

If someone becomes homeless, it's not their fault.

There are **lots** of reasons people lose their homes, and those reasons are almost always out of their **control**.

Here's some examples of why people can become homeless:

- They're being treated badly by a family member at home, and they need to leave
- They lost their job and haven't been able to find a new one
- They have an addiction that has made it very difficult to take care of themselves
- The landlord raises the rent so they can't afford to stay
- The landlord asks them to leave (this could happen for lots of reasons)
- They've come out of hospital, prison or care and have no home to go to

When a person loses their home, it's usually because of a few different reasons all happening at once, rather than just one thing.

[Almost a fifth of Scotland's population lives in poverty,](#)

meaning they are at risk of becoming homeless. **This isn't their fault!**



You can't always see homelessness.

We might **think** homelessness is **only** people we see sleeping on the **streets**.

But if you became homeless, you'd probably live in what's called "**temporary housing**", where you'd stay while you **wait** for a permanent home.

Thousands of people are in this situation, and sometimes, they can be living in temporary housing for **years and years**.

It can be very **difficult** to live there for many reasons, including:

- **No pets or visitors** (even family) allowed in your room - This limits your freedom and stops you feeling like you have your own life
- **Chaotic environment** – For lots of different reasons some residents could be experiencing mental ill-health, addictions, and other circumstances which can create an unstable environment that's stressful to live in
- **Poor facilities** - Often, there's no kitchen or place to store food so you can't cook for yourself or your family. Sometimes, there's no washing machine available either
- **Curfews** - Curfews vary from place to place, but often, you must be out by a certain time in the morning, and inside by a certain time at night - and if you miss this deadline by even 5 minutes, you could be locked out for the night and even lose your room
- **Unstable Lifestyle** – staying in temporary housing means you can't get settled and create a home, making it difficult to make plans for your life



Where do people who are homeless sleep and eat?

If you were to become homeless, you would need to **contact** your local **council**, who must **try** and find you a place to stay that night. The council will look for a **space** in a hostel or B&B, which will usually be a **room** with a shared bathroom. Often, there **aren't enough** places to stay, and if that happens, the council will tell you to come back **tomorrow**.

You can then try going to a **shelter** run by a charity. But shelters **don't** always have **enough** beds for everyone either. If there are no **spaces** left anywhere, you would have **no choice** but sleeping on the streets where it can be **dangerous** and very cold.

People who are homeless might not know where they can get **food**. There are a few different **charities** and places that **help** people out with free food, and one of them is Social Bite, where we offer **fresh and healthy** food. It's not just about **full tummies** - we **welcome** people, and try to create a space where everyone can **enjoy** each other's **company**. This is very **important** as people might feel **lonely** being in a tough situation. It's also a chance to let people **know** about other places where they can get more **help**.



Is everybody who begs homeless?

At Social Bite, we get asked a lot “*what if somebody **pretends** to be homeless to try and get free food?*” or people tell us “*people pretend to be homeless so that they can beg for money*”. We’ve learnt that **anyone** can end up in a hard situation, and it’s **not** always what it seems. We believe **everyone** deserves food and a **safe place** to live, and anyone who is begging is not likely doing it because they want to. Although a **few** people beg on the streets even though they have some kind of home, by getting to know people we’ve **learnt** that sometimes their lives have become so **hard**, begging seems like their best option to survive.

What do you think?

Is sitting on the street and begging a nice option?



Homelessness can make people very sad and very sick.

Having nowhere to live, and **not knowing** when you'll have a home again can be upsetting, **scary** and stressful. Without an address, it can be more **difficult** to get **medicine**, a dentist and other types of **help**, which makes life really hard if you get sick. This **situation** can make people feel even more **stressed** and **sad** so they can end up feeling really **bad**, all the time. People who've become homeless often show signs of **illness** that normally only happen to people who are much **older**, and their mental **health** is sometimes really bad.





We can all do something to help #EndHomelessness.

Everyone has the **power** to help. Raising money for homelessness charities is very **helpful**, and when you're older, you could also **volunteer** with them. A **really** helpful thing you can do is to **understand** more about homelessness, which you are doing right **now** by reading this! **Taking part** in programmes like Wee Sleep Out, which help **spread the word** to others about homelessness, changes the way people **think** about homelessness and makes them want to **help**. When lots of people **want** to help, that lets our **government** know what's **important** to us and how we'd like them to **act** on our behalf to make things better. When we all **agree** on something, that's when things are most likely to **change**.





As an **example**: Last year, Social Bite built a [Village!](#) We did this, and other **big projects**, using money we raised from an event we did called 'Sleep in the Park' with **thousands** of people. This just goes to **show** what we can **achieve** when we come **together!** In 2012, Social Bite opened its first cafe, and six years later, we opened a **village!**

Imagine what you could achieve in six years?

Did you know that even a **smile** and saying **'hello'** can change someone's day? **Remember**, everyone who is homeless is a **person** just like you and me, they have **favourite** colours and favourite songs, so **maybe** next time you're with a grown up and you **see** someone who is homeless, you could simply **say hi** – it helps to **remind** people that they're not **invisible**, and that they **matter.**

