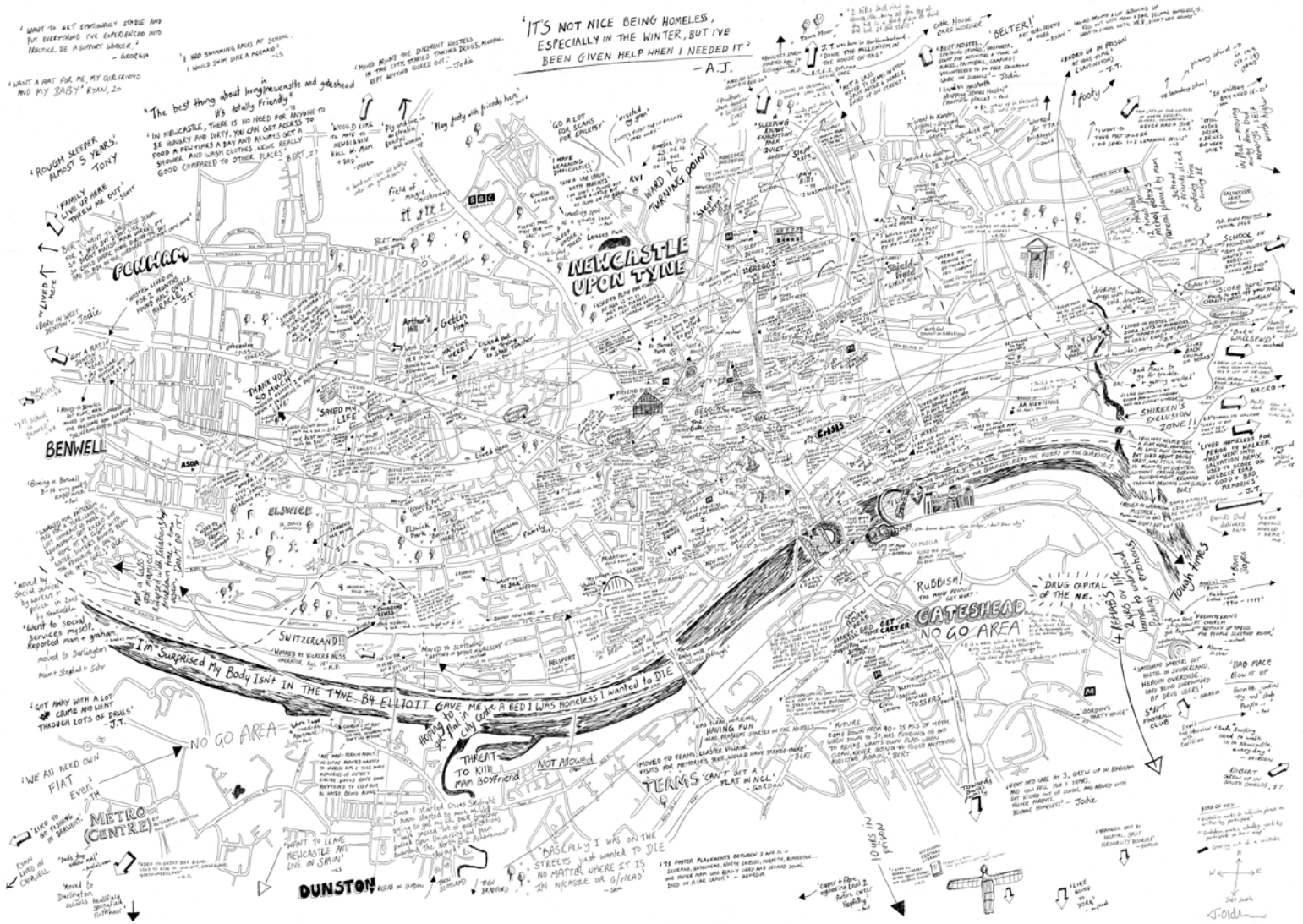


Imaging Homelessness in a City of Care

Participatory Mapping with Homeless People

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Imaging Homelessness in a City of Care was a participatory mapping project undertaken with 30 single homeless people in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (UK) in 2014. The project's objectives were three-fold: to pilot an innovative mapping-based methodology; to offer single homeless individuals an opportunity to comment on local service provision and delivery; and to inform and challenge public perceptions of homelessness. In what follows, we outline the context for the project and the reasons for adopting a mapping approach. We then discuss the research process and the various insights generated. Finally, we reflect on the effectiveness of the methodology used.

Research Context

The term "single homelessness" refers to adults without dependent children who are not entitled to housing provision under homelessness legislation in England. In the absence of formal monitoring processes, it is a category of homelessness which remains largely unquantified. Figures indicate, however, that rough sleeping levels have increased by 134% since 2010 (DCLG, 2017). The increased visibility of homelessness on our streets is provoking mixed reactions. Gifts and donations to many homelessness charities have increased, while greater engagement with street homelessness by faith-based groups is also evident (Cloke et al., 2012). At the same time, media scrutiny of the character and morality of homeless people has also increased (Fitzpatrick & Pawson, 2014), and punitive responses to street homelessness also remain prevalent (Harding & Irving, 2014). In this highly polarised context, it is important to both inform and challenge public perceptions of homelessness.

Research Process

The research proceeded by means of six workshops with 30 rough sleepers and users of supported accommodation. Participants were encouraged to annotate two-dimensional maps of the Newcastle city centre with reflections on the spaces, places and experiences significant to their life courses. The maps played a useful prompting role in the surfacing of participants' experiences, attitudes and values. Many participants were engaged with following a night of rough sleeping, meaning the articulation of life events through conventional talk-based methods would likely have proven challenging. Furthermore, the intuitive nature of map-making was intended to empower participants to take control of the research process. The generated mappings were shared with the artist Lovely JoJo, who prepared a "composite" map. The aim here was to present the participants' perspectives in a manner that was deliberately lo-fi and therefore in keeping with their selective and subjective nature.

Findings

The composite map displays a complex and often contradictory mix of practices. First, it highlights the large diversity of pathways along which individuals progress into homelessness; "evidence" that, while some people may be more predisposed to falling into homelessness, ultimately, anyone can fall victim. Second, the map highlights the daily challenges associated with street homelessness, as well as the multiplicity of survival strategies employed in response. While many of the strategies in evidence resonate with existing stereotypes, they can also be viewed as instances of "individuals cleverly deploying their creativity, competence and cultural knowledge to survive" (Duneier, 1999: 312). Third, it presents a series of counter-readings of the use of city spaces and forms. Doorways, for example, are reproduced as social and sleeping spaces, while pipes and ducts are shown to provide a modicum of warmth and comfort. Fourth, the map reveals a range of behaviours and activities characteristic of "normal" functioning lifestyles, thus presenting the participants as fully emotional subjects with needs, desires and a genuine sense of themselves (May & Cloke, 2014). Finally, it depicts the variety of the city's homelessness services. While there was evidence of punitive responses to homelessness, most participants spoke highly of the received support.

Participatory Mapping as a Social Research Method

The map proved highly effective in capturing the imaginations of audiences. The project's launch was attended by over 60 policy makers, practitioners and academics. The project blog has received over 5,000 hits from over 40 countries, and the map has received widespread media coverage, with an audience reach of over 2.5 million. The positive reaction appears to be based on the ability of the map to engage audiences instinctively and emotionally. Those offering comments stressed how the map served to emphasise the many different meanings assigned to the city, whilst also humanising discussions of homelessness. Comments included: "I found the maps of the participants and Lovely JoJo deeply affecting. I find myself returning to them and reconsidering the places I thought I knew."

However, the composite map is not without limitations. It does not provide an objective picture of homelessness in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. On the contrary, it is a social construction with its own performative character. Participants selected information to be mapped based on their "in-the-moment" subjective realities. Furthermore, the map is only partially able to depict the complexity of homelessness. Objects and events which lack geographical specificity (e.g. mobilities) are frequently obscured, despite the array of arrows and symbols. Therefore, mapping processes such as this one are probably most useful when used in combination with other methods of data collection.

Conclusion

For us, the experience of participatory mapping has confirmed the suggestion that many traditional methods of social science fail to engage with the many aspects of everyday life, thus lying outside the narrow discourse. There are, on occasions, thoughts, feelings and experiences that are simply "unspeakable". The value of maps such as this one, therefore, lies in their ability to engage an audience instinctively and emotionally, rather than through "rational" argument. Creative approaches to writing, mapping and image-making appear to be just some of the ways in which researchers can seek to access and communicate embodied and pre-reflexive knowledge.

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Illustrations

Map by Lovely Jojo's (lovelyjojoes.com)



ooty →

↑
TB Secondary school

↑
'IN WHITLEY BAY AGED 16-21'
- SAM



'DID LOTS OF JOB COURSES IN NORTH SHIELDS, JOINERY, DECORATING, NEVER HAD A JOB'
- A.J.

'STILL USING DRINK + DRUGS BUT VERY SAFE'

↑
'I WENT TO TYNE MET COLLEGE I DID LEVEL 1+2 LEARNING SKILLS'
- LS

↑
in flat - moving away from dad
memories, self worth higher



planned by man

School died
2 friends time
confusing
looking BK

SALVATION ARMY
cedar House

BERT, 27

WENT TO WARRINGTON SCHOOL FOR 9 DAYS BUT DIDN'T LIKE IT, SO DIDN'T FINISH. MAMA WORKED FT SO COULD SWEAK HOME DURING THE DAY HAD TO HIDE IN THE CURTAINS WHEN MAMA CAME HOME. WAS 20 ST!

FINISHED THERE WHEN I WAS 16.

WENT TO ST JAMES WITH BILLY TO SEE MRS BILLY/HEIK. PLAY WAS A MAKING UP DAY. AGENCY CAME BACK TO DRAW + -4. BOOKIE WOULDNT TAKE A BET ON IT.

IN NEWCASTLE, THERE IS NO NEED FOR ANYONE TO BE HUNGRY AND DIRTY. YOU CAN GET PAID TO FEED A FEW TIMES A DAY AND ALWAYS GET A SEVERAL REALLY GOOD COMPAS. NEWCASTLE IS THE CAPITAL OF THE NE.

SA-3 DAYS, KICKED OUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED DURING THESE 3 DAYS - LITTLE MEMORY!

FRANK'S HOUSE, OK AT THE TIME BUT ALL ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL. WAS A NORMAL WAY OF LIFE IN THERE. HUNG OUT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE + STARTED TAKING DRUGS. OVERDOSED ON HEROIN.

REN ENGER - FOOD, SHOWER, CLEAN CLOTHES.

1ST FISHERS. FRANK'S HOUSE, OK AT THE TIME BUT ALL ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL. WAS A NORMAL WAY OF LIFE IN THERE. HUNG OUT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE + STARTED TAKING DRUGS. OVERDOSED ON HEROIN.

WAS CLEAN, WORKING, HAVING FUN HERE. PROBLEMS STARTED IN THE HOSTELS.

HAS WAS TOLD THERE WAS NO BED ANYWHERE FOR THEM BUT BILLY CALLED, HAD A BED FOR THEM. WOULD HAVE HAD TO SLEEP ROUGH.

WAS CLEAN, WORKING, HAVING FUN HERE. PROBLEMS STARTED IN THE HOSTELS.

MOVED TO TOTTENHAM VILLAGE. UNITS FOR MEMORIES SAKE. WOULD HAVE SAVED THEM.

GET A FLAT HERE. ELIOT HELPED. FANTASTIC AS LONG AS OWN COMPANY. BUT LIVED ABOUT 18 MONTHS ON SUBSTOR WITHOUT TRAINING PROGRAM. ACHIEVEMENT. REWARD THROUGH LEARNING WITH GIRLS.

COME DOWN FROM 90 - 75 MRS OF MATH. WHEN DOWN TO 30, HAS FUNDING TO GO TO PETHAR. WANTS OWN FLAT. WHEN CLEAN NEVER GETTING TO DOG ANYTHING ADDICTIVE AGAIN.

WAS CLEAN, WORKING, HAVING FUN HERE. PROBLEMS STARTED IN THE HOSTELS.

MOVED TO TOTTENHAM VILLAGE. UNITS FOR MEMORIES SAKE. WOULD HAVE SAVED THEM.

MOVED NEXT TO BILLY'S MATH. DIRT UP IN SCOTTY SHIELDS, ST.

BETTER SINCE WE USED TO CHUCK PINS OUT OF THE WINDOW. TALKED THE DIET NEEDLES. THAT'S THE GOOD SIDE OF THESE PLACES.

ELIOT HELPER. WAS A RUNNIN' HAVING HERE, BUT LIKED IT BETTER. BEST HOSTEL IN THE NEER HELP. CIREMANS HAVE BEEN THE ONLY FOOD FOR A YEAR. LOADS OF CONTRACTS SO IT LEFT CONTRACTS SO MAKE REGULANT. GOT LOOKED OUT OF HOME AT 19 FIGHT WITH SKOTER. SISTERS ALWAYS BEEN THE FAVORITE AS SHE'S THE ONLY GIRL!

MOVED TO TOTTENHAM VILLAGE. UNITS FOR MEMORIES SAKE. WOULD HAVE SAVED THEM.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE



BERT MOVED HERE WHEN 18

BBC PINK PALACE

Castle Leazes

meeting spot as a young teen - Paul

"LEAZES PARK. FIRST PRIZE WITH LASS" - SCOTT

"SLEEP UNDER TREES"

Leazes Park

USED TO PLAY FOR TOON AT AGE 12 TO 15 MET ALL PLAYERS SADLY LEFT YEAR BEFORE SHEARER'S ARRIVAL - J.T.

looney tunes Hadrian's Clinic

my friend's hostel

"FINALLY MET MICHAEL WHO SHOWED ME WHERE TO GO FOR HELP + SUPPORT!" - GEORGIA

Arthur's Hill

Gettin High

Kicked out Yr 4 Trying to Stab Teacher - Paul

MAM LIVES HERE!

Went to school from YR 8 to Yr 11. Should have Attended more

GOT KICKED OUT FOR HAVING 350ME - SHIREEN

Westgate Hill Primary School

Education is the ability to almost anything without losing your temper or your self - confidence - Robert Frost

WENT TO ST JAMES WITH BRO TO SEE RESERVATION IN SWG PLAT. WAS A MESSING UP DAY - BERT

LIVED HERE WHEN FIRST HOMELESS. MADE FRIENDS BUT REVOLVED AROUND DRUGS + ALCOHOL - A.J.

Love going to game when I can. Mike Ashley is a W*H*E*R - David

Love to go cant afford to go! - TH

GOT A HOUSE

"I'D LIKE TO GO BOWLING" - LS

went with family - David

Monday night Football Prospect House

Drop ins volunteer part e.g. to

CHANGING LIVES

Jobbie likes coming here

FRIEND DIED

FOOD'S ALRIGHT... CHAOTIC

BEGGING FOR MONEY FOR DRUGS

SAVED MY LIFE

MOVED TO ELLIOTT, LIKED GARDEN BETTER THAN PITT STREET - A.J.

OK LIVED HERE 4 WEEKS

Lived HERE

CHANGING LIVES

PLACE FOR HELP

HELPING GEORGIA GET REHAB AND COUNSELLING

OWN tenancy

Places for people

WAS A PUNISHMENT MOVING HERE, BUT LIKED IT BETTER. BEST HOSTEL IN THE NE FOR HELPS - BERT

BETTER STAGE CHUCKED OUT JR. USED TO CHUCK PINS OUT OF THE WINDOW. USED DIRTY NEEDLES THAT'S THE BAD SIDE OF THESE PLACES?

Wipe your feet on way out - SHIREEN

1ST HOMELESS. FRANCIS HOUSE. OK AT THE TIME BUT ALL ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL. WAS A NORMAL WAY OF LIFE IN THE RE. HUNG OUT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE + STARTED TAKING DRUGS. OVERDOSED ON HEROIN ENDED UP IN THE GENERAL.

Friends live here

ABIGAIL HELD TO ME AS I SPENT 3 MONTHS ON THE STREET - SB

OWN tenancy

Lived here for 12 years

Full of checkies Central station

SHIREEN'S OLD HOUSE

ELSWICK PARK

Paul's brother lives here

CHANGING LIVES Hawthorn Terrace

Family

PROBATION TWICE A WEEK

CASINO

Life

NEW POLICE STATION

DRINKING FIELD (Marby Central)

A.J. LIVES HERE. HE GETS ON WELL WITH THE LABS. RENT IS CHEAPER THAN OTHER PLACES. HE LIKES BEING ABLE TO BUY HIS OWN FOOD AND STAY CLEAN HERE.

WANT TO GO BACK - GORDON

SHINY NEW CARS

Went to college painting + decorating (BORING) - Paul

my college David

WHERE GEORGIA GOT HER HEALTH + SOCIAL CARE DIPLOMA AND ENOUGH UCAS POINTS TO GO AND ENOUGH UCAS POINTS TO GO TO SUNDERLAND UNI. LEAVING CARE TEAM USED ME AS AN EXAMPLE OF SOMEONE WHO STARTED WITH NOTHING AND WENT TO UNI!

Friend slept rough + said was Horrid

Daily walk across Redheugh

THE BUBBLE

Moved to SCOTSWOOD "GETTING IN BOTHER IN WALLSEM" - Michael

GREW UP IN SCOTSWOOD - STEVEN

HELIPORT so handy for weekend jaunts

"I'D LIKE TO SEE GLEE LIVE AT METRO RADIO ARENA - LS

NEWCASTLE TELEVISION METRO RADIO ARENA

EVENT cover our contract Hard + Boring work - Paul

NEWCASTLE POLICE STATION

NEWCASTLE POLICE STATION

ERLAND!!

"IN SW FOR 10 YEARS GOT A YTS (WHITLEY BAY)"

"I know invincible doesn't mean that I wanted to DIE - SAM

Wanted to go back to see the Blaydon Races

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Wanted to go back to see the Blaydon Races

THE TYNE. B4 ELLIOTT GAVE ME A BED I WAS HOMELESS I WANTED TO DIE



TONY SLEPT HERE FOR A NUMBER OF WEEKS

'I WAS MARK' 2005

couldn't cope with me - Amelia's mum

*A.J.'S MATE'S LIVE HERE

'SOFA SURFER AT FRIENDS' HERE FOR 6 WEEKS - A.J.

My hostel, I live now - RC

'SLEPT BEHIND' PRIMARY

*GREGGS 'I WAS WARM BUT POLICE MOVED US ON' GREGGS IS ACTUALLY DOWN HERE. OOPS.

'I WOULD LIKE A FLAT HERE SO I CAN LIVE BY MY OWN RULES' - A.J.

'WHERE MY FRIENDS LIVE GO THERE TO SEE SIOBHAN' - LS 'HOME FUND RAISING AROUND SHIELDFIELD' RYAN

The City Stadium that never was

'drinking + drugs with friends' cold, drunken nights 'KICKED OUT RENT A'

'SLEPT BEHIND' PRIMARY

*TONY SLEPT HERE! 'FIRST SLEPT ROUGH UNDER WIRRAK AT 24' 'CAME BACK AT 24' 'EXTRACTOR KEYS' 'WANT A HOSTEL' - GEORGIA

'SLEEP, MATE' 'RYAN LIVED WITH TAL IN FLAT' 'Parents live here' 'CITY CAMPUS EAST' 'CITY CAMPUS' 'TONY SLEPT HERE IN A TENT!' 'Good MB Lives here' - TH

'This building recycled 95% of the material from the old Warner Cinema' 'North East Council on Addictions' 'NEW BRIDGE ST'

'BYKER FARM' 'WAS MY HOME AT I DID NOT KNOW WHERE TO GO FOR HELP' - SB

'LIVED IN HOSTEL 2002. LOTS OF GOT TAXED AT IN CHILLI ROAD' 'volunteer at barnardo's meeting' 'STAR AND SHADOW'

'SLEPT BEHIND' PRIMARY

'LIVED HERE FOR 4 MONTHS' 'T-TRILLIONS' 'VERY WARM' 'ON STAIRS' '1st place' 'LAING' 'I LIKE AUDIO BOOKS OF COURSE' '20 yrs' 'Rehabilitation' 'N. J. GIBSON' 'HEALING' 'Plummer' 'COURSE' 'I TEETING TWICE A WEEK. USEFUL BUT WOULD LIKE MORE SUPPORT TO STAY CLEAN!' - Jodie

'MAGISTRATES COURTS' 'A lot of time @ court... says enough!' 'VERY HELPFUL' 'once in a while' 'FINALLY GOT HELP' 'HAD TO GO A LOT' - Scott

'LIVED IN SA 5 TIMES' 'SLEPT! GOT INTO FIGHTS' 'GRIEF OFF OTHER RESIDENTS' RYAN

'This is a area I wouldn't go into' 'AA MEETINGS' 'St. Ann's Church' 'CITY RD'

'Bad Place go for the + getting' 'I LIKE SWIMMING' 'BYKER POOL WITH S AND HER SUPPORT' 'SHIR' 'EXC'

'SLEPT BEHIND' PRIMARY

'34' 'Crisis' 'dedicated to ending homelessness' 'STAYING TIME HERE DURING MY DIVORCE' 'I FOUND THE STAFF GOOD TO WORK WITH' - SB

'TERRIBLE' 'PEOPLE CLIMBING IN AND OUT OF WINDOWS' 'FOR CANNY WHILE STEVE' 'Smells like trench foot' 'SHIREEN' 'Paddie' 'march' 'sold clothes' 'and rag' 'G.L.' 'I LIKE TO GO FOR WALKS ALONG THE QUAYSIDE' 'READ THE HISTORY OF THE QUAYSIDE!' - A.J.

'LIVED IN SALLY ARMY WITH BROKEN LEG. HAD A FIGHT ON CRUTCHES. VERY CLEAN BUT LAY BACK THEN. VERY LAID BACK' '1st HOSTEL WENT TO' - M.D. 'USED TO TALK TO WEATHER MAN' 'PAUL MOONEY' - J.T.

'Elliott' 'A FLAT HE' 'AS LOVE O' 'BUT LIED A' 'HABIT WAS' '14 MONTHS' 'WITHOUT TA' 'ACHIEVE' 'THROUGH A'

'MOVED TO WASHING' 'MISTAKE' 'MOVED NEXT TO EX'S' 'MAM. DIDN'T GET'

'SLEPT BEHIND' PRIMARY

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'SLEPT BEHIND' PRIMARY

GATESHEAD NO GO AREA

'RUBBISH!' 'TOO MANY PEOPLE GET HURT'

'DRUG CAPITAL OF THE NE.'

4 REHABS life 2 yrs

'DID NOT WANT TO SLEEP IN THE TOWN CENTRE AS I KNOW AND FELT THAT I WOULD NOT FEEL SAFE. I WAS TOLD THAT TO GET 500 POINTS I HAVE TO BE FOUND BY THE HOUSING OFFICER BUT I WOULD NOT SLEEP IN TOWN!' - SB

'SLEPT BEHIND' PRIMARY

'SLEPT BEHIND' PRIMARY

'SLEPT BEHIND' PRIMARY

'SLEPT BEHIND' PRIMARY

'GATESHEAD LEAVING CARE TEAM GOT ME A FLAT AT 18. LOOKING FORWARD TO STABILITY AND SUPPORT. JUST ONE HR PER FORTNIGHT' 'RELECY MANAGEMENT'

'Gateshead Leaving Care Team' 'Civic Centre' 'social services' 'TOSSERS' - David

'Gateshead Leaving Care Team' 'Civic Centre' 'social services' 'TOSSERS' - David

'Gateshead Leaving Care Team' 'Civic Centre' 'social services' 'TOSSERS' - David

'Gateshead Leaving Care Team' 'Civic Centre' 'social services' 'TOSSERS' - David