

# UNDERSTANDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS



Activity pack for key stage 3

# Introducing Depaul UK

We are Depaul UK, which is part of Depaul International. We are a national charity that supports young people affected by and at risk of homelessness.


We run accommodation projects across the UK, provide young people with emergency accommodation, family support, counselling and housing advice in times of crisis.

We also offer an education programme to schools and colleges to teach young people about the causes of youth homelessness. We want to make sure that young people don't have to sleep in unsafe places and know where to turn for help and support.

This pack has been put together to help young people learn more about youth homelessness and is filled with activities exploring hidden homelessness, rough sleeping and sofa surfing.

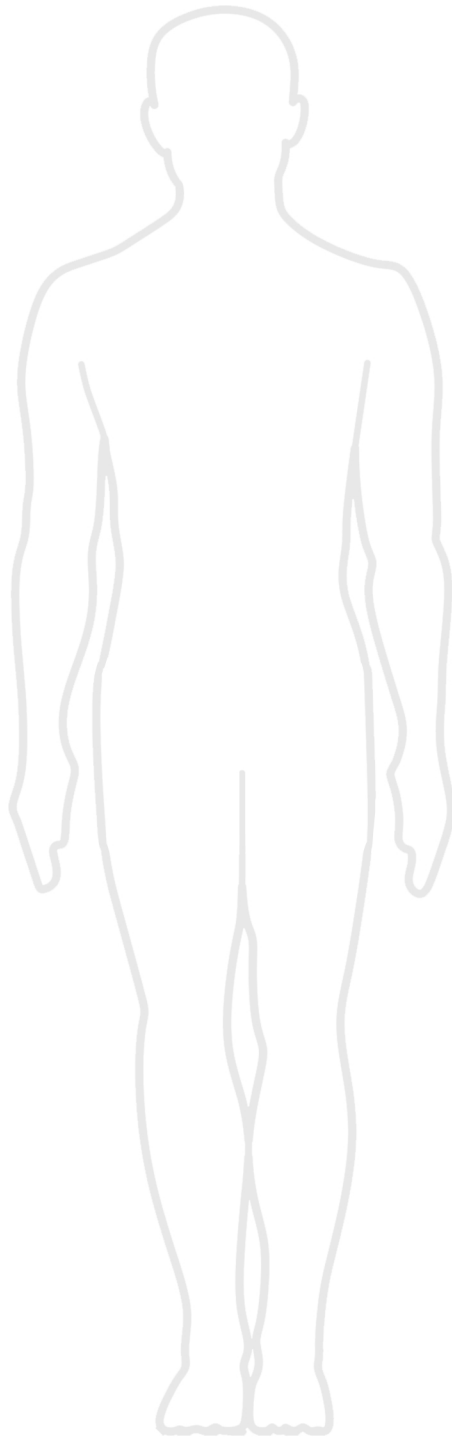
The activities in this pack are designed for young people aged 11-13 years old. You can do these activities by yourself or together with parents/carers.

Why not get your friends to do it too and see who gets the most answers right?



Did you know that 110,000 young people in the UK are facing homelessness?

What do you think a  
homeless person look like?



Can you draw them?  
Would they have anything with them?

# Wordsearch

What words do you think of when you think about homelessness?

G D E D L X S S P A G T H Y V  
R N C S P O Y T D W E V V M B  
G S I E O H H Q E N P I C N C  
E D L P L F O O T E E H G J P  
A W O G E P A N C V R I Y N S  
H D X I E E O S E L R T R S W  
L R Y B U D L E U N A Q S F G  
L A Y E N O M S P R E S V D I  
V S G G B W F L H G F D V L Q  
F G Q G E Q I I J G N I D T F  
R U R I A R V O L M U U N I M  
C R H N R A B L N A V O O G H  
S D G G D T C L T T C A R Y N  
Z J A S L E E P I N G B A G Y  
O B A S P L A X F S A G T V B

There are 15 words to find,  
here are a few to get you started:

**STREET SOFASURFING SLEEPINGBAG**

Head over to our website to find the answers.

<https://uk.depaulcharity.org/answers>

## How did you draw your homeless person?

Stereotypes affect how we think about homelessness. Unfortunately many people still expect a person experiencing homelessness to be older, unclean, often with long hair and a beard and sleeping on the streets.

Most of the words we put in to the wordsearch form part of these stereotypes. Hopefully some of the words used made you think a little bit differently about homelessness?

The reality is that there are a lot of people who are experiencing homelessness who look exactly like me and you, and you often won't see them sleeping on the streets.

### Hidden Homelessness

Many people who become homeless do not show up in official figures. This is known as hidden homelessness and includes people who are sofa surfing and those living in temporary or insecure accommodation.

Sofa surfing is when you stay with different friends and family for a few nights at a time. Young people who become homeless are often sofa surfing and don't even realise that they are homeless. Often people run out of friends and family to stay with and can end up staying with strangers which can be very dangerous.

Just remember that homelessness can happen to anybody at any time. Understanding what it is and the different forms it takes can help you seek support and get help more quickly.

*62% of single homeless people are believed to be hidden and don't show in official statistics*

# Spot the difference



**Can you spot the 8 differences?**

Head over to our website to find the answers.

<https://uk.depaulcharity.org/answers>

# Challenge

Imagine you have been forced to leave your home.  
What five items would you take with you?

**All five items must fit inside your rucksack.**



Over 100,000  
young people run away from  
home each year in the UK

## So, what goes in your bag?



1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

### Let's take a look...

How many of your items are essential?

How will these items help you?

Do you own these items?

What luxury item would you miss the most?



# What is homelessness?

Do you think these people are homeless?



Amy has been sleeping on the sofa at a friend's house for over a month.

**YES**    **NO**



Lisa lives with her boyfriend who is violent towards her. She was too scared to go home and spent all night in a 24hr McDonalds.

**YES**    **NO**



Shania and her new born baby are sharing a bedroom with her sister in her parents' overcrowded home.

**YES**    **NO**



Ben had a big argument with his parents and they told him to leave. He spent all night walking the streets.

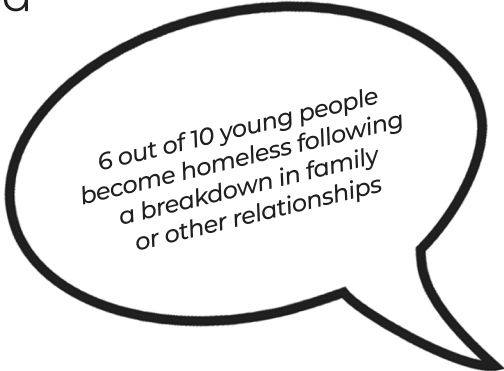
**YES**    **NO**

**You don't have to be sleeping on the streets to be classed as homeless. You can be homeless if you are:**

- Temporarily staying with friends or family
- Staying in a hostel or bed and breakfast
- Living in very overcrowded conditions
- Living in supported accommodation
- Living in a refuge
- At risk of violence or abuse in your home

**There are many reasons why people become homeless including:**

- A breakdown in relationships with their family
- Being unable to afford to pay the rent
- Family, friends or a partner asking you to leave
- Domestic abuse or violence at home
- Harassment from others
- Losing or leaving your job that provided accommodation



6 out of 10 young people  
become homeless following  
a breakdown in family  
or other relationships

# What is it like to be homeless?

Watch this video about 16 year old Amy's experience of homelessness:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t\\_bj60sy2lk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_bj60sy2lk)



The video player shows a young girl with long brown hair, wearing a light purple t-shirt and pink pants, sitting on a dark brown sofa. She has a sad expression, resting her head on her hand. In the background, there is a red pet bed and a box of 'Milkmaid' baby formula. The video player interface includes a BBC logo in the top left, a play button, a progress bar at 0:11 / 5:35, and a 'SUBSCRIBE' button in the bottom right corner of the video frame.

**THE YOUNG AND HOMELESS S1 • E3**  
**Scared, Hopeful, Angry, But Happy That I'm Free: Young & Homeless**

202,878 views • 14 Nov 2018

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**BBC Three** ✓  
2.02M subscribers

**SUBSCRIBE**

# Challenge

Now imagine that you are Amy and write a diary entry about your experience of homelessness so far.

**Things to think about when you are writing the diary entry...**

- Do you know where you will be staying tonight?
- Do you feel secure with your housing for the future?
- How do you feel?
- Who is there to help you?
- What are you doing for money?
- Have you got everything that you need?
- What will you do next?
- Can you see things getting better soon?

**Words that might help you:**

Alone | Unsafe | Risky | Lonely | Temporary | Insecure

Unsure | Scared | Worried | Unknown | Desperate | Improve



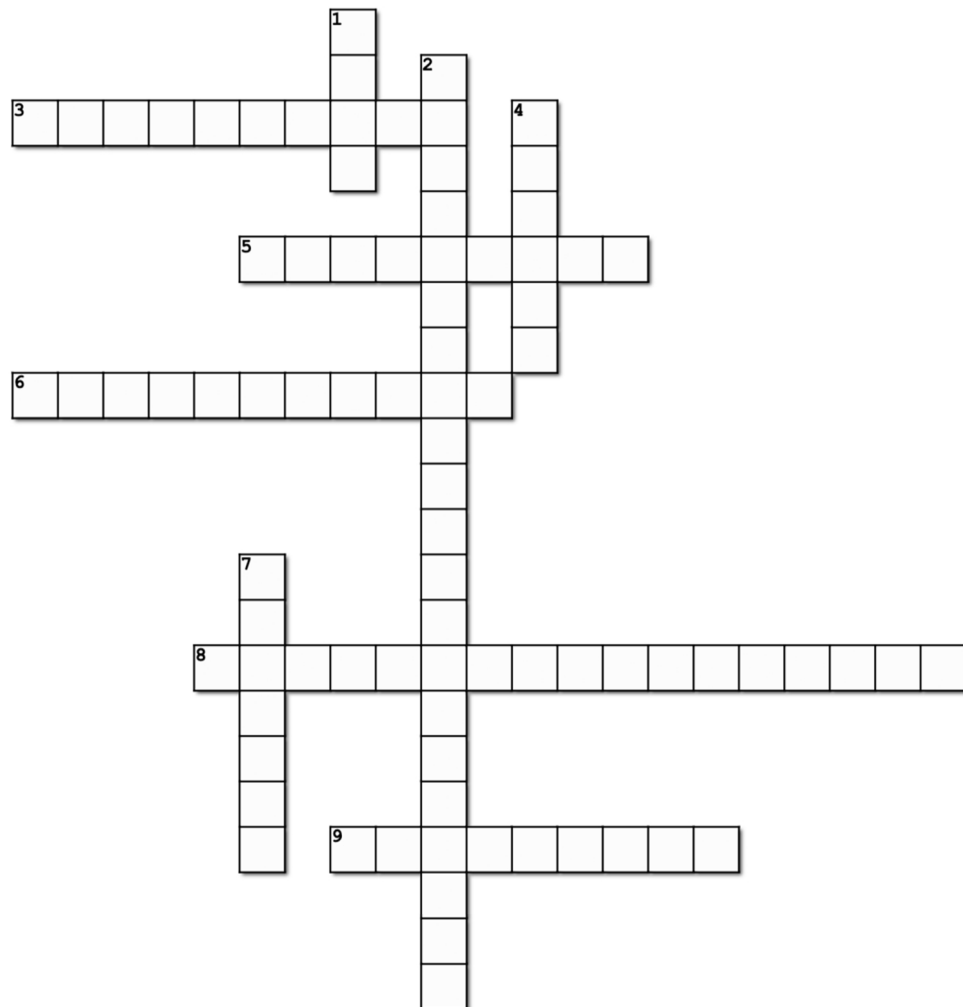
A series of 20 horizontal light blue lines for writing, with a red margin line on the left side.



A series of horizontal blue lines for writing, with a red margin line on the left side.

# Getting Help and Support

All of the answers can be found throughout this pack and by watching the video about Amy.



## Across

3. If you are under 18 and homeless, your local authority has this for you (4,2,4)
5. An emergency accommodation service for young people run by Depaul UK (5,4)
6. Staying for a few nights at a time with friends or family (4,7)
8. A long-term service for young people where they can stay with a host family (9,8)
9. Support you can get to help rebuild relationships with family (9)

## Down

1. A type of accommodation (4)
2. The main cause of youth homelessness (12,9)
4. A type of supported accommodation for young people who are homeless (6)
7. Where you should go for help if you think you are homeless (7)

Head over to our website to find the answers.

<https://uk.depaulcharity.org/answers>

# What have we learnt?

After completing all of the activities in this pack, you should now know that:

- Anybody can become homeless
- There are lots of stereotypes about homelessness but the reality is often very different
- Some types of homelessness can be “hidden” such as sofa surfing.
- The main cause of youth homelessness is a breakdown in family or other relationship breakdown.
- If you or somebody you know becomes homeless, there is help and support available for you. Contact your local council and also look for charities in your area that could help, like Depaul UK.



# Help and Support from Depaul UK

## Nightstop

We offer emergency accommodation for young people aged 16-25 in the homes of trained and vetted volunteer hosts.

Vist our website at: [www.nightstop.org.uk](http://www.nightstop.org.uk)

## Family support and mediation

We offer young people aged 11-25 and their families, support, advice & guidance to help improve relationships with each other and reduce arguments and conflict in the home.

For more info visit: [uk.depaulcharity.org/answers](http://uk.depaulcharity.org/answers)

In some parts of the UK we also offer counselling, housing advice, supported lodgings and other supported accommodation options for young people.

Everyone has the right to a safe place to sleep. If you or somebody you know is experiencing youth homelessness please visit our website for more information and a list of services available.



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