

the
FREE
mag for
homeless
people

thePavement

Recovery

May / June 2019



Missing



Jan Mustafa

Jan went missing from Canning Town, London on 6 May last year. She was 37 years old at the time.

Jan, 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.



Ali-Sina Heydari

Ali-Sina has been missing from Lambeth, London since 2 May 2017. He was 15 when he went missing.

Ali-Sina 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 Ali-Sina or Jan, you can contact our helpline anonymously on **116 000** or **116000@missingpeople.org.uk**, or you can send a letter to 'Freepost Missing People'.

Our helpline is also available for anyone who is missing, away from home or thinking of leaving. We can talk through your options, give you advice and support or pass a message to someone.

Free, confidential, 24/7.

**missing
people**

Registered charity in England and Wales (1020419)
and in Scotland (SC047419)

A lifeline when someone disappears

Recovery

There are so many people who say they have given up sugar, fags, drink, drugs, and then backslide, that perhaps most of us are in recovery from our addictions. But wherever you are on your recovery journey, *the Pavement* celebrates you. Breaking an unwanted habit, or trying to build new, healthy patterns into your life, is super-tough when you are homeless. It is always easier taking it one day at a time, ideally surrounded by people who encourage you to stick to your resolve. Turn to the centre pages to find healing help – and if you slip up, do not give yourself a hard time, because you can try again. And again. Stay safe.

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Cover: Ariadne Birnberg: “As a piece it’s gone through a lot of stages. The final image is a long way from its starting point as a random jumble of cables. I can’t honestly say I was sure where the work was heading as I worked on it. But I like how it came together in the end.”

Follow @ariadnebirnberg

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Welcome to *the Pavement*: a magazine for homeless readers

We're a small charity, founded in London in 2005. Now we produce 8,500 FREE bimonthly magazines for homeless and insecurely housed readers in London and Scotland. You can find *the Pavement* at 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 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.

You can fundraise or donate, see how at:

- www.thepavement.org.uk

Join us

We are always looking for volunteer journalists with experience. We particularly welcome those who've been homeless.

- nicola@thepavement.org.uk

Fundraise or donate so we can keep providing *the Pavement* free to homeless people. Mags that help them at moments of crisis, as well as giving the info people may need to move on.

- www.thepavement.org.uk

TURN TO **PAGES A – P** IN THE
CENTRE OF THIS MAGAZINE
FOR THE LIST OF SERVICES



Listen up: Participants at the joint Groundswell and *the Pavement* action day held on International Women's Day. Go to the Groundswell website to hear their podcast:

- www.groundswell.org.uk

© Becky Evans

Thank you to the National Lottery
Community Fund for funding this
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**COMMUNITY
FUND**

**We support people and
communities to thrive.**

The National Lottery Community Fund

Written by Jake Cudsi

Dying homeless

The **Museum of Homelessness** is now managing the Dying Homeless Project, originally set up by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism. Over 18 months (Oct 2017–March 2019) the bureau logged the stories of the 800 men and women who died while sleeping rough or living in temporary accommodation. From now on the Museum of Homelessness wants you to contact them when you hear of a death.

- See how at:
museumofhomelessness.org/dying-homeless-project/

Fatal inequality

Homeless people in England are dying at a rate of more than nine times higher in economically depressed areas than in the least deprived locations. The BBC has published analysis of recorded deaths among homeless people from 2013 to 2017 and when weighted against population, **Blackburn with Darwen**, in Lancashire, had the highest rate of deaths, with 10.2 per 100,000 of the population. A quarter of homeless deaths in the past five years took place in areas officially ranked among the 10 % most deprived in the country.

Chief executive of the housing charity Shelter, Polly Neate, said:



I can see clearly now: staff at Specsavers Kingston providing eye tests for homeless people in Kingston.

© Specsavers

“People dying homeless is a direct consequence of a broken housing system.”

Hot water

Video footage posted by a member of the public on Facebook in late February showed Southern Rail workers pouring water on a homeless man at **Sutton** station. Angie Doll, the passenger services director for Southern Railway, confirmed the guilty pair had been suspended and put under investigation. British Transport Police has opened an investigation and is treating the incident as common assault.

Art and graft

Having stayed in **Port Talbot's** YMCA hostel while he was homeless, Steven Roberts held his first show as an artist there. Roberts struggled growing up with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and was kicked out of his family home when he was 19. For almost a year he stayed at the YMCA hostel, where he had "a lot of time to sit and think," he told *WalesOnline*. He also had time to focus on art, and, with the assistance of Caer Las advocacy charity, Roberts applied for uni. Now 22, Roberts is studying art at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

• www.ymca.org.uk

No rush

A year after the **Windrush scandal** broke, many victims of the government's hostile environment remain homeless. Windrush refers to the generation of Caribbean people who came to the UK after World War Two. The scandal involved them, and many of their family, being deported, sacked and made homeless, despite being British citizens. The government was forced to apologise over its conduct; however, many people affected by the Home Office's actions remain in dire straits. Meg Hillier MP, chair of the Commons Public Accounts Committee, said the Home Office lacked "any sense of urgency".



Magical music: *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* at the Tate Modern saw 16 clients from The Connection join Streetwise Opera to play for the first three hours of the all-night performance with Gavin Bryars and the Academy of St Martin's Orchestra. The venue quickly filled up and everyone then came together to play the final hour, which was a magical way to end.

© Tom Walton

Season ticket

Premier League club **Crystal Palace** FC's homeless shelter scheme, which saw the club's stadium opened to a number of local homeless people, was such a success last winter that the club plans on keeping the scheme running for years to come. *Pavement 119* reported the south London club had, in collaboration with Croydon council, set up one of the ground's lounges for people sleeping rough to use in the event of extreme weather.

Now the scheme has been used on nine occasions, with the council praising the “promising start”.

Taking note

When 16-year-old Charlotte Howard of **Hastings** read a “heartbreaking” note on a bus stop written by Anthony Johnson, she decided to act. Johnson had been homeless for nine years and his note said that he was looking for work “to make life worth living”. Charlotte sent out an appeal on social media raising more than £1,000. It also led to Anthony being offered a job as a handyman and use of a caravan, which, once decorated, would provide him with shelter. When contacted by *BBC Sussex* over the story, Charlotte explained that “everybody deserves a home.”

Winning recipe

Late April saw homeless charity Emmaus **Burnley** raise funds by hosting a curry evening in the town’s award-winning Usha restaurant. According to the Burnley Express, those attending the fundraiser were treated to an array of dishes for £16, and learnt more about the work of Emmaus Burnley. Half of every £16 ticket purchase went to Emmaus to help pay for the social enterprise they run in Burnley and neighbouring **Accrington**.

• www.emmaus.org.uk

Utter madness

Landlords in **London** are being paid incentives by hard-up councils of up to £8,300 to house homeless people, according to *the Guardian*. These payments were made more than 5,700 times in 2018, and do not replace actual rent. Housing campaigner Nye Jones said, “private landlords are using a council’s desperation to pocket huge cash incentives just to rent their property out.” For example, Barnet council in north London paid out £1.5m to landlords last year, despite its overall budget being slashed by £23m.

The council has built just 20 council houses over the past five years.

What housing crisis?

For the second year in a row, the number of vacant houses across England has increased. There were 216,186 long-term vacant homes in England between October 2017 and October 2018, representing a 5.3 % increase on the previous year. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government defines long-term as a house empty for at least six months. About £53.6bn of property is left vacant, says Project Etopia, a modular home and school builder. Their chief executive, Joseph Daniels, said empty homes were “compounding the housing market’s deeply entrenched problems”.



Creative power: After completing youth homelessness charity Accumulate's course, Crystal Alleyne secured a place on the Access to HE diploma in Design & Digital Media at Ravensbourne University. She is seen here seen with Vice-Chancellor Linda Drew at the 2019 exhibition held at Autograph in Shoreditch. "I liked doing different things and finishing what I started," said Crystal.

• www.accumulate.org.uk

© Accumulate

Is this progress?

A year ago *the Pavement* welcomed the government's new Homeless Reduction Act (HRA) with both scepticism and hope. Councils were now legally bound to help and support homeless people (good!). But they weren't offered the necessary funding to make it workable (bad!). Fast-forward a year and a Local Government Association report has further highlighted the delicate balancing act of hope and despair. A sharp increase in people approaching councils for support and shelter has been registered. Before HRA became law, councils would only be obliged to offer temporary accommodation to people in priority need (pregnant, minor, etc.), so a spike was inevitable. However, the report, based on a survey answered by 150 councils, revealed 90 % of councils were "seriously concerned" they could not meet the demand for affordable

housing. Furthermore, HRA has had little impact on population trends of homeless people.

Tenants' rights

In a move hailed as groundbreaking for tenants' rights by Shelter, the government is consulting on abolishing Section 21 evictions writes *the Guardian*. Announcing the plans, PM Theresa May called it "wrong" that "millions of responsible tenants could still be uprooted by their landlord with little notice and often little justification."

The dreaded Section 21 eviction – one of the leading causes of family homelessness – looks set to be a thing of the past now the government has announced plans to scrap no-fault evictions. At the moment, landlords can get rid of tenants with as little as eight weeks' notice after a fixed-term contract ends.

Ready in three

Students in **San Diego** broke the Guinness World Record for most sandwiches made in three minutes back in April. *NBC San Diego* reported that the students, from the San Diego Jewish Academy, made 868 sandwiches, all of which were donated to the Alpha Project, an organisation that helps homeless people in San Diego. The Alpha Project distributed the sandwiches among people living in their homeless shelter, as well as local people sleeping rough. The previous record was 490 sandwiches.



Ian Kalman raising awareness about homelessness at King's College.

Streets of gold

Ian Kalman writes: I have two goals in my life. One is to become a millionaire by the time I am 21, the other is to educate the public how incredible people on the streets are. I am 64 now, so I am too late for one of my targets...

I was a rough sleeper and when I became one, I was arrogant enough to think I knew what homeless people were like – they were drunks, druggies and thieves. How wrong I was and how often have I seen the public reinforce the derogatory belief I once had. So, I have a two-pronged plan. First is to publish a book which will be a series of interviews. I also plan to start a podcast.

Now I need your help, if you would like to be interviewed for Streets of Gold or make any suggestions, email Ian Kalman at:

• iankalman@gmx.com



Dining room: Graih is the Manx word for love. It's also an organisation running a drop-in and night shelter for those who are homeless and in insecure accommodation on the Isle of Man.

• <http://www.graih.org.im>

© Michael Manning

Big red button

Recovery is the focus of this issue of *the Pavement*. Here Rob Edgar explains how he copes with feelings of contradiction and struggle



Life when you're in recovery is awash with great opportunities, some of which seem more desirable and welcoming than others. With the less attractive opportunities you might occasionally have to take a leap of faith if you're going to find where that particular road takes you.

I know what is beneficial for me and I definitely know what isn't, but the choices I make represent me at that particular moment. It's a struggle that means I can sum myself up as "the most reliable unreliable person I know."

The line between these two parts of me is in constant flux. I am always just a single thought away from a state of utter elation or absolute, unmitigated self-destruction.

People often use the label "sensitive" to describe me. In the beginning I thought that was their polite way of calling me a gay man. Recently I have begun to accept that I am a very sensitive man and it has absolutely nothing to do with me being gay.

Self-awareness and accepting what I find can be both rewarding and liberating. But the answers I'm

looking for are shrouded in a fog of self-doubt pumped out by my own anxiety-fuelled fog machine. The more anxious I am, the thicker the fog becomes. Sometimes I stumble around in what feels like dense pea soup desperately searching for the motivations on a spectrum that has connect & survive at one end and isolate & destroy at the other. That's why I can find the answer hard to trust. The simple solutions that most people find and seem to cope with effortlessly can be difficult for me to deal with. I'm continuously asking myself what is real and what is just an illusion?

It's really difficult to explain, this feeling I have, but I know that I'm getting better at this "game of life". I'm getting better at talking about this struggle as well, sharing the ups and downs, so that perhaps I can help others to help themselves as they try to recover.

Everything comes down to how I handle my big red button. If I push

it, do I explode, taking the entire thing with me? Or does it trigger an alarm somewhere in a secret room where my friends are waiting to help me through the fog?



Need help?

- **Off the drugs:** Don't dismiss Narcotics Anonymous (NA) at the first mention of the word God because each meeting is very different, so shop around for one that suits you.
www.ukna.org or helpline **0300 999 1212** (10am to midnight)
- **Volunteering:** Organisations are putting more stock in lived experience so consider using your expertise to help and inspire others. This can also lead to paid employment.
- **Getting fit:** Yoga is therapeutic. Have you had a go yet? Running through the streets gets you fit and gives you times to think and a way of connecting to the city you live in. Or find local sports clubs and do more of what you love, such as football, table tennis, etc.
- **Hobbies:** The internet has thousands of clubs for all sorts of activities. If you've forgotten how to knit, sew on a button or focus a camera, get a memory refresh via YouTube.

Tough times

Lawrence Blake is dealing with insecure housing and mental health problems

The Pavement wishes Lawrence well and is running an extract from his article because almost all (80 %) of homeless people in England report having mental health issues, with 45 % diagnosed with a mental health condition.

"When you are at the bottom of the heap, who even takes the time to notice you? Your self-esteem is shot to pieces, you have no purpose in life and you get ill. We may never have an all-inclusive society – but whilst we have a capitalist system, nothing will change – it may even get worse. And with so few doctors doing work for NHS mental health, if you are ill and it gets too hard to cope, very little is on offer, apart from being sectioned. So, my advice is do not let the rubbish system take away your pride, dignity or your mind."

- Mental Health Awareness Week is 13–19 May. Get help and join in: **www.mentalhealth.org.uk/your-mental-health**

**TURN TO PAGES A – P
FOR THE LIST OF SERVICES**

Glasgow voices

Knowing you need help can be part of recovery. Interviews by Caroline Fairgrieve

TURN TO PAGES A – P
FOR THE LIST
OF SERVICES

Melvyn

In recovery from mental health issues

He took an overdose and had a breakdown. He'd been living in Glasgow a short time and felt he was struggling on the streets. He was assessed by a mental health team and Police Scotland. Melvyn feels he is in recovery with new schizophrenia medication and has a one-way ticket to see his family in England. *See p10.*

Britt

In recovery from alcohol and has mental health problems

Went downhill when family members died, and it was the final straw when her best friend was diagnosed with cancer. After 16 years she fell off the wagon and went back to drinking, but woke up and decided she wanted her life back. Friends and her doctor helped her through it. "Sharing my story helped me recover." *See p20.*

David

Living on the streets to escape violence and alcohol

David had swapped drugs for drink, but his old drug mates beat him up when he stopped his friend buying

heroin. The kindness of a stranger showed David that he could fight back, and now he is getting stronger. At Christmas, a stranger left him a sleeping bag, thermals and a rucksack. "Don't give up." *See p18.*

George

Alcoholic in recovery

George says it was a wake-up call when his Dad (also with a drink problem) died, as it feels nearly impossible to come off the street when you are alcohol-dependent. "Don't leave it too late to get help. Tackle addictions before they kill you." *See box p21.*

If you are homeless in Scotland, contact Shelter Scotland, see their info on the centre pages of the List. If you are homeless in Glasgow help is at:

- **Lodging House Mission,** 35 East Campbell Street, G1 5DT
Tel: 0141 552 0285
www.lhm-glasgow.org.uk
- **The Wayside Club,** 32 Midland Street, G1 4PR. Tel: 0141 221 0169
www.thewaysideclubcentre.co.uk
- **Glasgow City Mission,** 20 Crimea Street, G2 9PW.
Tel: 0141 221 2630
www.glasgowcitymission.com



PTSD

(to educate)



I was daddy's girl & mother's daughter; now I'm a woman saying I've got Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

When I say post, the symptoms are present; but it's no gift, it's very unpleasant.

Traumatic, dark memories make me woozy, scarier than a horror movie.

But like a film played on repeat; the hands start to shake with wobbly feet.

The root of stress is anxiety manifested; remembering to breathe deep like my therapist suggested.

Disorder comes in many forms; restless insomnia gives me the yawns.

Heart drums with too much bass, hot & cold sweats pours down my face.

When the sensations are on overdrive, depression convinces me why am I alive?

Sensitive eyes & ears turns a whisper to a shout, my eyes are open but have the lights gone out?

No, my brain's trying to be protective, as I go through blackouts & they're non selective.

Fine one min then crying next, hyper-vigilant defensive reflex.

When the heart's pounding, my speech runs fast; or is slow & slurred like a drunk on their arse.

There's times when I'm sober & others think I'm tipsy, if only they knew the images flashing before me.

The city rushes ahead as my world becomes static, it really hurts to be told "stop acting dramatic"

A soft tone with a warm hug is all it takes, to calm the nerves & stop the shakes.

Flashbacks, panic attacks is more than I can chew; I'll embrace joy so depression "f*ck you!"

The diagnosis is not who I am, my soul is just healing & I'm doing the best I can.

The play's the thing

This interview with the Deputy Mayor of London, James Murray, was held at City Hall. Report by Ian Kalman

Mr Murray's duties cover residential development and rough sleeping. Here he talks about *Rising* the play that Cardboard Citizens performed in front of him and members of the public. He has agreed at a later date to talk about rough sleeping.

Q: What did you think of Cardboard's performance of *Rising*?

It was a really powerful story and a unique way to tell the story. I particularly like the way after the main show, the audience were brought back to question their assumptions. This led on to questions about policy and whether they should be changed, or new ones brought into the country. It was a novel and interesting way to present the issue. I felt that everyone was engaged and afterwards I spoke to some people who were continuing to talk about it.

Q: Did you know all the issues brought up in the play come from research by the company?

Now here at City Hall we work with many councils and we are keen on getting the services right but we can

Tough times

- Cardboard Citizens' play *Rising* is about the difficulties a young man finds getting work or a place to live after a short prison sentence.
- *Rising* was performed at City Hall to get the attention of Deputy Mayor, James Murray.
- www.cardboardcitizens.org.uk/new-tour-hostels-and-prisons-rising

unintentionally forget the human side. For me I think the play was a good reminder of what is happening out there.

Q: Years ago if a person left prison, they had accommodation waiting for them. Now this does not happen. Why?

If you look at the overall picture of homelessness, it has doubled from 10 years ago and now it is a national problem and a national disgrace. While here at City Hall we are working with charities and faith groups and are doing as much as we can, but there must be more pressure put on the ministers to make a reversal on the policies which are forcing more people on the streets.



Let's talk: After the *Rising* performance at City Hall there was a panel debate about changes to the law. It was chaired by Adrian Jackson OBE, the CEO of Cardboard Citizens. The panel consisted of Helen Beresford (NACRO), Gordon Booker (Citz), Femi Keeling (writer), James Murray (Deputy Mayor), Emma Revie (Trussel Trust) and Petra Salva (St Mungo's).
© Cardboard Citizens

Q: Why are people not able to apply for Universal Credit just before release?

This is a good example of a broad approach that the government has got wrong. Over the past 10 years they have made significant cuts to the welfare system again and again. This has affected many people, as has universal credit. I hear of too many people not being able to get by and they then find themselves homeless.

Q: Who is at fault?

Well the buck stops with the Prime

Minister, that is the system we have in this country. Yes we do have ministers, who are acting on her behalf, but in the end it is the Prime Minister's responsibility and she has had many years of service in the government. It is right to identify who has caused this but what makes me particularly angry is when you hear ministers pretending, or maybe it's a lack of understanding, that the policies they have made have nothing to do with creating homelessness. It is time they acknowledge this and make a real concerted effort to combat it. ■

Get trained up

James Murray from City Hall says these are two good places to help ex-prisoners find training and work:

1. **Change Please** is a coffee company and they help homeless people by training them up as baristas with the aim that at the end of their training they will end up with a coffee making job. www.changeplease.org
2. We also have funded **Beam**, that uses crowd funding to help people to get on to training courses that will lead to employment. <https://beam.org>



"I'M ADDICTED TO TURNING A BLIND EYE"

Q: Tell us ways to be kind to yourself?

Answers from The Pavement Magazine Facebook page

- ◆ **Rachel:** "Think of one thing you are grateful for each morning, and before you go to bed 10 things which went well that day."
- ◆ **Jeremy:** "We're all addicted to something."
- ◆ **Jill** shared a happy card with 12 things to remember from FB/the idealist:
 1. The past cannot be changed
 2. Opinions don't define your reality
 3. Everyone's journey is different
 4. Things always get better with time
 5. Judgements are a confession of character
 6. Overthinking will lead to sadness
 7. Happiness is found within
 8. Positive thoughts create positive things
 9. Smiles are contagious
 10. Kindness is free
 11. You only fail if you quit
 12. What goes around comes around.

Solve this reader problem...

Got any good advice for young people who are homeless?

Send us your advice (or any other questions you have) to:
nicola@thepavement.org.uk

Feedback from issue 119



"Good stuff: direct, clear, easy to read and funny, but very useful and important."

"A really good mix of voices."



Homelessness on TV: "Watching the last 60 days on the street, the one from Glasgow. It was the only episode that hasn't annoyed me, I really liked this one – but I did laugh at all the subtitles they had to use!" says Ruby. © Boundless Productions

Escape plan

What we lose in the fire we find in the ashes, writes Mat Amp

There are thousands of platitudes generated by the recovery industry.

- “I’m not telling you it’s gonna be easy. I’m telling you it’s gonna be worth it.”
- “The goal isn’t to be sober. The goal is to love yourself so much that you don’t need to drink.”
- “Change your behaviours and your feelings will follow.”
- BLAH BLAH BLAH...

Despite having roots in the cool religion – Buddhism, in case you’re wondering – this seemingly endless stream of platitudes still manages to come across as meaningless to someone who has truly had to eat shit at the broken edge of our society.

I’m not gonna trot out some tired old wisdom, dressed up as universal truth when, at the end of any day, we’re all very different. We have different stories, different problems and therefore we need different escape plans tailored to our personal experience.

Although my own story heavily features addiction, it’s important that any discussion about recovery takes care not to myopically focus on that one issue. People do that a lot, as if the drugs themselves are the problem. But some people take

drugs for fun and have no problem when it comes time to stop. Drugs can exacerbate issues, no doubt, but they are rarely the root of a problem. Understanding this can be a key element when it comes to making your recovery stick.

Recovery for many people just means reconnecting to society. It might be mental health issues that set people on that road to homelessness and disconnection (see Rob’s story on p10), or it might simply be the result of not being able to pay the rent (see Sarah’s story on p20).

Whatever your story may be, and no matter which path you take to find your way back, recovery offers another chance to start again. You just need to realise that the scars that you carry are bruises rather than tattoos. I mean, I still have bad days but that’s okay, I used to have bad years and I’m pretty sure my history includes a bad decade.

For me, recovery started when I stopped habitually using heroin, but that was just the beginning. I started working with *the Pavement* magazine which kept me busy. Regular NA meetings stopped me feeling isolated, running got me fit, CBT fixed behavioural issues, yoga got my mind, body and spirit firing together, volunteer work got me a job and my writing ... well, here I am writing. Cause and effect.



Line up: We Make Change Homelessness is a network of people who “believe homelessness is solvable”. First aim is to pressure the Government to repeal the Vagrancy Act (1824) with high profile actions planned for World Homelessness Day on 10 October. While Rosie Downes from Crisis says: “If you’ve had personal experience of enforcement action (eg, moved on, arrested or charged) under the Vagrancy Act, or worked with people who have had this experience, email campaigns@crisis.org.uk.” © We Make Change

Consequences is no longer a dreaded word for me the way it was when it meant an abscess, another night in police cells, sleeping on the street, another broken relationship and so on.

It seems to me, at least, that there are two big hurdles when it comes to making your way back to mainstream society.

The first one is yourself. You’ve got to believe, on some level at least, that you’re worth it; that you matter enough.

The second thing is probably less straightforward, at least it was for me, and that is convincing yourself that society is worth rejoining.

My advice is not to look at the big

picture. It can be overwhelming and there is plenty of stuff out there that isn’t too impressive. Instead take things one step at a time, enjoy the journey rather than the destination and savour the simple things: decent food, new clothes occasionally, washing, running, being creative, learning something new... Gradually things will start to fall into place.

Recovery offers a fresh chance to knit yourself a new coat in whatever colour you choose. Make sure it fits.

My life is far from perfect and I’m still recovering from it all, but I’m so much better than I was a few years ago and right now that’s enough for me.



Chicken or egg?

Which comes first: homelessness or the addiction? Report by Sarah Hough

For me it was trauma, bereavement, years of insecure housing and a high-pressure job that led to my addiction. After years of subletting rooms in shared houses, I found myself self-medicating; unable to cope with the stresses of living with other people and the constant uncertainty of my situation. In the end, I had to drink to function which led to losing my job and the room I was sub-letting.

I found myself sofa surfing until I worked up the courage and motivation to seek help. In order to do this, I had to attend an assessment which only operated as a drop-in between 8am and noon. I was advised to arrive by 7am to ensure that I would be seen. Getting up that early was impossible and I overslept many times after a day and night's heavy drinking. Also, I often didn't know where I'd be staying – I might be miles away from the service.

After weeks of failing to get to the service, I decided to stay awake all night and camp outside. Obviously, I needed substances to help me (which is ironic considering I was trying to get into treatment). I wondered if the professionals who were running the service realised how difficult it was to gain access to the

In a nutshell

- People say that homeless people end up on the street because of addiction or serious substance misuse.
- Maybe homelessness (including sofa surfing) is the biggest problem, not the addictions?
- Why have a system that makes getting into rehab so difficult?

drop-in. Was it some sort of test to see who was serious?

My assessment went well. I was painfully honest and within a week I'd been allocated a key worker. She was really understanding and advised me the best course of action would be rehab. I told her about my housing situation, and she referred me for supported housing. In the meantime, I was told I needed to attend groups including a pre-detox group. I was sofa surfing anywhere that would have me, so to get to my groups, I had to get several buses, which took money and motivation. I was exhausted. My sleep pattern was all over the place and when I was awake, I was too depressed to do anything apart from drink. Then my key worker told me that her manager wanted to close my case because I was staying in another borough.

It would have been catastrophic



Recovery © Mat Amp

to have to start the process all over again. I don't know if I would or, could have done this. Luckily, my key worker had already made the referral for supported housing and she hurried this along. I got into a hostel several weeks later. My key worker regularly warned me that funding would have to be agreed for my rehab placement and unless I was attending groups regularly it was unlikely that I'd get this. After six months of attending groups and engaging with services, I got into rehab.

It's clear to me why so many people are unable to jump through these hoops when homeless, in active addiction, and with other complex health or mental health problems. The system is designed to be difficult to navigate, let alone used, by the people with multiple issues who need it the most.



Keep at it

- When allocated a keyworker, request a referral to supported housing.
- Try to stay near to the services you'll be using.
- Be careful about disclosing if you're staying in a different borough.
- Try evening groups. Narcotics Anonymous and Alcohol Anonymous offer evening groups in many areas. More about AA www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk or call 0800 9177 650, or email: help@aaemail.org
- See if Groundswell can help. It enables people experiencing homelessness to take more control of their lives.
- See <http://groundswell.org.uk/> or call 020 7725 2851.

The homeless film director

David Fussell talks about how he made *Mystic Demon Killer* and his hopes that it'll become a cult classic. Interview by Jacqueline Messih and Judah Stephenson

A homeless filmmaker who completed his first feature film while living on Tottenham Court Road has premiered at Screen On The Green cinema. *Mystic Demon Killer* is David Fussell's first feature film. It is a horror/thriller about an MI6 agent sent on a covert operation. The making of this film is remarkable considering the testing circumstances that surround it. The 56-year-old lost his home after a flood ruined the exterior of the property and put him into debt. In 2013, David left North Wales, where the film was shot, and set out for London with nothing but the clothes on his back, a hard drive and a "dream".

David's experience in filmmaking was limited but he believes "the best way to make films is to actually make films." David learnt all his post-production skills through editing music videos and wedding videos for friends. Although *Mystic Demon Killer* is David's first attempt at a feature film, many have commented on its quality. David's advice to other aspiring filmmakers is that "people are too afraid to make a fool of

Film tips

- Try crowd funding or an investor for your creative projects.
- Advice to filmmakers "be willing to cut it tightly down".
- Make sure your basic needs are met: food, clothes and warmth. This can all be acquired through charities.
- Use libraries and churches for quiet time to collect your thoughts and allow your creativity to flow.
- Use social media, such as Twitter and Insta as marketing platforms.

themselves these days, but everyone has to make a fool of themselves in order to learn. You're not going to learn sitting around thinking about it."

It is this passion and drive that radiates from David when you speak to him, and it's what drove him to complete the film despite the adversities of homelessness.

David fondly recalls being bought a guitar from his nan, and a camera from his auntie at seven-years-old. Using both at such a young age, David discovered a love for both photography and music, and soon realised that film was in fact a blend of the two. That's when his passion



The Homeless Film Director, David Fussell, says: "I would like to have five feature films behind me and a stable income. I don't like houses, so I'd live on a cabin cruiser (boat). That's my dream".

© VICE Media

for film began to blossom.

The film was shot on mini DV at very high quality for the time, using a £2,000 camera. David mentions how he could have got 10x the quality for a fraction of the price now, but also highlights how "you've got to make things when you can." David was still unsure as to whether anything could be retrieved from his hard drive and had limited resources and equipment living on the streets of London. "I had to work for Next for about three years before I had the equipment to even start anything. That was the biggest problem. The final edit took about eight months and I used libraries, pubs and the computer at homeless shelter C4WS, mostly using free editing software".

The choice of horror wasn't random for David, in fact, it was very well calculated. David describes how with the horror genre, films never become unpopular. He also notes that if you do make a bad one, it can be really great because really bad

films are so watchable. He thinks fans of horror are more open to buying stuff they haven't heard of, so for a debut feature film, David decided this was the best choice.

Since its release on Halloween 2018, David has sold 18 copies, and grossed US\$137 dollars in total. With the release of the *Vice* documentary about him, *The Homeless Film Director*, on 10 April, David's inspirational story in the build-up to the cinematic premiere of his film looks set to reach 12 million people.

- Rent or purchase *Mystic Demon Killer* here: <http://bit.ly/2U50bu4>
- Support David's GoFundMe for further films here:
- <http://bit.ly/2P0spFg>
- <http://c4wshomelessproject.org>
- Find *The Homeless Film Director* on *Vice* https://video.vice.com/en_uk/video/vice-mystic-demon-killer-homeless-filmmaker/5c5d94e0be40773bcc774261



Keep it clean

Look after your veins by injecting safely, even on the street. Here are some tips from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine's Magdalena Harris

It is not always easy to practise safe injecting when you are homeless, but the following tips can help. Good injecting technique and keeping everything as clean as possible can keep your veins going and protect against dirty hits as well as viral (Hep C) and bacterial (abscesses, cellulitis) infections.

1. GET READY: If possible, be prepared. Get more injecting equipment than you think you might need. If there are safe places you can stash sealed works, do so.

2. WELL LIT: Try and find a clean, private place where you can prepare and inject. Somewhere with decent light (not blue lights) and where you are less likely to be disturbed. Some public toilets are better than others...

3. WIPE WELL: If you can, carry a packet of baby wipes or stash of alcohol swabs (sterets) with you. Use these to wipe injecting prep surfaces, your hands and the skin where you are going to inject.

4. DODGE DIRT: If you are outside, put down a newspaper, plastic bag etc to prepare your injection on.

5. STAY STERILE: Ideally, you want to use a sterile needle and syringe for every injection. If you can't, it is better to reuse your own old one than use someone else's. Clean your works as thoroughly as you can – the best way to do this is to flush with clean water, then bleach, then clean water again.

6. DON'T SHARE: Avoid sharing any injecting equipment such as cookers or water. If you have to reuse cookers, it is best to clean with soap and water or bleach solution first. If using the bottom of an empty can to cook up in, swab off the ink lettering on the bottom first.

7. WATER RULES: You will need water to prepare your hit. If you don't get any water with your injection pack, freshly boiled and cooled water is best – but not always easy to access. Next go for cold tap water, then bottled water that hasn't been drunk from (bacteria risk) or used for other people's injections (virus risk). A good tip, if begging, is to ask passers-by to buy you a bottle of water. Get two – one to drink and one to use for drug prep. If you have to use water from a toilet,

flush the toilet and catch the water before it enters the bowl. Look out for empty bottles you can fill from the washroom. Avoid using puddle water. Ask people for nearly empty bottles of water instead.

8. JUST A LITTLE: If preparing brown or white, you need an acidifier. Citric or Vit C is best, but don't use too much! This can damage your veins and cause painful injections. If cooking up a £10 bag, you only need half a sachet or less to dissolve the gear. Any residue left behind in the spoon will be the crap the gear is cut with – leave it there. Avoid lemon juice; it has a fungus in it that can damage your eyes.

9. DON'T SPIT: Take care with saliva – it has heaps of bacteria in it and can make you really sick. Don't lick your needle or get any saliva in your hit.

10. MOVE: Try to rotate your injection sites – this will keep your veins going longer.

11. TIDY UP: Dispose of your used works in an incineration (cin) bin. If you don't have one, put them in an empty drinks can. Crush the can to prevent anything being removed and put in a rubbish bin.



Reasons to smile: National Smile month starts in May and Dental Awareness month is November. Oral cancer is twice as common amongst men as women, and the Scottish incidence rates are almost double those seen in England. "Going for a dental check-up and eating a diet high in fruit and vegetables protects against oral cancer," says dentist Declan Cairns from the Glasgow Dental Initiative, which now opens on Wednesdays at Cadogen Street Soup Kitchen in Glasgow from 9–9.30pm.

© Marco Biagini

Understanding UC

In the last issue of *the Pavement*, the Glasgow News Group wrote about their trauma from being moved on to Universal Credit.

This is the Department of Work and Pension's advice for people who are homeless. It's written by Will Quince MP, the Minister for Family Support, Housing & Child Maintenance at the DWP

Whether you're sleeping on the streets, sofa surfing, or living in temporary accommodation, support is in place in jobcentres across the UK to help you claim benefits and get advice on a whole range of issues.

Navigating a complex benefits system can sometimes feel overwhelming. I want people to feel reassured that Universal Credit has been designed to simplify the system, by rolling up six benefits into one payment.

Our jobcentre staff don't have targets to meet – their focus is to support each individual in a way that works best for them. All work coaches receive training to support a range of people claiming Universal Credit, and to address other issues they might be facing.



Will Quince is MP for Colchester. Here he explains how homeless people have a right to Universal Credit. © DWP

Universal Credit is now available in every jobcentre, and here are some handy tips to help with your claim:

- Universal Credit replaces the old benefit system and is for people who are on low income or are out of work. How much you'll get depends on your circumstances. For example, if you've got children or a health condition.
- You don't need a **permanent address** to access Universal Credit. To make a claim, you can use: your hostel address, the address of a family member or trusted friend, or

the jobcentre address.

- **Computers** are free to use in all our jobcentres, and staff can help you set up an email address when making a Universal Credit claim. You can save your application and come back to it later, so you don't have to complete it all in one day.
- You can **bring a friend or helper** along to any of your jobcentre appointments if you want extra support.
- You **don't need formal ID** to make a claim – we can check your identity in other ways. You can find out more about this by talking to jobcentre staff.
- We can **help you set up a bank account** so you can receive payments, or they can be made by other methods if needed.
 - **DWP says:** People don't need a bank account to receive benefits. There are other methods of us paying people such as into a **Post Office Card Account**, or payments can be made into someone else's bank account. Payments can also be made using the HM Government Payment Exception Service. We will assess someone's situation when they come into the

jobcentre. Work coaches can also help people through the process of setting up a bank account, including applying for ID.

- **Pavement tip:** if you are happy on line you could try getting a **Monzo account** (ID is a selfie and scan of a passport or driving licence). <https://monzo.com>
- **Finding a home** is prioritised over finding work, and jobcentres can pause any requirements to look for work while you find housing. This sort of help is also available if you are at risk of homelessness. If you need more housing support, we can also refer you to a Local Housing Authority.
- If you need extra support with managing a single payment, we can **help with budgeting**, and set up different ways of paying your Universal Credit (including bimonthly or straight to your landlord).
- Visit your local jobcentre or <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-and-homeless-people> to find out more. Follow twitter @DWP to keep up-to-date with the latest news.

TURN TO PAGES A–P
FOR THE LIST
OF SERVICES

We want the DWP to...

Here's how the DWP responded to some of the Glasgow News Group's demands

1. Train staff so they know how to help...

DWP says: All our staff receive complex needs training and we have many specialists across the UK who specifically work with those affected by homelessness. We are also developing a homelessness single point of contact in every jobcentre.

5. Do away with benefit caps on rent that are leading to rent arrears and making people homeless...

DWP says: The Chancellor has confirmed the Benefit cap will be coming to an end next year.

6. Give people who are homeless the right to proper independent representation...

DWP says: Each person can nominate an appointee to support them. If they do not have someone available, we have recently launched the **Help To Claim** service through our partnership with Citizens Advice to provide extra support.

7. We want charities to have regular info sessions...

DWP says: That's a constructive recommendation. We regularly



This cartoon was sent in by a *Pavement* reader. It shows that people are not as confident about Universal Credit as the Minister in charge (see p26). © Jean Hindry

convene round table discussions with Ministers, policy officials and charities to hear their concerns and develop support. Jobcentres around the UK also engage with charities and local organisations on a daily basis to better support customers.

Pavement verdict



The Glasgow News Group has played an important part in changing UC for the better. Good work team.

Our demands

The Glasgow News Group found the same problems came up time and time again. We think these could be easily solved. We want the DWP to:

- ✎ Train staff better so they can offer more help
- ✎ Make the first appointment available without an email. Benefits staff could help set an email up.
- ✎ Do more publicity: social media alerts, posters, TV adverts explaining the ins and outs of Universal Credit.
- ✎ Come clean on the targets.
- ✎ Do away with benefit caps on rent that are leading to rent arrears and making people homeless.
- ✎ Give people who are homeless the right to proper independent representation. They need support.
- ✎ We want charities and welfare rights organisations to have regular information sessions, and be proactive in day centre and drop-ins. Make sure people know their rights.

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Fitting in: “When I moved back to Manchester from London, West Gorton Working Men’s club was the first place that gave me a job working on the bar. The working men’s club reminded me of the sort of places I grew up around, but now felt so alien. From my first day working there, everyone made me feel like I was really at home. It’s important to record the type of place that accepts everyone without judgment – and also because they seem to be dying out.”

• youtu.be/De01DedrunU

© photographybylewis.co.uk

Banter

No more quiet pints. Ruby's tales of life off the drink

☛ Some folk are lucky, they can just cut back. But I have to go all out abstinent. I can't just have a quiet pint. If I have that, then I'll definitely have another, followed by another three, minesweep anyone else's at the pub, get a bottle of voddie after being thrown out and destroy my life in new and very shit ways. I did this maybe 1,000 times to learn I had to stay right off it. Well I had to be sure, didn't I?

☛ They tell you that you'll replace one addiction with another. On films, and telly, you see addicts working out down the gym. Literally every person I know replaced the gear with pies and sausage rolls. Now their higher power is Greggs.

☛ In recovery, you've forever got staff on yer back going on about how you are: 'Have you spoken to the nurse?' 'Have you taken your meds?' So, when you bump into yer pal down the road and he asks how y'are, you forget that he doesn't want to hear all about your struggles shitting on the methadone. Maybe mind that.

☛ I've learnt I don't have an anger problem. Folk just need to stop pissing me off.

π I discovered all these skills I didn't know I had till I was off the drink. I'd been years living on fuck all, and working out the 'pissed per pence' (ABV strength divided by the price) of everything in the pub. When I started doing sums like that in my head down the garage, they're staring at me like I'm Stephen bloody Hawking.

Housing in England: Your Rights

Your local council does not always have to help you find emergency accommodation if you are homeless.

If you need help right now, please try these numbers below.

Ask them to help you make an emergency housing application.

For free help with your emergency housing application:

1. Streetlink

- Phone: **0300 500 0914**

2. Shelter

- Web: www.shelter.org.uk
- Phone: **0808 800 4444**
(8am–8pm Monday to Friday, 8am–5pm weekends)

3. Citizens Advice Bureau

- Web: www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- Phone: **03444 111 444**

If your application is rejected:

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

Visit www.thepavement.org.uk for a more detailed version of your housing rights in England and Scotland.

Summer safe

Drink water and make use of shade. “During the cold winter months, the thought of warmer weather is something to look forward to. Then summer arrives and I wish it were winter again. When you’re waking up in a tent inevitably sweating from the heat, it can be a challenge to stay hygienic. During the day, searching for shade can give you some reprieve from the heat. Sometimes summer’s not all it’s cracked up to be,” says a *Pavement* reader at Stratford.

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