Kent Online*, shoppers had walked past his body unaware that he was dead. Another man known locally as Greg, who was sleeping rough near the entrance to a local car park, was found dead less than a week later, leading to calls for



Conditions on the streets can be fierce in winter.

the local council to act.

In late November, two homeless men in Manchester – named locally as Wayne and James – died when an empty building in which they had been sheltering caught fire. It is thought that they might have lit a fire to keep warm in the freezing conditions. Local charities said that the building was commonly used by rough sleepers.

In the capital, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, opened several emergency shelters and called for Londoners to report anyone sleeping rough to the Street Link rough sleeper support scheme. According to the

Severe Emergency Winter Protocol (SWEP), which could be used by all local authorities if temperatures are forecast to reach low enough (below freezing for three days), shelters must be provided for homeless people. However, several charities said more must be done.

Jennifer Barnes, Centrepoin't's head of policy and research, said: "It's disgraceful that people are dying on the streets in the 21st century.

"Emergency interventions in extreme weather are life-saving but focus on the symptom rather than cause. It is incumbent on government to address the core issues such as

overcrowding and a lack of affordable housing options, which can force young people into potentially fatal situations."

Jacqui McCluskey, director of policy and communications at Homeless Link, said it was calling on local authorities to "take a common-sense approach" and offer shelter for people whenever the weather conditions were bad rather than merely doing their duty under emergency protocol.

"No one should have to sleep rough in the first place, but it is simply unacceptable that rough sleepers are dying on our streets in the cold weather," she added.

"There is a humanitarian obligation on local authorities to prevent winter deaths and follow the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol. However, we are calling for them to adopt a common-sense approach, going beyond the minimum trigger to open during other severe weather, including storms and cold snaps."

She said authorities must work with local charities, faith groups and others to make sure those most at risk were protected.

Jon Sparkes, the chief executive of Crisis, said, "Snow and freezing conditions can prove fatal for anyone sleeping on the streets. Tragically, the average age of death for a homeless person is just 47. This is a desperate state of affairs."

*Catherine Heath and Karin Goodwin*

## Glasgow Homeless services “at risk”

Glasgow City Council has raised the alarm about the introduction of Universal Credit – due to be in place across the city within 18 months – which, it claims, will put its ability to provide homeless services at risk.

The concerns were raised in a paper presented to the city’s Integration Joint Board last month. It reveals that the council has already racked up £144,000 in arrears from just 73 homeless Universal Credit claimants. Those receiving the benefit do not receive the full cost of temporary accommodation provided.

The council has already been working with the Scottish Housing Regulator for over a year because of its failure to provide temporary accommodation to all unintentionally homeless people, a legal obligation in Scotland. It now claims that under current Universal Credit proposals, it will not be able to run a service that meets its statutory duties.

The paper notes that: “The city’s Homelessness Services is [sic] dependent on housing benefit/rental income for a significant percentage of its front line staffing to manage operational demand.”

It claims that when the Universal Credit roll-out is completed in September 2018, services for



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homeless people, temporary accommodation and staff jobs will all be affected.

“The welfare reforms identified in this paper constitute a major risk to the delivery of statutory homelessness services in Glasgow, with particular concerns in relation to frontline staffing, delivery of statutory services, provision of temporary furnished accommodation, which is also a statutory duty, and in relation to the existing recurring budgetary pressure of £1.4m”, it states.

The paper, which offers no solutions at this stage, concludes: “Following on from the significant savings applied to budgets in the past five years, Homelessness Services can no longer absorb this level of impact and continue to operate a sustainable service that

meets its statutory duties.”

Sandy Farquharson, director of Glasgow’s Marie Trust day centre, said the paper caused him “considerable concern”.

“The consequences for the council so far for those people affected by homelessness who have already been transferred to Universal Credit in error are quite alarming,” he added.

“It is right and proper that the council is flagging up their concerns at this stage so that Government policy can be challenged at this stage and in the future.”

Shelter Scotland called for solutions to be found. Alison Watson, its deputy director, said: “By its own admission, Glasgow City Council is already turning people away who have a statutory right to access temporary accommodation. Raising the alarm like this must now be followed up with urgent action to ensure that funding remains in place for high-quality temporary accommodation.”

A Glasgow City Council spokesman said it would continue to look for solutions.

A DWP spokesman added: “Local authorities are best placed to understand the needs of their residents. That’s why we will have provided them with around £1bn in funding by 2020 to support people transitioning to our reforms.”

*Karin Goodwin*

## Street violence now worse

New research shows that people sleeping on the street are almost 17 times more likely to have been victims of violence and 15 times more likely to have suffered verbal abuse in the past year, when compared to the general public.

Homeless charity Crisis surveyed 458 recent or current rough sleepers in England and Wales and found that almost eight out of 10 have suffered some sort of violence, abuse or anti-social behaviour in the past year – often committed by a member of the public – while nearly seven in 10 report that life on the street is getting worse.

Crisis spoke to rough sleepers, who asked that their first names only were used. Simon said: “It was some guy. He said, ‘Are you homeless?’ I said, ‘Yeah,’ and he just kicked me in the head. I was sat on the floor reading my book.”

Dan added: “I’ve had young lads coming up to me like giving me loads of shit, you know, call me a dirty scumbag and scrounger and all that. But they haven’t got a clue, you know?”

Philip told researchers: “We don’t know if we’re going to get burnt alive or anything, it’s too dangerous out there. I’m glad that we have got each other out there because I don’t know how people cope on their own, I really don’t.”

The report shows that more



Graffiti shows the harsh reality of life on the streets ©Oluji Samail Zeid

than one in three of the rough sleepers Crisis interviewed had been deliberately hit, kicked or had experienced some other form of violence whilst homeless (35 per cent). Almost one in 10 had been urinated on and seven per cent had been sexually assaulted.

Homeless Link says that despite the results of Crisis' research, they believe many people are concerned when they see someone sleeping rough. Homeless Link aim to reduce violence against homeless people with their StreetLink mobile phone app, which enables people to send an alert about a rough sleeper and helps connect them to local support services.

Crisis believe that preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place is key. They are encouraging people to the support the Homelessness Reduction Bill, which is in parliament now and aims to make sure people facing homelessness can get support when

they need it.

Matt Downie, director of policy and external affairs at Crisis, said: "This is a shocking state of affairs and shows why we need to prevent people ending up in this situation in the first place. We'd urge anyone experiencing or witnessing this sort of abuse to report it to the police immediately. At the same time, the police must act to reassure homeless people that their safety is paramount and any crimes against them will be fully investigated."

Jacqui McCluskey, director of policy at Homeless Link, said: "Although we know that rough sleeping is dangerous, these latest figures revealing the extent of the violence and abuse that people are subjected to are shocking. They further highlight the urgent need for more action to prevent people from ending up on the streets in the first place.

Jane Evans

## Homeless village progress

Homeless people in Scotland may get the chance to move into a new eco-village after a high profile charity sleep-out involving celebrities and politicians raised more than £500,000 for the project.

The scheme to provide 10 environmentally-friendly purpose-built homes in Edinburgh is being run by Social Bite, a sandwich chain which supports and employs homeless people, in partnership with the council.

Around 20 residents will stay in the supervised "village" environment – with access to counselling, addiction therapy and budgeting advice – for up to 15 months before moving on to more permanent accommodation.

Work on the project is expected to begin within months, with the first residents moving in by the summer.

Participants who slept out to raise money for the scheme included Olympic cycling veteran Sir Chris Hoy. Actors George Clooney and Leonardo Di Caprio have visited Social Bite to show their support.

However, concerns have been raised that the new village could isolate residents by putting them in an institutionalised environment.

Dr Beth Watts, a research fellow at the city's Heriot Watt University, said: "While it is innovative in some ways, it replicates things that have been going on for many years

– namely, concentrating people together on the edge of the city in an institutionalised environment."

"Evidence from around the world suggests that homeless people should instead be moved directly to permanent accommodation in mainstream neighbourhoods", she told the *Scottish Sun*.

The Rock Trust, which works with young homeless people in Edinburgh have backed the comments made by Dr Watts.

Chief executive Kate Polson said: "What is really needed is affordable housing.

"I can understand why something like the village seems more appealing because it means more beds, but the problem is what happens after. The goal has to be to house people within communities and support them to live there."

But Social Bite founder Josh Littlejohn, who recently received an MBE for his work with homeless people, said the village would not be "isolated".

"The plan to build a village for the homeless is based on our five years of working with the homeless in the context of providing food, employment and opportunities and support," he added.

"The project plans to create a highly-supported environment, totally geared at breaking the cycle of homelessness."

Katharine Hibbert

## News-in-brief

### Homeless fenced off

A 10ft wooden barrier has been put up outside a former branch of BHS in an apparent bid to stop homeless people sleeping there.

The wall was constructed in the doorway outside the shop on South Street in Exeter, Devon, the Metro reported in January.

Workers at the site said it was to stop rough sleepers who had started gathering there since the chain's collapse in August last year.

It is understood that Duff and Phelps, administrators for BHS, employed a firm from Dartford in Kent to travel nearly 200 miles to the city to erect a wall under instruction from the local authority.

Shortly before the barrier was built the rough sleepers were removed from the building.

A spokesman for Exeter City Council said it was done in response to complaints about anti-social behaviour.

### Rise in child homelessness

A homeless charity claim new figures that reveal the number of Scottish children living in temporary accommodation has increased, show the problem is "far from fixed."

Homeless stats released by the Scottish Government show homeless applications have dropped by three



Alasdair Codona outside the Scottish Parliament

per cent in the last year. Some 17,100 applications were made from April to September 2017.

But Shelter Scotland say the figures also show the number of children living in temporary accommodation has risen by 17 per cent to 826.

Overall, there were 10,570 households in temporary accommodation as of 30 September 2016 – an increase of 97 households from 2015.

The charity said the figures were "deeply worrying" and the Scottish Government admitted that the rise was "disappointing."

The stats were released just weeks after homeless man Alasdair Codona, who was starving himself to death outside the Scottish Parliament in December, finally agreed to break his fast.

He ended his 24 day strike after the Scottish housing minister vowed to introduce a "statutory right" for people to declare themselves homeless.

### Baby dies in US cold snap

A baby died in January in freezing temperatures with his homeless mother at a bus stop in Portland.

The baby, found in early January, marks the fifth death on Portland's freezing streets this year.

Four homeless people died of exposure in the first 10 days of 2017.

According to US-based *Willamette Week* (WW), which reported on the baby's death, it was unclear whether he died of exposure hours after being born outdoors or was stillborn.

However WW claims that it obtained a police report which suggested the baby was alive when the mother, who was barefooted and only partially clothed stopped a passing commuter.

He called emergency services and baby was rushed to hospital but did not survive.

### Burger PR doesn't please Pope

McDonald's has been accused of pulling a PR stunt that exploits homeless people to win over those who objected to their newly opened restaurant within steps of the Vatican.

The new branch of the burger chain in Rome has pledged 1,000 meals to homeless people. However a community group called Safeguard the Borgo said the offer was one that "cynically uses the homeless and offends many years and daily work [done by others] to help alleviate



Near the Vatican ©Riccardo Romano

extreme poverty".

The US fast-food chain revealed the plan after a handful of cardinals, as well as the Borgo group, complained last year that opening a McDonald's so close to St Peter's Square was not fitting in the Unesco-protected neighbourhood.

The restaurant opened on 30 December and according to new agency Reuters, gave away 50 meals on the first Monday of the year. The meal consisted of a double cheeseburger, an apple and water, and will only be on offer for six months.

Reuters reported that it was the idea of another charity, Medicina Solidale, whose director wrote to McDonald's in the wake of the criticism over the restaurant opening.

In September last year Pope Francis offered 1,500 homeless people a pizza lunch at the Vatican after Mother Teresa's canonisation Mass.

# Meet the team

Since September last year *the Pavement Magazine* and homeless charity Groundswell have been running 'From the Ground Up' which aims to teach journalism skills to people with first hand experience of homelessness. Their articles focus on some of the numerous problems faced by people who've been marginalised by homelessness.

We've recorded a podcast, done interviews and written articles. We're also holding our first Action Day to highlight the issue of 'dual diagnosis' and campaign for change in the way addicts with mental health issues are treated. We'll report on that in our next issue. Meanwhile meet our team, who bring you experience of homelessness and honesty in spades.



**John Doran**

"I'm very interested in how the media works. I attended a Morley college course on journalism and this project seemed like a perfect way to progress. My experience of homelessness tells me that the mainstream media does not represent the homeless situation accurately. The experience of working on this project has been rewarding."

**Jeremy Hayden**

"I got involved with the project 'From the Ground Up' because I wanted to be a part of something that I felt passionately about. I thought I could make a positive contribution here. I've been around homelessness as a professional and a service user so I have a fair insight into some of the issues that arise."



**Stephan Morrison**

"Having been homeless myself I was interested in participating in a project where my own life experiences could positively benefit others. When an opportunity to join "From the Ground Up" came along I immediately put my name forward. It seemed like a perfect platform to work from... so far I have been proven right."



**Mahesh Pherwani**

"Working in tandem with the support of influential London organisation Groundswell as well as *the Pavement Magazine* is an unbelievable opportunity. The bonus is that I'm working with group of gifted, insightful, kind, peer-journalists who have same aim: to raise people's awareness of the debilitating, heart-breaking issues of homelessness."



**Julz Watt**

"I'm from London and was homeless for many years until five years ago. This made me aware of the need for change. The 'From the Ground Up' project interested me as it aims to highlight current homeless issues and hopefully find solutions."

**Find out more:**  
[www.thepavement.org.uk](http://www.thepavement.org.uk)

# Housing in Scotland: your rights

All councils in Scotland have a duty to help you when you're homeless. If your own local council thinks you are homeless, they legally have to help you find a home: to help you find temporary accommodation right away, and then to help you find a home of your own in the long-run. If the council thinks you **might** qualify to be registered homeless then they have to find you a temporary home whilst they check you are eligible. If you have applied to the wrong council, they have to point you in the right direction.

## To get help from your local council, you must:

1. be legally homeless, now or within 28 days, meaning you:
  - have no accommodation at all
  - cannot access your home
  - live in a violent household
  - live in an overcrowded home
  - live in an unclean or unsafe home
  - live in a B&B, hostel or refuge
2. have been born in the UK or European Economic Area (EEA), or have family living there
3. not have chosen to be homeless
4. have a connection with the local council you are applying to
  - find out if you have a local connection visit **Shelter Scotland's** website linked below
5. if you are from outside the EEA, you need to have the right to live and work in the UK

Shelter Scotland  
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)  
National Domestic Violence Helpline  
Govan Law Centre (Glasgow)  
Glasgow City Council  
Edinburgh City Council

Visit [www.thepavement.org.uk](http://www.thepavement.org.uk) for a full PDF version of this page, with more detailed information on your housing rights.

## If you have nowhere to sleep tonight, and nowhere else to turn, contact:

1. Your local council: Glasgow: **0800 838 502**; Edinburgh: **0800 731 6969**
2. Simon Community (Glasgow): **0800 027 7466 (Free, 24 hr)**
3. Streetwork (Edinburgh) **0808 178 2323 (Free, 24 hr)**
4. Shelter's advice helpline: **0808 800 4444 (Free, 9–5 Mon–Fri)**
5. Police Scotland: dial **101** (not 999)

## If your application is rejected:

- you should appeal the decision if you think it is wrong. The council must find you temporary accommodation whilst they look at your appeal
- the council legally has to direct you towards local homeless charities

[scotland.shelter.org.uk/](http://scotland.shelter.org.uk)  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/)  
0808 2000 247  
0141 440 2503  
[www.glasgow.gov.uk](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk)  
[www.edinburgh.gov.uk](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk)

# Housing in England: your rights

Your local council does not always have to help you find emergency accommodation if you are homeless. English local councils run a '**priority need**' system which was originally set up to make sure that the most vulnerable homeless people are helped first. However, the 'priority need' system can negatively affect many 'single-homeless' people who do not have the same rights to emergency housing as others do.

## To get emergency housing from your local authority you must:

1. be legally homeless meaning you:
  - have no roof over your head now, or in the near future
  - have not chosen to be homeless
  - are fleeing from domestic abuse
  - have been released from prison or hospital with nowhere to go
  - live in overcrowded or hygienically unsafe accommodation
2. be 'eligible for assistance', meaning you:
  - have the right to live in the UK
  - can receive housing benefit
3. be in 'priority need' meaning you:
  - are 'vulnerable'
  - have children who depend on you
  - are pregnant
  - are homeless due to a fire, flood or other disaster
  - are 16–17 years old

## For free help with your emergency housing application:

1. Streetlink
  - Phone: **0300 500 0914**
2. Shelter
  - Web: [england.shelter.org.uk](http://england.shelter.org.uk)
  - Phone: **0808 800 4444** (8am–8pm Monday to Friday, 8am–5pm weekends)
3. Citizens Advice Bureau
  - Web: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
  - Phone: **03444 111 444**
4. UK Government
  - Web: [www.gov.uk/homelessness-help-from-council](http://www.gov.uk/homelessness-help-from-council)

## If your application is rejected:

- you should appeal the rejection if you think it is wrong. You have 21 days to appeal this decision
- Shelter and Citizens Advice Bureau can help you with your appeal

## Short Term Emergency Housing

- emergency nightshelters will allow you to stay there for 1 or 2 nights
- **No Second Night Out:** [www.nosecondnightout.org.uk](http://www.nosecondnightout.org.uk) (via *Streetlink*)
- 'cold' and 'winter' shelters are open in winter
- **Women's Refuges are available for women fleeing domestic violence** (Call the National Domestic Violence Helpline on **0808 2000 247** if you are experiencing domestic violence or abuse.)

Visit [www.thepavement.org.uk](http://www.thepavement.org.uk) for a full PDF version of this page, with more detailed information on your housing rights.

