



IT'S TIME TO TALK ABOUT ROUGH  
SLEEPING AND HOMELESSNESS

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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### IT'S TIME TO TALK ABOUT ROUGH SLEEPING AND HOMELESSNESS, 2019

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# INTRODUCTION

This report shares the findings and outputs of phase 1 of a collaborative project to address rough sleeping and homelessness in the Kings Cross, St Pancras and Somers Town areas of Camden, London.

The project was led by Somers Town Community Association (STCA) working in partnership with The St Pancras and Somers Town Living Centre (L/C), C4WS Homeless Project (C4WS) and the Public Collaboration Lab (PCL) at University of the Arts London (UAL) working with staff and students from London College of Communication (LCC).

The project engaged with rough sleepers and service providers through interviews and workshop activities to identify challenges to existing approaches and find opportunities for interventions that might offer new ways to support people that are homeless and/or rough sleeping in the area. These opportunities were then articulated as briefs for co-design of new service proposals.

## PRINCIPLES

The project was funded by the Camden Community Impact fund and as such was structured to respond to the following funding principles:

- Preventative and Upstream Approaches
- Partnership and Co-design
- Tackling Ingrained Social Issues
- Highlighting the Value of Camden's Voluntary and Community Sector
- Learning from New Ways of Working
- Closer Community Connections

## CONTEXT

In January 2018, conversations began between STCA, the British Library, the Francis Crick Institute, UCL, Origin Housing and New Horizon Youth Centre as to the potential of what was termed as a 'Realisation of Assets' approach to addressing the challenges that contribute to rough sleeping. For all concerned it was felt that it was simply no longer acceptable that local organisations did not at least begin the conversations as to what such an approach that leverages the assets and resources of local organisations to address the challenges around rough sleeping, may mean in reality.

These discussions led to STCA facilitating and chairing a meeting in early February 2018, bringing together local stakeholders with the desire to create an Alliance that would seek to collectively work towards:

1. Ensuring the voice of those experiencing homelessness or whom have experienced homelessness are heard
2. Developing a greater understanding of what is actually needed and not what is assumed to be needed
3. Developing a greater awareness of what support was and was not available to people sleeping rough, as it very quickly became clear from Alliance conversations that there was a distinct gap in knowledge/awareness amongst stakeholders of what services were/weren't available
4. Creating a set of shared goals that Alliance members could all sign up to in terms of homelessness and, from the identification of these shared goals, each stakeholder would be better able to bring their organisational strengths/assets to bear on the challenge
5. Identifying gaps in provision that we would collectively seek to address, through collaborative projects and, if necessary, future funding bids
6. Ensuring those organisations already working at the sharp end were listened to and placed at the heart of the Alliance
7. Looking to tackle misconceptions around homelessness amongst the users, staff and management boards of Alliance member organisations
8. Looking to deliver joint training across all stakeholders for front line staff, who may through the undertaking of their work come into contact with those that are rough sleeping
9. Drawing into the Alliance the wider community in terms of Faith groups, Schools, VCS groups
10. Drawing into the Alliance more Knowledge Quarter partners
11. Drawing into the Alliance Urban Partners and Euston BID
12. Bringing Community Centre's into use at key times to offer extra beds, especially when the temperature drops, and indeed working towards providing support at Christmas and Easter being permanent fixtures in their programmes.

This list, whilst extensive, was generally agreed as achievable with the collective power of the organisations within the Alliance and engendered a real belief in the support deliverable via a 'Realisation of Assets' approach.

# PROCESS

To realise the potential reach and impact of this collective approach it was decided that there was a clear need to better understand the needs and experiences of those the Alliance was seeking to support. To this end it was agreed to apply a design-led collaborative approach to research into the key challenges and opportunities surrounding the issue of rough sleeping and co-design a set of proposed interventions that could be piloted with participating stakeholders and service providers.



# PROCESS

Research was delivered by a combination of research staff from Public Collaboration Lab at University of the Arts London working closely with STCA and The Living Centre and groups of students from MA Service Experience Design and Innovation, led by their tutor, Cordula Friedlander.

The research team facilitated the students in the delivery of a process of design research and development engaging with people with experience of rough sleeping and those that provide support services to them.

Over the course of the 15 week student project students were supported through a typical 'double diamond' design process which provides a structured approach to:

1. discover insights into the problem of rough sleeping; understanding 'what is' and identifying people's behaviours, needs and values in relation to the issue
2. define the challenges faced, the opportunities for intervention and the areas to focus upon
3. develop potential solutions and
4. deliver solutions that work.

## DISCOVER (WEEKS 1 – 4)

Researchers and students delivered desk research, spoke with rough sleepers, interviewed service providers, conducted on street observations and immersed themselves in the issue, with some students volunteering within homeless support services.

## DEFINE (WEEKS 4 - 8)

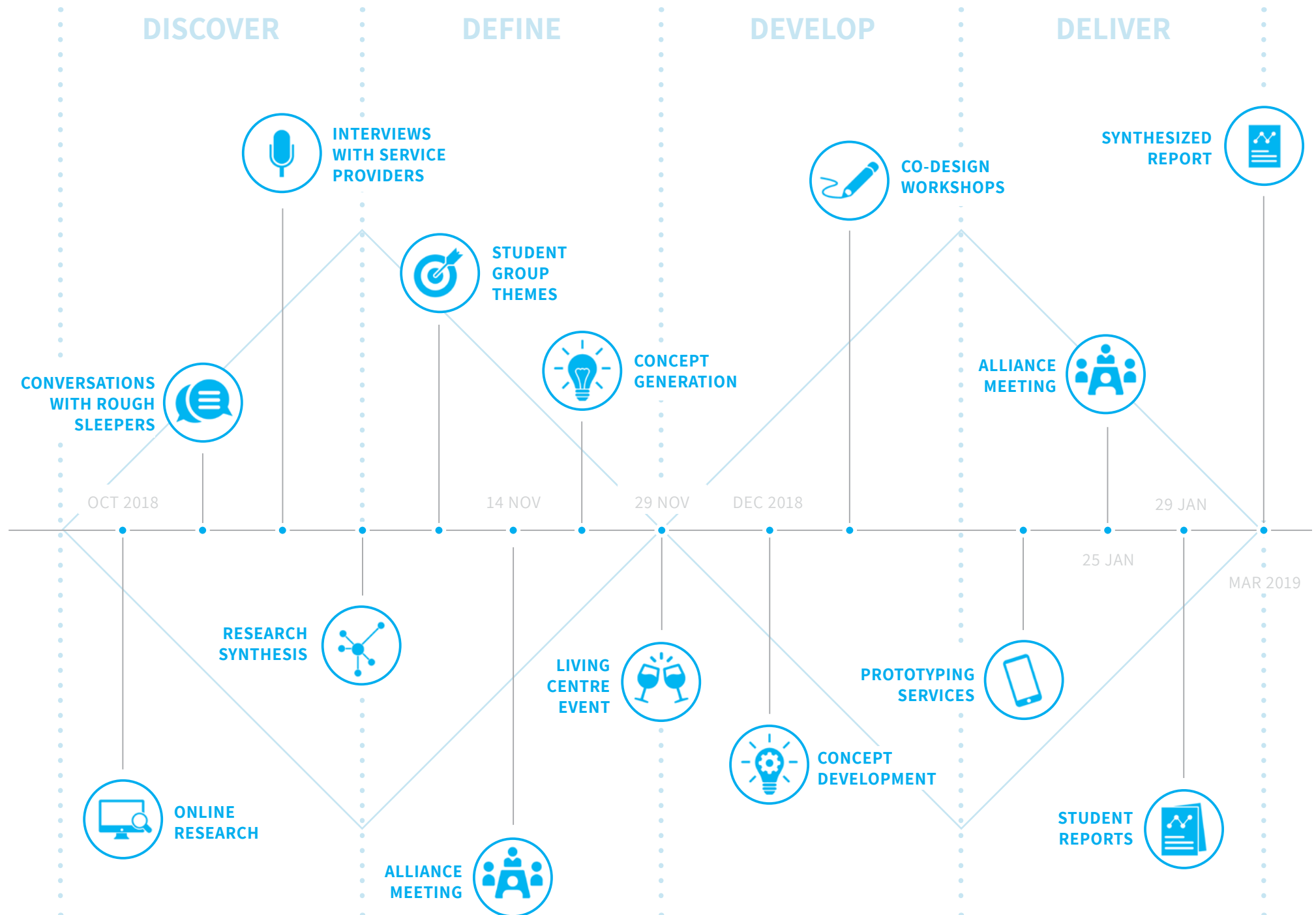
Students reflected on their research, and synthesised their understandings and insights in the form of stakeholder maps (showing organisations' relationship to the issue), personas (showing different kinds of people that they had encountered sleeping rough and their different experiences, behaviours and characteristics), service ecologies (showing the networks of services supporting rough sleepers and the relationships between them), service journeys (showing their insights into how people that are rough sleeping are connecting with services, or not). Reviewing their research findings and insights the students identified seven themes; challenges and contexts that presented opportunities for intervention; and formed seven groups to work together with stakeholders to address them. At this stage the research was visualised and insights were presented to the Alliance so as to share and receive feedback on findings, establish validation of intervention themes, as well as seek support to fill identified knowledge gaps before proceeding to work with stakeholders to co-develop proposals that responded to the opportunities identified.

## DEVELOP (WEEKS 8 - 12)

Student design teams, supported by tutors and the research team, worked with stakeholders to develop service concepts that might serve to address the people and scenarios identified. These service concepts were visualised and presented to stakeholders as part of a networking, asset mapping and feedback event at the Living Centre. The aim of this activity was to validate findings and initial proposals with a wider audience to receive further input and seek to identify further people and groups to collaborate with in the development of concepts. Based on the input from stakeholders concepts were further developed and refined and workshops designed to engage specific groups of service providers in the co-design of the proposed services. Each group delivered co-design workshops with relevant groups iterating their proposals, developing service prototypes and further detailing their service designs before presenting them to the Alliance for final feedback.

## DELIVER (WEEKS 12 - 16)

Groups delivered reports summarising their research, their findings and insights and their service proposals for further development by Alliance members and stakeholders supported by the research team. The teams' findings and proposals are brought together and summarised in the following sections of this report.



## METHODOLOGY

Throughout this project a range of service design methods were applied to discover and define insights and co-develop service concepts to address the challenges faced by different groups of people at different stages in their journeys into, and out of, homelessness and rough sleeping.

# INTERVIEWS

Interviews with homeless people, rough sleepers and services providers were conducted by students and research staff to understand the experiences of people that are homeless and rough sleeping in Camden. This helped the design teams identify the challenges faced by rough sleepers and homeless people, what is working well for them in terms of support, what needs remain unmet, and what opportunities exist to improve the situation.

# PERSONAS

A persona is a characterisation of someone we are designing for based on the experiences, behaviours and characteristics of real people that have been defined from research. Personas of different kinds of people that were rough sleeping have been created to better understand their specific needs and desires so as to help the design teams to create services that will work for them.



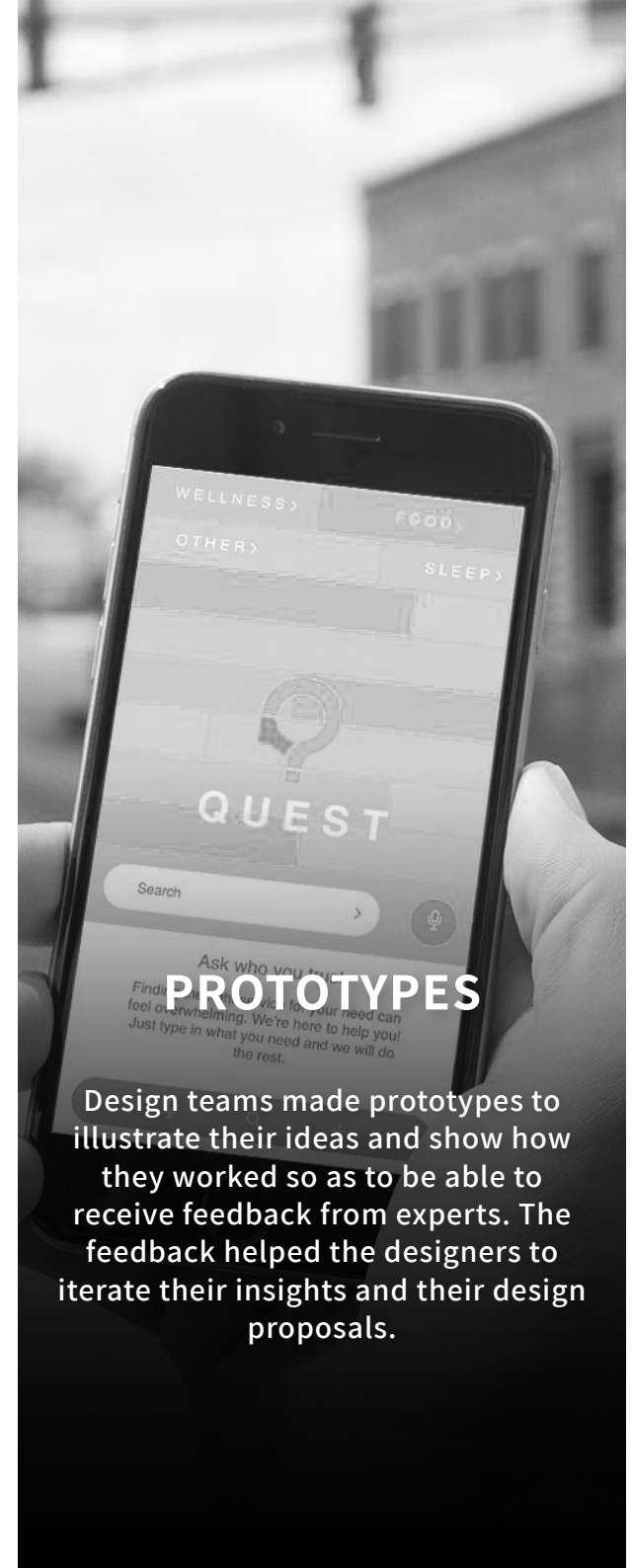
## MAPS

Students created maps to make sense of their research, and visualise it in ways that make it easier for others to understand and feedback on. Through this process we were able to identify specific points of experience within journeys, systems, and services where specific barriers and challenges exist that offer opportunities for intervention.



## WORKSHOPS

During co-design workshops, students designed ways to involve stakeholders in the design process, to bring their expertise into the proposals. In this way it is hoped that the concepts developed are more likely to be fit for purpose and able to be implemented and piloted.



## PROTOTYPES

Design teams made prototypes to illustrate their ideas and show how they worked so as to be able to receive feedback from experts. The feedback helped the designers to iterate their insights and their design proposals.

## INTERVIEWS

Over the course of this project, researchers from Public Collaboration Lab and MA Service Experience Design and Innovation at London College of Communication have conducted 60 interviews. In this report, the perspectives of rough sleepers, sofa-surfers, hostel residents, charities, local authorities, and social enterprises were considered as equal. Here we list people who we had conversations with. The numbers written after names or job titles indicate which of the seven teams of students held the interview.

9

## INTERVIEWS OF SERVICE PROVIDERS LED BY PCL AND STUDENTS

### CAMDEN COUNCIL

- Contract Manager

### C4WS

- Manager

### SOMERS TOWN JOB HUB

- Manager

### CAMDEN AND ISLINGTON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

- Nurse in Focus Homeless Outreach Team

### ORIGIN HOUSING

- Social Investment Manager

### WOMEN@THEWELL

- Manager

### SAFER LONDON

- Organisational Lead
- Project Coordinator
- Policy Coordinator

### CAMDEN SAFER STREETS

- Outreach Team Leader

### WOMEN'S HIDDEN HOMELESS PROJECT

- Manager

## CONVERSATIONS WITH HOMELESS PEOPLE LED BY STUDENTS

20

### HOSTEL RESIDENTS

- Josh <sup>2</sup>•
- Jacob <sup>3</sup>•
- Mason <sup>3</sup>•
- Archie <sup>3</sup>•
- George <sup>3</sup>•

### ROUGH SLEEPERS

- Adam <sup>2</sup>•
- Tim <sup>3</sup>•
- John <sup>4</sup>•
- Gary <sup>7</sup>•
- Mike <sup>7</sup>•
- Marc <sup>7</sup>•
- Frank <sup>7</sup>•
- Eva <sup>5</sup>•
- John <sup>5</sup>•
- Charlie <sup>6</sup>•

### EX-ROUGH SLEEPERS

- Paul <sup>1</sup>•
- Mike <sup>4</sup>•
- John <sup>7</sup>•
- Francois <sup>7</sup>•

### SOFA-SURFER

- Ellen <sup>1</sup>•

(Names have been changed to protect people's identity)

**AMERICAN CHURCH'S SOUP KITCHEN**

- Director <sup>4</sup>
- Volunteer <sup>4</sup>

**CAMDEN SAFER STREETS**

- Street Safe Coordinator <sup>4</sup>

**CENTREPOINT**

- Nutritionist <sup>5</sup>

**CHANGE PLEASE**

- Manager <sup>5</sup>

**CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

- Coordinator <sup>1</sup>

**CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY**

- Dept Coach <sup>2</sup>

**CITY HARVEST LONDON**

- Head of Volunteering Engagement <sup>4</sup>

**EMMAUS**

- Volunteer <sup>6</sup>

**FAT MACY'S**

- Entrepreneur <sup>3</sup>

**FOOD BRIGADE**

- Founder <sup>5</sup>

**FOOD CYCLE**

- Staff <sup>7</sup>

**FOSTER CARE SYSTEM**

- Foster Carer of Asylum Seekers

**HARE KRISHNA**

- Staff <sup>5</sup>

**KING'S CROSS BAPTIST CHURCH**

- Drop in Manager <sup>4</sup>
- Project Manager <sup>7</sup>

**KING'S CROSS METHODIST CHURCH**

- Volunteer <sup>6</sup>
- Staff <sup>7</sup>

**LONDON JESUS CENTRE**

- Manager <sup>1</sup>

**NORTH LONDON YMCA**

- Staff <sup>3</sup>

**NETWORK RAIL**

- Staff <sup>3</sup>

**NEW HORIZONS**

- Youth and Advice Team Manager <sup>1-5</sup>

**ORIGIN HOUSING**

- Housing Manager <sup>2</sup>

**POLICE**

- Police Officer <sup>6</sup>

**SHELTER FROM THE STORM**

- Staff <sup>7</sup>

**SIMON COMMUNITY**

- Staff <sup>7</sup>

**SINGLE HOMELESS PROJECT**

- Head of Housing Initiatives <sup>2</sup>

**SOMERS TOWN LIVING CENTRE**

- Benefits Coordinator <sup>2</sup>

**SPECTRUM DAY CENTRE**

- Manager <sup>2</sup>

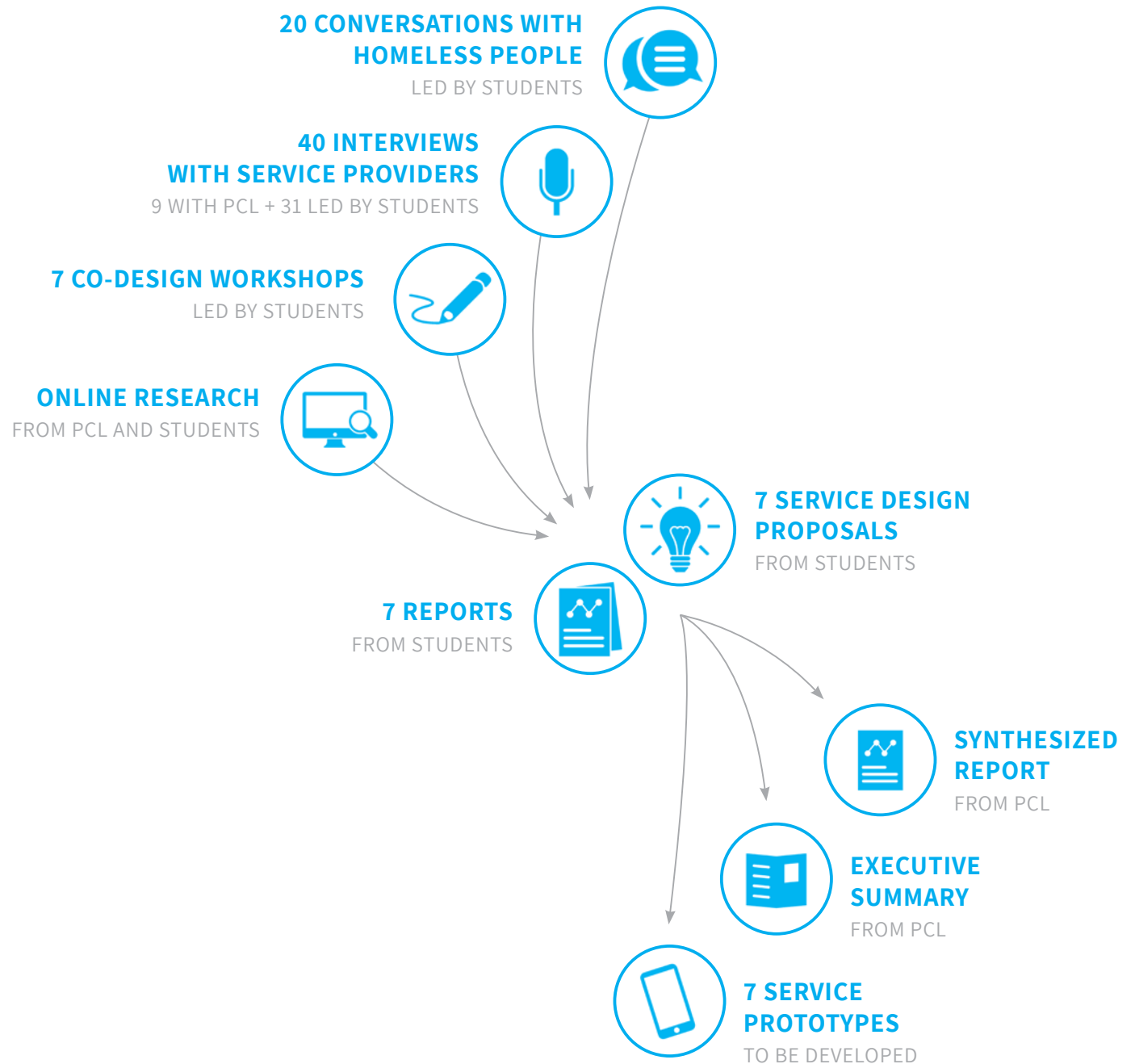
**TRAINING LINK**

- Coordinator <sup>4</sup>
- Director <sup>4</sup>

# RESEARCH SYNTHESIS

The conversations with people that are homeless and/or rough sleeping, interviews with service providers, co-design workshops and online research all contributed to the development of seven service design proposals, each of which is communicated in a separate report. All of this work has also been summarised within this report.

Some of the new service proposals will be prototyped and piloted with support from Alliance members, The Living Centre and the Public Collaboration Lab.



# SERVICES

The following chapters summarize our research findings. The information compiled originates from online research, interviews, and students' research.

This section explains how people may become homeless and how a range of services help them on their journey out of homelessness. The following pages list many of the public, private, and charity sector services that aim to support homeless people. Finally, rough sleepers' opinions were summarized to display the strengths and weaknesses of various services.

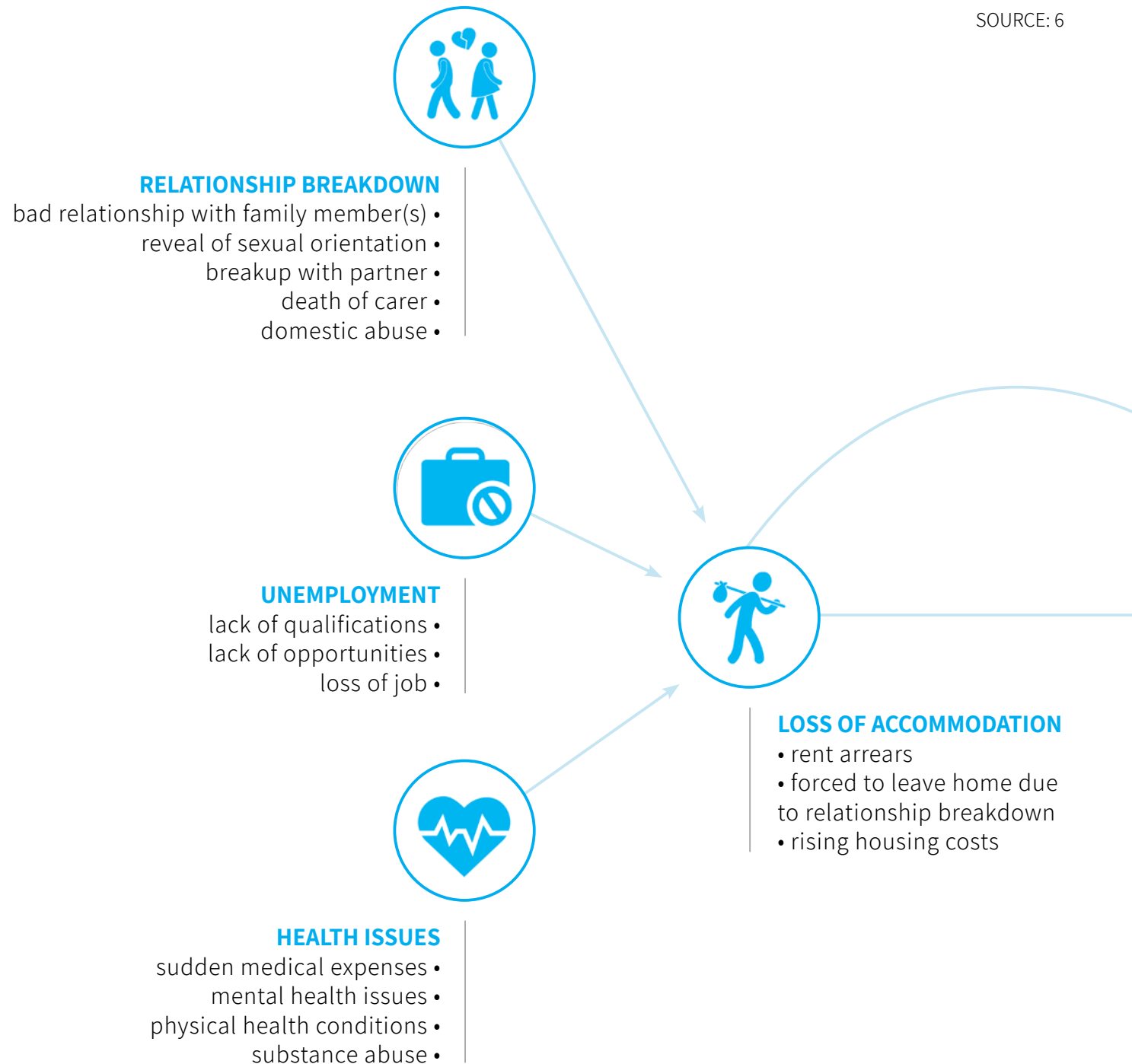


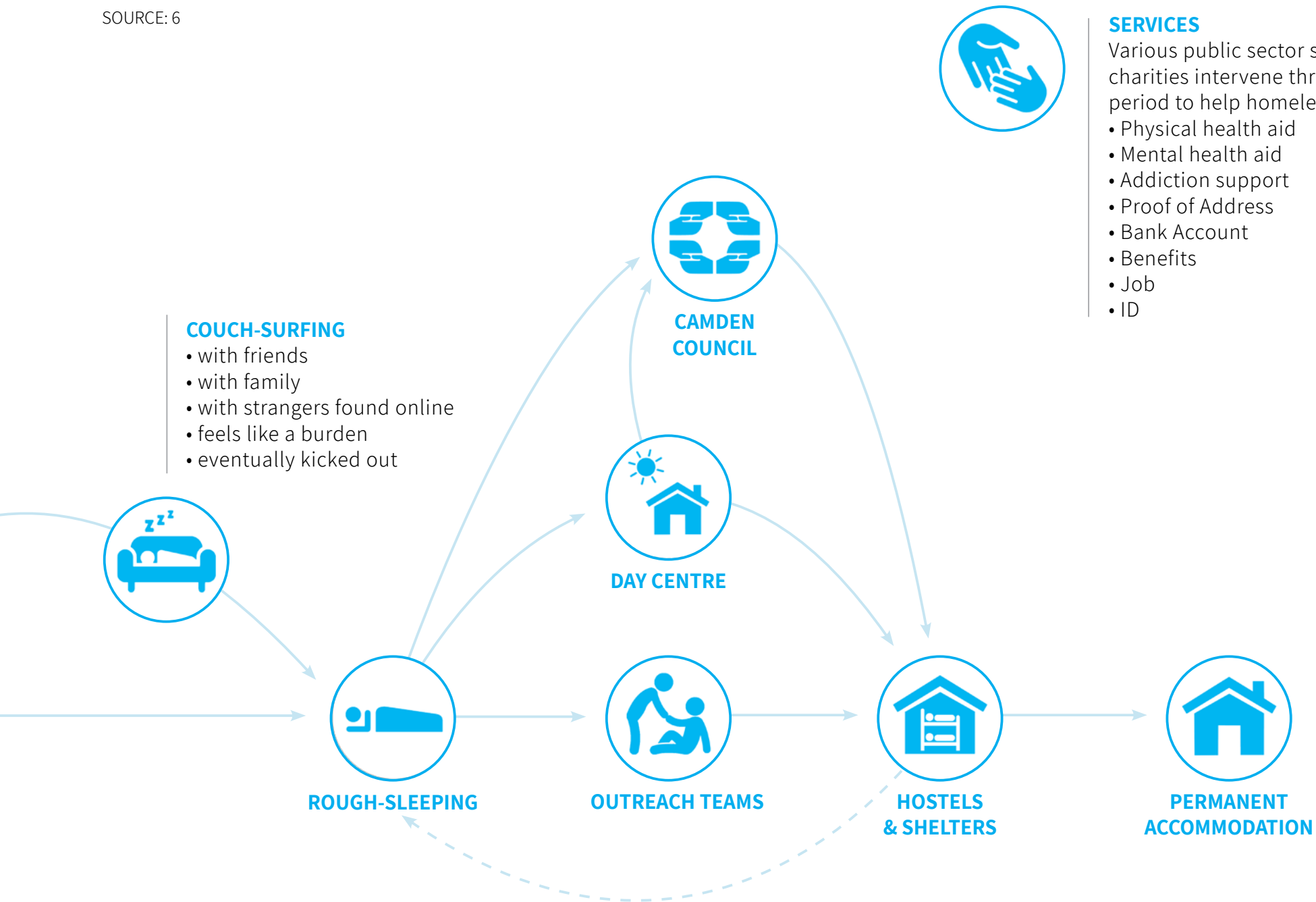
# PATHWAYS IN AND OUT OF HOMELESSNESS

Two of the common reasons why people become homeless are relationship breakdown and loss of job.<sup>1</sup> Things then quickly spiral out of control, as people are forced to leave their homes.<sup>2</sup> But living on the streets isn't just about not having a home, it's a way of life.<sup>3</sup> People can continue to spend time on the streets despite living in a hostel or supported accommodation. Changing lifestyles and behaviours is difficult, and it prevents people from escaping homelessness.<sup>3</sup>

Losing a home can happen so easily and quickly but getting one back is an incredibly hard and long process. Even once people are no longer homeless, they can fall back into homelessness very quickly. Going back to a previous way of living can be difficult because it reminds people of what they have lost. Also, when people are housed far from their community, they can feel lonely and want to go back to the streets where they have friends to keep them company.<sup>4</sup> Mental health issues can also lead people back to homelessness, as they can get triggered easily. That's why it is necessary to address the issues that have led a person to live on the streets in the first place.<sup>5</sup>

SOURCE: 6

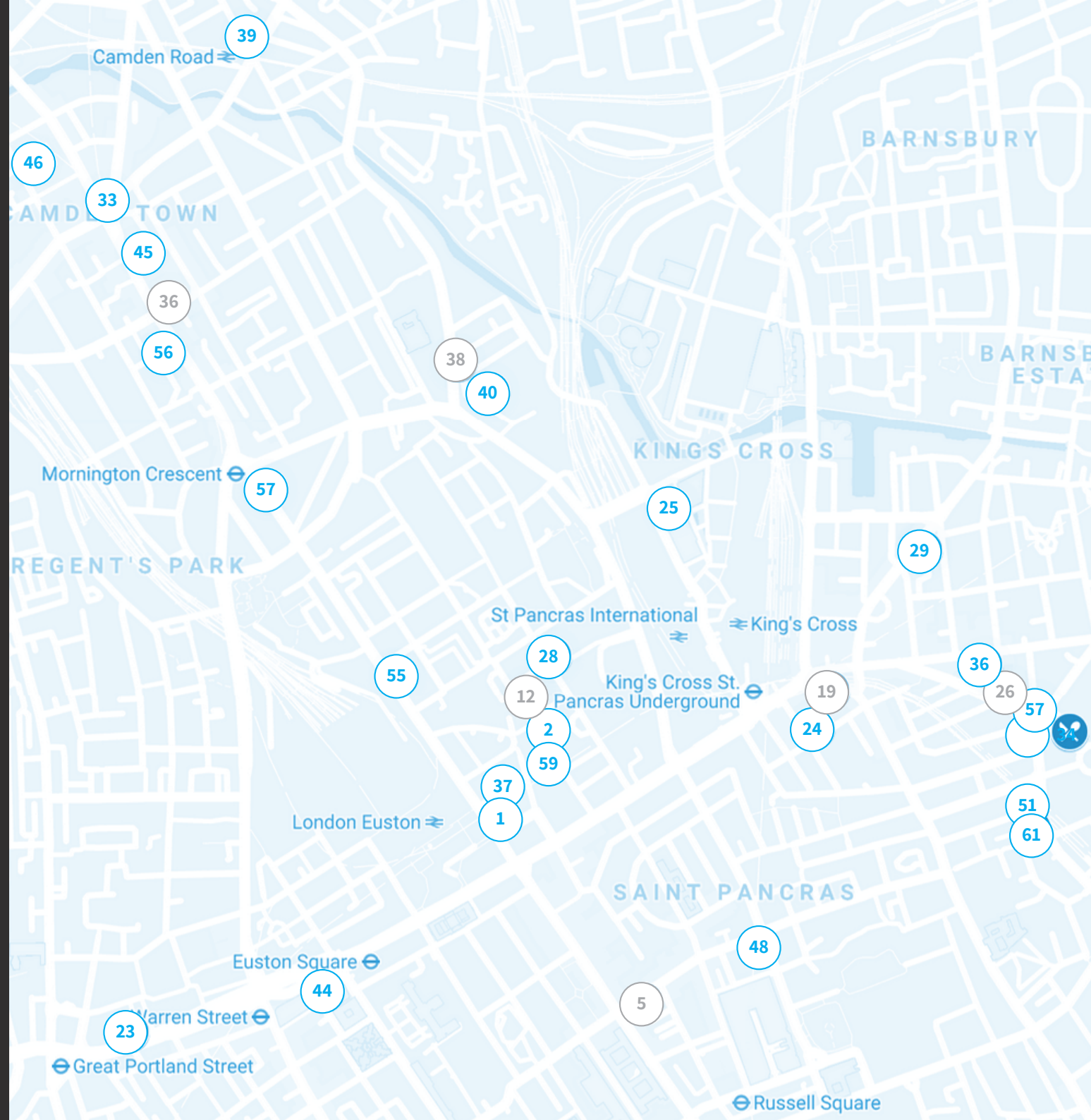




## SERVICES

These pages list some of the services that are available to homeless people in Camden and whether they are for Camden only, London, or the UK. The numbers in blue refer to Camden only services, whereas the grey numbers refer to London or UK wide services.

To see the map online go to:  
<http://bit.ly/homelessmaps>  
 For more information on services go to:  
[www.homeless.org.uk](http://www.homeless.org.uk)



## CHARITIES

1

### **C4WS HOMELESS PROJECT**

The C4WS provides cold weather shelter for homeless people. Thirteen churches in Camden take it in turns to accommodate up to sixteen homeless adults during winter nights.

2

### **CAMDEN LGBT FORUM**

Camden LGBT Forum holds a meeting every month to ensure that the rights and interests of LGBT people are represented in Camden through advocacy, schools, policy, crime analysis, training registrars and social landlords, and raising awareness.

3

### **CENTREPOINT**

Centrepoint help homeless young people by giving them the practical and emotional support they need to find a job and live independently.

4

### **CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY**

CAP is a Christian organisation offering debt counselling for people in financial difficulty.

5

### **CLINKS**

Clinks supports, promotes and represents voluntary organizations working with people in the criminal justice system and their families.

6

### **CRISIS UK**

Crisis supports people out of homelessness through education, training and support with housing, employment and health. They offer one to one support, advice and courses for homeless people.

7

### **DEPAUL UK**

Depaul UK empowers young people experiencing homelessness. They provide emergency accommodation, supported housing and other services to help people rebuild their lives.

8

### **DOGS TRUST**

Dogs Trust offers free veterinary care for dogs whose owners are homeless.

9

### **HOMELESS LINK**

Homeless Link represents organisations on the frontline of homelessness and campaigns on their behalf.

### **STREETLINK**

StreetLink is a website that enables the public to alert local authorities about rough sleepers in their area. This service offers the public a means to act when they see someone sleeping rough and ensure that they are connected to the local services and support available to them.

10

### **HOPE WORLDWIDE UK**

The main focus of Hope Worldwide in the UK is helping homeless people and recovering addicts.

### **TWO STEP**

The Two Step program works with single homeless people who are the lowest priority for local authorities.

11

### **LANKELLY CHASE FOUNDATION**

Lankelly Chase works in partnerships with people across the UK to change the systems that perpetuate severe and multiple disadvantage.

12

### **NEW HORIZON YOUTH CENTRE**

New Horizon Youth Centre supports 16-21 year olds who have no one else to turn to. They provide everything from hot food, showers and laundry to finding them accommodation, training and employment.

13

### **NO SECOND NIGHT OUT**

No Second Night Out (NSNO) focuses on helping those who find themselves rough sleeping on the streets of London for the first time. They provide a rapid response to new rough sleeping and link those who migrate into central London back into services where they have a local connection.

14

### **REFUGEE COUNCIL**

The Refugee Council provide free advice for asylum seekers & refugees on housing, jobs and health. They have also produced a guide to help anyone supporting refugees make homelessness applications to local authorities.

15

### **SAFER LONDON**

Safer London work to prevent and address gang violence, vulnerability and sexual exploitation. They manage the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal, an agreement between local authorities and registered housing providers, which prevents those fleeing violence or abuse from becoming homeless.

16

### **SHELTER**

Shelter helps people struggling with bad housing or homelessness. They provide face-to-face services, online housing advice and legal support.

17

**SINGLE HOMELESS PROJECT**

Single Homeless Project (SHP) works to prevent homelessness and help vulnerable and socially excluded people by providing support and accommodation, promoting wellbeing, developing people's confidence, and being a voice for change.

18

**ST GILES TRUST**

St Giles Trust is a charity helping people facing severe disadvantage for example having a criminal record, homelessness, addictions and gang involvement, to find jobs, homes and the right support they need.

19

**ST MUNGO'S**

St Mungo's provides support to homeless people and ex-offenders by undertaking prevention work, engaging rough sleepers with outreach teams, offering accommodation and training, increasing empathy within communities, and advocating for policy change.

**CHAIN**

CHAIN is a multi-agency database which allows users to share information about work done with rough sleepers and about their needs, ensuring that they receive the most appropriate support and that efforts are not duplicated.

20

**THE PAVEMENT**

The Pavement publishes a magazine/booklet which has details of shelters, food banks, and health services for homeless people. It is intended for a homeless readership.

21

**THE SALVATION ARMY**

The Salvation Army is a Christian charity that offers accommodation, drop-in centres, addiction support, and employment in social enterprises.

22

**UNION CHAPEL'S MARGINS PROJECT**

Margins offers showers, clothes, food, therapy, english classes, advice on housing and benefits, as well as paid positions in their café & office to support people facing homelessness, or in crisis in Islington.

23

**WHHP**

Also known as FERSP (Female Entrenched Rough Sleeper Project), Women's Hidden Homeless Project focuses on building relationships with older isolated female rough sleepers to help them off the streets.

24

**WOMEN@THEWELL**

Women@TheWell provide support to women whose lives are affected by or at risk of being affected by prostitution.

25

**CAMDEN COUNCIL**

Camden Council helps homeless people with temporary and long-term accommodation and supports them with benefits.

26

**SAFER STREETS TEAM**

Safer Streets Team is run by Change, Grow, Live and aims to end street homelessness and reduce street based anti-social behavior and "street activity" such as drug use, drinking, begging, and prostitution.

27

**THAMES REACH**

Thames Reach helps homeless people with accommodation, health, skills, and employment. They also run outreach teams and the only day centre in Camden, Spectrum Day Centre.

28

**THE LIVING CENTRE'S SUNDAY CLUB**

The St Pancras and Somers Town Living Centre in partnership with C4WS invites homeless people to come in and relax on Sundays.

**FOOD**

29

**ALL SAINTS CHURCH**

All Saints Church offers food, social contact and informal advice for people who are homeless.

30

**AMERICAN CHURCH SOUP KITCHEN**

The Soup Kitchen provides free hot meals, clothes, toiletries, and a sense of belonging to the homeless, elderly, lonely and poor.

31

**FOODCYCLE ISLINGTON**

FoodCycle collects surplus fruit and vegetables from supermarkets and local market stalls and turns these ingredients into free three-course meals for people at risk of food poverty and social isolation.

32

**NEXT MEAL**

Next Meal is a website that can direct homeless people to food and support.

33

**STREETS KITCHEN CAMDEN**

Streets Kitchen provide the homeless community with an evening outreach of hot food, bedding, clothes and other essentials.

**PUBLIC SECTOR**

34

**THE KINGS CROSS BAPTIST CHURCH**

The Kings Cross Baptist Church is a drop-in centre that provides breakfast, tea, coffee, conversation, signposting and advice to people who are homeless, jobless or in need.

35

**THE SIMON COMMUNITY**

The Simon Community aims to alleviate isolation by going out to offer a cup of tea, coffee, sandwich or soup, and spend some time talking to rough sleepers.

36

**THE TRUSSELL TRUST FOOD BANK**

The Trussell Trust Food Banks distribute parcels containing three days of nutritionally balanced, non-perishable food to people who were given foodbank vouchers by a referral agency.

37

**EUSTON FOOD BANK**

The Euston Food Bank is one of the Trussell Trust Food Banks.

**HEALTHCARE**

38

**BRITISH RED CROSS**

The British Red Cross offers a range of support services to vulnerable migrants and people in crisis.

39

**CAMDEN COMMUNITY DRUG SERVICE**

Camden Community Drug Service is a free and confidential drug service that provides key work, counselling, groups and complementary therapies for adults in Camden and Kilburn.

40

**CAMDEN AND ISLINGTON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

The Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust provides mental health and substance misuse services.

**FOCUS HOMELESS OUTREACH AND STREET POPULATION**

Focus Homeless Outreach offers assessment, triage, signposting and treatment to street homeless people and homeless people in hostels.

26

**CHANGE, GROW, LIVE**

Change, Grow, Live provides help with health and wellbeing, substance use, mental health, criminal justice, domestic abuse and homelessness to adults, children, young people and families.

41

**LONDON FRIEND**

London Friend's services are developed to improve the health and mental well-being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered people.

42

**ONE DAY AT A TIME**

(Hope Worldwide UK) The ODAAT program helps substance misusers to live in abstinence recovery houses.

43

**PATHWAY**

Pathway is the UK's leading homeless healthcare charity, helping the NHS to create hospital teams to support homeless patients. Each team includes a specialist GP, nurses, allied health professionals, housing experts and ex-homeless care navigators.

44

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE HOSPITAL**

Homeless patients who visit University College Hospital are treated by a dedicated team and receive advice and guidance from a specialist care navigator who used to live on the streets themselves.

**FIND AND TREAT**

The UCLH Find and Treat service is a mobile unit which gives homeless people the opportunity to be screened for tuberculosis.

**DAY CENTRE**

45

**SPECTRUM DAY CENTRE**

The Spectrum Day Centre provides advice around accommodation, drug or alcohol problems, poor mental health and access to education, training, and employment opportunities.

**TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

46

**ARLINGTON**

Arlington is a mixed use homeless hostel with residential rooms and affordable studio flats for tenants who have a community connection to Camden.

47

**CAMDEN HOSTEL PATHWAY SERVICE**

Hostels in Camden have joined together to offer a pathway service that helps people who are homeless to live independently and find work.

48

**CAMBRIA HOUSE**

Cambria House is a Salvation Army hostel that works with the London Borough of Camden to resettle single men experiencing homelessness who are in receipt of benefit, engaging with other services and present a low risk to themselves and others.

19

**ST MUNGO'S HOUSING**

St Mungo's operate a range of accommodation services, from basic shelters or hostels, through to supported and semi-independent housing, to help people at every stage of their recovery from homelessness.

49

**ST MUNGO'S ARGYLE WALK SHELTER**

This shelter has 12 rooms for single homeless people with mental health and alcohol or drug issues.

50

**ST MUNGO'S BIRKENSTREET HOSTEL**

This hostel has 31 rooms for single homeless people, including those who have additional support needs.

51

**SHP - FREDERICK STREET**

This hostel has 17 rooms for 16-21 year old single homeless women and people from minority ethnic groups.

52

**YMCA NORTH LONDON**

YMCA North London runs a hostel for 154 young people aged 16 to 35.

53

**SHELTER FROM THE STORM**

Shelter from the Storm is a completely free emergency night shelter providing bed, dinner and breakfast for 42 homeless people every night of the year.

**HOUSING**

54

**CAMDEN HOUSING ADVICE CENTRE**

The Camden Housing Advice Centre provides a range of housing advice services to tenants and people looking for accommodation including singles and families who are threatened with homelessness.

25

**COUNCIL HOUSING**

Camden Council has a legal duty to offer homeless people accommodation if they are considered as priority need. People can also apply to Council Housing if they lack savings and have lived in Camden for 5 out of the last 7 years.

**HOUSING BENEFIT**

Camden Council allows people to claim housing benefit to help with rent if they are on a low income and pay rent.

55

**ORIGIN HOUSING**

Origin housing is a provider of affordable social housing as well as related care and support services to their residents. Its community development team helps rough sleeping and homelessness people to move to the sustainable accommodation.

**EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING**

56

**JOBCENTRE PLUS**

Jobcentre Plus delivers employment support in the United Kingdom.

57

**SOVA CAMDEN**

Sova helps children and adults gain new skills, find a job, or return to education and training.

58

**SOMERS TOWN JOB HUB**

The Job Hub provides advice and help with training and employment to the community of Somers Town and Camden.

59

**CRÊPE UP**

New Horizon Youth Centre runs an initiative that gives young homeless people the opportunity to learn to make and sell crepes.

60

**EMMAUS**

Emmaus supports people to work their way out of homelessness, providing meaningful work as well as a stable home for as long as someone needs it.

61

**FAT MACY'S**

Fat Macy's trains young Londoners living in hostels to become chefs and serve food at supper clubs, events and offices

62

**THE BIG ISSUE GROUP**

The Big Issue offers people facing poverty and exclusion the opportunity to earn their own money by becoming newspaper vendors.

## COMPANIES

63

### INLINK

Inlink is a communications service that replaces payphones and allows people to call for free, charge their phones, and find information from Camden Council regarding benefits, housing etc.

## LINK TO ONLINE LIST

[HTTP://BIT.LY/HOMELESSMAPS](http://bit.ly/homelessmaps)

# ROUGH SLEEPERS PERSPECTIVES

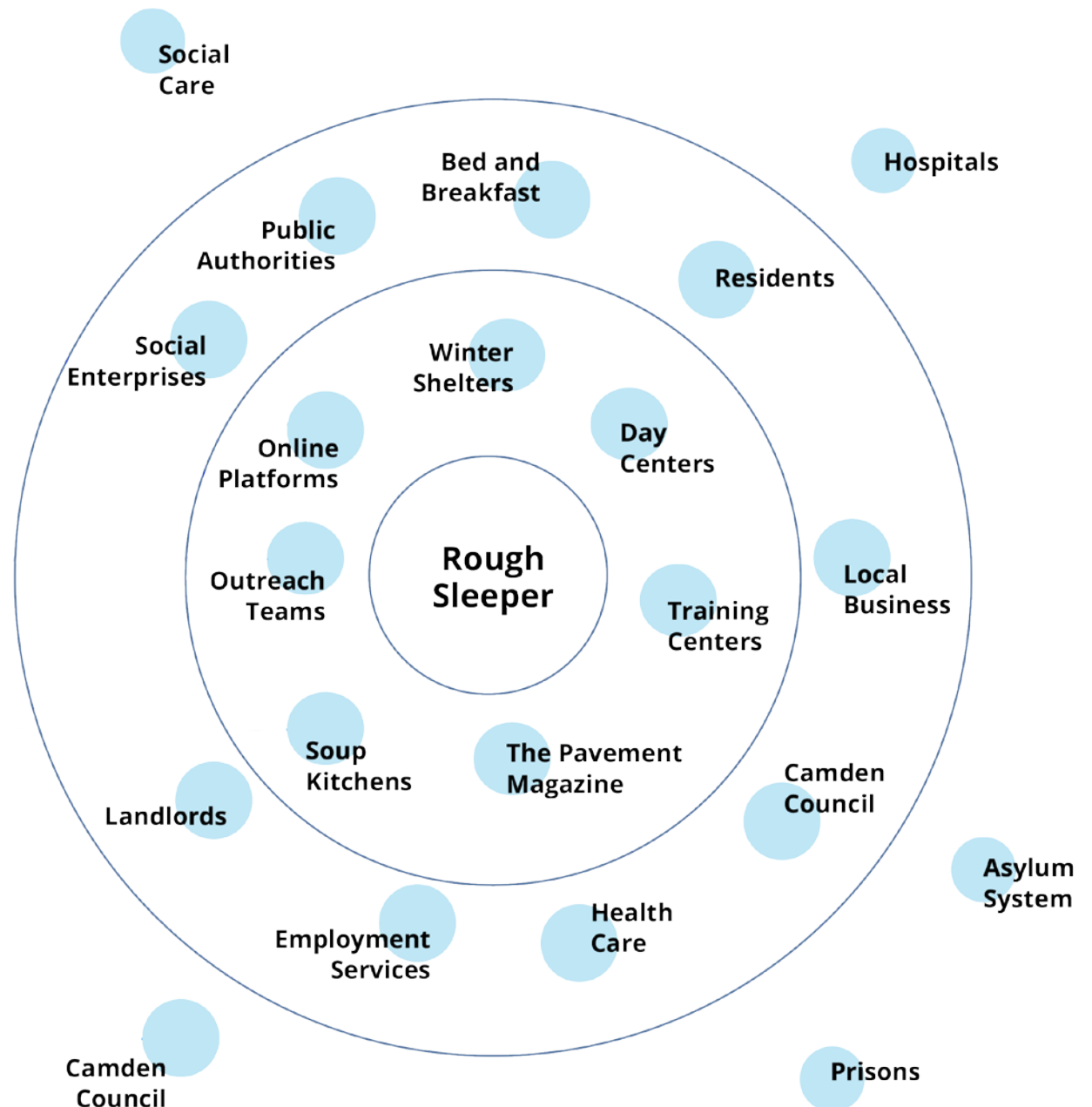
The Stakeholder Map shows the different services and service providers that rough sleepers interact with and how likely they are to do so.

The inner ring contains services that rough sleepers connect with most frequently. The further out the services are positioned on the map the less frequently rough sleepers connect with them.<sup>1</sup>

The following illustration clusters rough sleepers' perspectives on those services. It shows the strengths and weaknesses of each type of service as experienced by rough sleepers.<sup>2</sup>

## STAKEHOLDER MAP

SOURCE: 7





## OUTREACH

- Platform for public participation
- Refer rough sleepers to services
- Give hope
- Feared by non-uk nationals because of deportation. Also, feared by those that do not wish to be 'reconnected' to their 'place of local connection' as this can mean being sent back to a place they fled from.
- Takes a long time to follow-up on reports of spotted rough sleepers. Outreach must engage a person whilst sleeping rough to offer support but some rough sleepers report that they are moved on before outreach can connect with them.
- Long, complicated and decentralized process



## FOSTER CARE

- Quality education and support
- Support stops at 18
- Deportation of non-uk nationals at the age of 18
- Lack of independent living education



## POLICE AND SECURITY

- Provide information on services
- Report rough sleepers to outreach teams. This is a problem for those that do not wish to be 'reconnected' to their 'place of local connection' where they are registered to receive support services.
- Remove rough sleepers



## COUNCIL

- Fund statutory services
- Power to create change
- Distrusted linked to fear of 'reconnection'
- Strict criteria for benefits
- Less support for LGBTQ, mental disabilities and non-uk nationals
- Less support for grassroots initiatives
- Lack of financial support for rough sleeper entrepreneurship



## BIG CHARITIES

- Trusted by the public
- Access to volunteers and donations
- Thematic expertise
- Good Christmas services
- Less support for people in "the back of the queue"
- Strict criteria of entry
- Complicated process
- Disappointment and distrust from rough sleepers
- Transparency
- Impersonal relationships with rough sleepers



## SOUP KITCHENS

- Food
- Community
- Social Connection
- Safe space
- Warmth
- Advice
- Open door
- No questions asked
- Genuine relationships
- Opening hours
- Distances between soup kitchens
- Unavailable volunteers



## HOSPITALS

- Bed
- Release rough sleepers with disabilities to the streets
- Prioritize healthcare for rough sleeper's that pose a danger to the public
- Lack of healthcare for persons with minor mental/health issues
- Need permanent address to register with GP

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

SOURCE: 8

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

SOURCE: 8



### SHELTERS AND HOSTELS

- Roof and bed
  - Meals
  - Warmth
- Fees
  - Don't inform rough sleepers about rights
  - Low standards
  - Safety issues
  - Availability
  - Opening hours
  - Strict rules
  - Strict entry criteria
  - Non-segregated
  - Short term solution
  - Need referral
  - Blacklist rough sleepers who refuse shelter or who commit arson



### BACKPACKER HOSTELS

- High standards
  - Safety
  - Breakfast
- Expensive
  - Availability



### LANDLORDS

- Provide accommodation services for local councils
- High rent
  - Eviction
  - Request high deposits
  - Contracts don't protect renters



### COUCH-SURFING

- Building relationships
  - Access to showers
- Personal safety
  - Expectations of pay (money, drugs, sex)
  - Not considered a rough sleeper by government

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# PERSONAS

This section displays personas representing some of the homeless people students interacted with. These personas characterise some of the people we are likely to find on the streets or couch-surfing. Their journeys into homelessness are visualised to create a better understanding of who these people are and the difficulties they faced that led them to sleep rough. This isn't however, an exhaustive list of homeless people. These personas are limited to the accounts of rough sleepers that have engaged with the researchers or have been described by service providers.



# PERSONAS

The following pages describe their journey and the reasons they became homeless, as well as the individual struggles they face as they try to rebuild their lives.



## CARE LEAVER

Young people who age out of foster care are at high risk of becoming homeless.<sup>1</sup> In fact, according to a Crisis report, a quarter of homeless people have been in foster care. They are forced to live independently at a younger age than most people. And often lack the emotional and practical support to do so. Young people often choose to sleep out of sight for their own safety, meaning that they are unlikely to be picked up by outreach teams.<sup>2</sup>



## YOUNG SOFA-SURFER

Young people can end up homeless after feeling from or being forced out of their family home. Causes can include family break up, lack of acceptance of a young person's sexuality or gender, physical or mental abuse. Young people often don't identify as homeless, which keeps them from accessing the services that are available to them. After being kicked out of their family home, they try to maintain normalcy through couch-surfing. But this puts them in a vulnerable position.<sup>3</sup>



## HOSTEL RESIDENT

Some rough sleepers in their 30's are motivated to get a job and a home, but financial struggles make it difficult for them to leave hostels. They express the need for help with budgeting. The hostel environment and the other residents can be difficult to live with.<sup>4</sup>



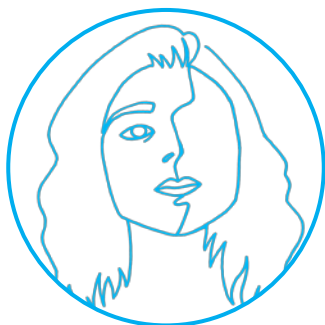
## ENTRENCHED ROUGH SLEEPER

After spending a while being homeless, people lose the hope or desire to leave the streets.<sup>5</sup> Some rough sleepers also become dependent on drugs and alcohol. People who have been living on the streets for a long time will often continue to go back, even if they are currently in a hostel. People get very used to their on street community and find it difficult to change their situation.<sup>6</sup>



## REFUGEE OR ASYLUM SEEKER

Refugees can be scared of service providers because they think they are linked to immigration and will deport them.<sup>9</sup> Asylum seekers in foster care can be deported when they reach 18 years of age. For this reason, many run away before then. This is difficult for both foster families who have gotten attached to them, and young asylum seekers who are left unsupported.<sup>10</sup>



## ABUSE SURVIVOR

Women often become homeless due to physical, sexual and emotional domestic abuse. They often have mental health issues resulting from these experiences. Women are more likely than men to use couch-surfing as a mechanism to not be on the streets often involving sexual exchange and financial exploitation.<sup>7</sup>



## IMMIGRANT

EU nationals are at greater risk of becoming homeless because they cannot claim housing benefits unless they meet specific employment criteria. And it's very difficult for non-EU citizens to get a job or a home. It is harder for immigrants to rebuild their lives without family and friends nearby, or a good understanding of the language.<sup>11</sup> Immigrants generally have no recourse to public funds. They can still access shelters and soup kitchens but will probably be 'reconnected' with services in their country of origin.<sup>9</sup>



## OLDER ROUGH SLEEPER

Older people can have lived on the streets for a long time, or might have become homeless recently because of financial struggles. They are more vulnerable to these harsh living conditions because of their age, but services are often not specialised enough to meet their needs.<sup>8</sup>



## EX-PRISONER

Many offenders are given short sentences for minor crimes like theft or anti-social behavior. But these jail sentences cause people to lose their jobs, homes, and contact with children.<sup>12</sup> A lot of inmates have nowhere to go once they are released from prison and end up on the streets. Without healthcare, employment or mental health support, they are likely to re-offend.<sup>13</sup> Some people even choose to go back to prison to access support services and a place to sleep

## CARE LEAVER

Around 8,500 16-to-18-year-olds leave care every year, according to a Shelter report. Children often enter the care system as a result of the breakdown of their birth family. Some will have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or neglect. For this reason, care leavers often lack the emotional and practical support from families that other young people can rely on.<sup>14</sup> A Centrepont report reveals that care leavers have to learn to live independently at a younger age than most other young people, and are often unprepared for the difficulties they will face. Some have no clear understanding of what it means to sustain a tenancy, pay rent, manage utility bills or apply for benefits. Care-leavers might not access Council accommodation for various reasons, and finding a private tenancy can be a struggle. Many landlords will refuse to rent to care-leavers, especially if they've been to prison. And even if they do find a tenancy, they may not have enough savings to pay a deposit and the first months rent upfront.<sup>15</sup> Because of this difficult transition into adulthood, Care leavers are much less likely than their peers to be in education, employment or training.<sup>14</sup>

### KEY



Pathway



Possible Route

At least 1 in 4 of all rough sleepers have been in care.

(Crisis, 2017)

“ Child exploitation is defined up until 18, once they're 18, it might be seen as prostitution. ”

(Service Provider)

“ I remember that in a hostel specifically for women involved in prostitution, at one point every single woman in the hostel had been in local authority care. There's a real failing here. ”

(Service Provider)

“ I was turfed out on my 18th birthday. I got woken up at nine o'clock, and they said 'you can't stay past nine o'clock'. And then they just kicked me out. ”

(Report Interviewee, Centrepoint)<sup>4</sup>



### CARE LEAVER

Ellie was removed from her family and placed into foster care when she was 12. When she left care at 18, she refused council housing, but was unprepared to live independently. Without a support network to fall back on, she became homeless.



### ABUSIVE HOUSEHOLD

Social services removed her from her birth family because she was being abused and neglected.



### FOSTER CARE

She stayed in foster care until she was 18 where she was the victim of further abuse by people inside or outside of the household. She was at risk of:

- going missing
- sexual exploitation
- domestic abuse



### COUNCIL ACCOMMODATION

When she turned 18, the council had a duty to support her until she was 21 by offering her housing. But she refused it because:

- it was inappropriate accommodation
- she wanted to escape the borough in which she was abused
- she didn't want to be in "the system" anymore

From then on, she was considered as "intentionally homeless".



### ROUGH-SLEEPING

She sometimes sleeps rough when she has nowhere else to go.



### COUCH-SURFING

She uses couch-surfing sometimes to have a place to sleep for the night.

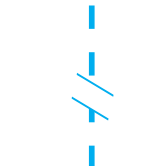


### PRIVATE FLAT

She had, at times, a private rented flat, but at her age, was not ready for independent living. She didn't know how to sustain a tenancy.

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

She formed relationships with perpetrators who consciously target vulnerable care-leavers by waiting outside of hostels or substance misuse centres. Her sexual exploitation, which was considered as prostitution, also led her into the criminal justice system.



### ROUGH-SLEEPING

She sometimes sleeps rough when she has nowhere else to go.



### COUCH-SURFING

She uses couch-surfing sometimes to have a place to sleep for the night.



### PRIVATE FLAT

She had, at times, a private rented flat, but at her age, was not ready for independent living. She didn't know how to sustain a tenancy.

## YOUNG SOFA-SURFER

Service providers struggle to find young homeless people because they are hidden and indistinguishable. According to a Homeless Link report, many young people who are homeless do not approach their local authority for help because they are unaware of their housing rights or have negative expectations of the response they might receive.<sup>17</sup> Students' research also found that young people don't identify as homeless, and don't want to be associated with the stigma of homelessness. Many of them resort to couch-surfing to maintain a semblance of normality. Centrepont reported that 77% of young people in homelessness services had sofa-surfed.<sup>2</sup> These sofa-surfers search for free temporary accommodation using Couchsurfing.com or turn to dating Apps like Tinder or Grinder.<sup>3</sup> This puts young people in a very vulnerable and dangerous position, prone to abuse. Current services have not adapted to the needs and habits of young people. These couch-surfers use their phones to access information. But services aren't available online unless users type the word "homeless" in their search engine. And the amount and complexity of information on homeless services is difficult to navigate.<sup>3</sup>

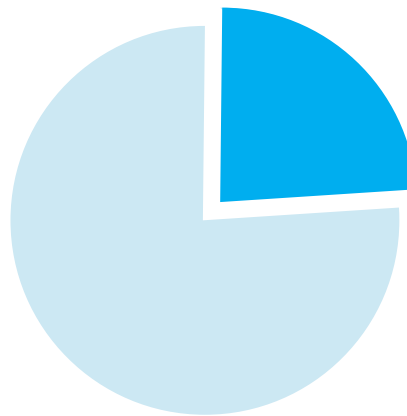
“ Sometimes, sofa surfing makes me depressed, because you always feel like you are under somebody else's control and mercy. ”

(Sofa-surfer)

“ Have you seen any young rough sleepers on the streets? Good luck finding them. ”

(Service Provider)

24% of homeless youth are LGBTQ+ (2015, AKT)



LGBTQ+ homeless youth are highly likely to have experienced familial rejection, abuse and violence. And they are significantly more likely to experience targeted violence, sexual exploitation, substance misuse, and physical and mental health problems than other homeless youth.

### KEY

- Pathway
- - - Possible Route
- - - Opportunity to Help

“ I just changed my profile on Tinder to “looking for a one night stand”, there were so many offers. And then I thought, I don’t need to worry about where to sleep anymore... ”

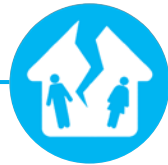


### YOUNG SOFA-SURFER

Alison, 20 years old, is part of the “hidden homeless” because she doesn’t identify as being homeless and doesn’t want the stigma associated with that label.

### SHE WANTS

- anonymity
- independence
- control
- safety
- a sense of normalcy
- to be respected
- to be treated equally



### FORCED OUT

She was forced to leave her family’s house because :

- of her gender identity
- of her sexual orientation
- they have a bad relationship
- she’s scared of being abused



### COUCH-SURFING

She stayed at a friend’s place until:

- she was asked to leave
- she left because she doesn’t want to feel like a burden.



### DOESN’T USE SERVICES

She doesn’t use statutory services because she :

- doesn’t think she is eligible for housing
- feels too intimidated to connect with community services
- wants the freedom to choose where and with who she sleeps
- doesn’t want to be with older homeless people in hostels



### OPPORTUNITY

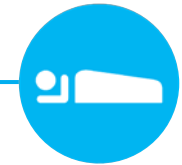
She needs a service :

- that is accessible on a phone
- with easy access to information and services
- that isn’t stigmatizing
- with no waiting time to secure accommodation
- where she can remain anonymous



### DATING APPS

She uses apps like Tinder or Couchsurfing.com because it’s a quick and easy way to find a place to sleep, there aren’t many barriers to registration and there’s a lot of information about the hosts. It’s an issue because it’s short-term, which puts her at risk of ending up on the streets, and it puts her in a vulnerable position where she is at risk of abuse.



### CRITICAL POINT

She travels on the bus at night if she doesn’t find a place to sleep. She’s on the edge of rough-sleeping.

## HOSTEL RESIDENT

In a Homeless Link report, hostels reported facing significant challenges in relation to moving residents on from their services, mostly due to a lack of affordable housing. Some of the other barriers that keep hostel residents from moving on are insufficient social housing, existing rent arrears, or difficulty sustaining past tenancies.<sup>18</sup> A Housing Committee report states that the lack of move-on accommodation means that hostel residents can remain in emergency provision for some time, risking the institutionalisation this may cause and hampering their progress towards independent living. On average, accommodation projects in England report that one third of their clients are ready to move on but have been unable to do so, and of these, one fifth have been waiting for more than six months.<sup>19</sup> This situation can be very difficult for hostel residents who find the environment very uncomfortable. Many people dislike the chaos of hostels, as well as the use of drugs and alcohol by other residents.<sup>4-20</sup>

“ People seem to get stuck in the system indefinitely. ”

(Vendor, Big Issue website)

“ I’d like to be more conscious of money, find a job, generate money so I could save... ”

(Hostel Resident)

### KEY

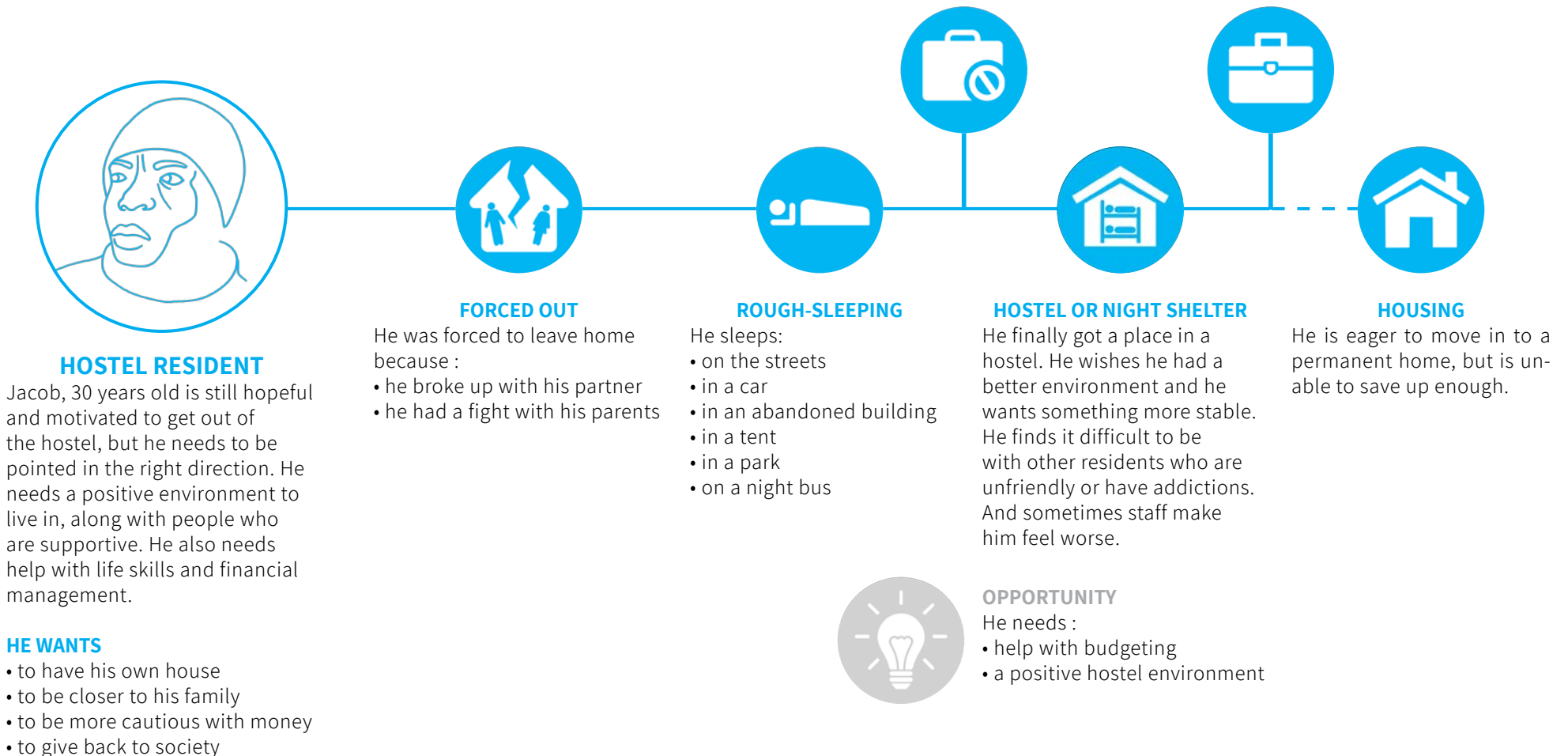


Pathway



Possible Route

“ I’d really like to move forward with my life and move on from the hostel. It’s not the greatest place to be, and sometimes being here gets me down. ”



## ABUSE SURVIVOR

The rise in female homelessness in Camden in recent years is very worrisome because of how vulnerable women are to becoming involved in prostitution.<sup>21</sup> Women often become homeless due to physical, sexual and emotional domestic abuse.<sup>16-22</sup> Some have also experienced abuse during their childhood. Women struggle to escape abusive relationships and once they do, their children are removed from their care in some cases. This leads to worsening mental health conditions, as mothers tend to feel ashamed and guilty for not being able to take care of their children.<sup>22-23</sup> They have to cope with the loss of their children with little emotional support and sometimes turn to drugs or alcohol in order to self medicate.<sup>22</sup> There is a lack of specialist services for women, and lack of understanding around how women are more marginalized by heteronormative, male focused services.<sup>7-16-24</sup> Women are more likely than men to use couch-surfing as a mechanism to not be on the streets often involving sexual exchange and financial exploitation.<sup>24</sup>

“Sex working is very hidden at the moment, it's mainly online. They're using apps.”

(Service Provider)

Half of St Mungo's female clients experienced domestic violence. 79% of mothers have had their children taken into care or adopted. More than a third have been involved in prostitution.

(2012 Report, St Mungo's)

## KEY

- Pathway
- Possible Route



## OPPORTUNITY

She needs a women's hostel that is run like an independent hotel. She also needs a holistic service to respond to her mental health needs (including trauma due to abuse or loss of children) and substance abuse.

## DOESN'T USE SERVICES

She doesn't use statutory services because she :

- is apprehensive of interacting with male staff or security guards
- feels the need to hide because of her past experiences

## ABUSIVE HOUSEHOLD

She went back home several times and continued to be abused.

## LOST CUSTODY OF CHILDREN

She lost custody of her children because she didn't protect them or because she's homeless.

## HOTEL

She stays at hotels.

## PRISON

She committed small crimes to enter prison to feel safer. Upon release she had nowhere to go.

## ABUSE SURVIVOR

Karen, 35 years old, ran away from an abusive relationship and finds it difficult to engage with services. She is not trying to change her current situation.

## SHE WANTS

- a female only service provider
- access to female staff
- to see her children

## RAN AWAY

She ran away from home to escape domestic abuse.

## SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

She is vulnerable to sexual exploitation because :

- she gets abused by other rough sleepers
- she gets offered a bed for the night in exchange for sex

## OLDER ROUGH SLEEPER

The number of people over the age of 60 that registered with local councils as homeless doubled from 2009 to 2016.<sup>25</sup> Some have been homeless for years and have become elderly while homeless, while others became homeless for the first time in later life. Older homeless people are especially vulnerable because of issues normally linked to old age like physical disability, sensory impairment, mental ill-health, dementia and isolation. And for many, their vulnerability is made greater by other issues, including substance abuse, addiction, learning disability, elder abuse and premature ageing for those who have been long term homeless. Long-term or repeated homelessness is particularly damaging to the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of older people. Too often, older homeless people's needs are marginalised and fall between the gaps. Older persons services are often unaware that their users do not have adequate housing while homelessness services lack specialized support for older people. Many older homeless people die before their needs are met.<sup>8</sup>

“ Some will never admit that they are homeless, which is an issue when you're trying to help somebody. ”

(Service Provider)

“ People find that they cannot jump through the hoops of benefits application. ”

(Service Provider)

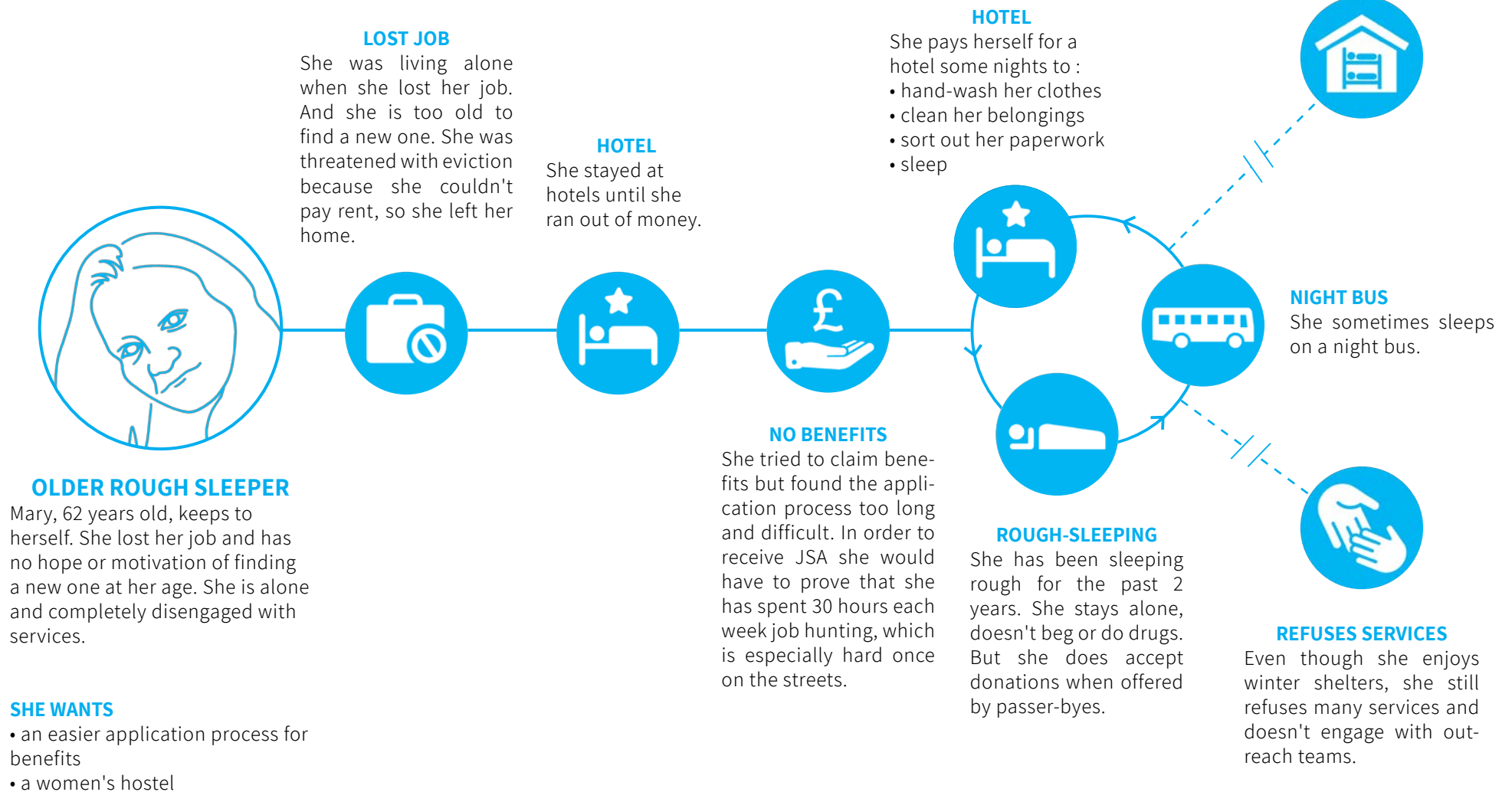
## KEY

- Pathway
- Possible Route

## DOESN'T GO TO HOSTELS

She doesn't go to homeless hostels because she doesn't want to :

- interact with people in the queue
- share a kitchen or a washing facility
- be told by younger people what to do



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# IMPACTING FACTORS

This section outlines the factors that often contribute to people becoming homeless.

The challenges noted here were mentioned repeatedly by different interviewees.

The following pages explore how mental health, dependencies, skills, stigma, communication, and bureaucracy can all be barriers to breaking the cycle of homelessness.



## MENTAL WELLBEING & DEPENDENCIES

Mental health, motivation and substance abuse can be big barriers to helping people off the streets. A report for Crisis found that homeless people were nearly twice as likely to have experienced mental health problems than the general population.<sup>1</sup> Addiction and poor mental health are both a cause and consequence of homelessness.<sup>2-3-4-5</sup> Rough sleepers addictions are exacerbated by the stresses associated with being homeless.<sup>2</sup> Substance abuse increases the longer people have been homeless.<sup>5</sup> Drugs and alcohol are often used as a coping mechanism by those who are traumatised, either by homelessness or past experiences.<sup>3-4-6</sup> According to a Homeless Link study, 44% of those with a mental health problem said they self-medicate with drugs or alcohol.<sup>6</sup> Of course not every homeless person has problems with drug or alcohol abuse. Some avoid drugs and alcohol altogether.<sup>3-4</sup>

### HOPELESSNESS

Many people who become homeless have faced some kind of trauma, relationship breakup or substance misuse, which makes them less likely to face and overcome challenges.<sup>7</sup> Rough sleepers interviewed stated that their experiences took a toll on their mental wellbeing, pushing some to question the relevance of their existence. They often had low expectations of themselves and little confidence to move on from their circumstances. The isolation of living on the streets worsens their mental health as well. Homeless people who have lost hope are unable to plan their future. Service providers refer to entrenched rough sleepers who are in this state of mind as living in "survivor mode".

### MOTIVATION

A lot of ex-rough sleepers and service providers seem to agree that in order for people to get off the streets, they need to start to want to change themselves. That isn't to say, they don't need help from services to succeed, but a certain amount of motivation and dedication is necessary to follow through. People who aren't ready, tend to drop out of services they had started engaging with.<sup>8</sup> The desire for change is a significant first step in the process of rebuilding a life. People cannot be forced off the streets, they need to find the mental will to improve their situation.<sup>9</sup> Rough sleepers might want to change their situation because they feel that they have hit rock bottom or became afraid of putting their life at risk.<sup>10</sup> Service providers understand that they can't run people's lives, but they can only give them the tools to take control themselves.<sup>11</sup>

### DEPENDENCIES

Some people became homeless because of a previous dependency to drugs, alcohol, or gambling, which led to them being kicked out or losing their job and tenancy. Others became homeless because of the substance abuse of a partner or family member. People who become homeless who have never had issues with substance abuse can start taking drugs or drinking alcohol for the first time within a matter of weeks. Substance abuse is often used as a way to cope with the current situation or escape a traumatic past. People on the streets will use drugs to forget something that happened to them or drink to stay warm.

### RECOVERY

Even though some people who sleep rough want to change their situation, it becomes very difficult for them to put these thoughts into actions. Their entrenched lifestyles and many other barriers such as mental health, drug and alcohol addictions keep them from doing so.

“ Some people will tell us, I'm not ready. Others will say I've had enough, please help me, I need to change. ”

(Service Provider)

## SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT

For many, employment is a route out of homelessness. Working provides a vital boost to a person's sense of self-esteem and self-respect. Unemployment, on the other hand, exacerbates social exclusion and perpetuates physical and mental health problems. Many people experiencing homelessness want to work but find it difficult to hold down a job without a stable roof over their heads. St Mungo's carried out a survey of its hostel residents, and found that 80% said that getting back to work was one of their goals. But the same study found that in these hostels, the employment rate was only 4%. Additionally, 15% of their residents had never worked; and two thirds had been out of work for five years or more. Massive welfare to work programmes, which cater for the majority, lack the necessary flexibility to help homeless people who need more support. Many homeless people aren't ready to work, in terms of skills, health, experience, confidence and motivation. But job centres don't do an assessment of how 'job-ready' individuals are. Over half of St Mungo's clients cannot read and write to a functional level, and 50% say their lack of self confidence is holding them back.<sup>13</sup>

## READINESS

Putting people forwards for jobs or encouraging people to constantly apply for jobs, when they are going to keep being knocked back, time after time, does not benefit them. This gives people low self esteem and they start thinking that they are unemployable.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, the Somers Town Job Hub looks to understand the individual needs of every person they work with to determine whether getting a job is best for their current situation.

## TRAINING

People who have been homeless often lack life-skills, confidence and the ability to structure their day. They need training to acquire basic habits as well as soft and hard skills.

## PRACTICAL LEARNING

Just giving people information doesn't mean they are going to use it. Service providers have stressed the importance of making learning sessions as practical as possible. For example staff could help service users search for a house by having them look through real tenancy agreements to understand which ones should be avoided.<sup>15</sup>

## COMPETITION

Not having a fixed address can deter employers from hiring homeless people, especially within London where many applicants are competing for the same job.

“ Most of the rough sleepers are very keen to find a job and make a living by themselves, they don't want to be dependent on others or become others' burden. ”

(Service Provider)

## RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship breakdown is one of the major causes of losing one's home. And rebuilding lives relies on building a social network of healthy relationships. A Homeless Link report on social networks in hostels found that residents had diverse forms of practical and emotional support that were often reciprocal with other residents. Homeless people also maintained their social networks online with people who weren't homeless. These connections helped people overcome isolation and loneliness. They found however, that they could have difficult relationships with their families due to relationship breakdowns, bereavements, drinking and drug use, mental health problems and lack of trust, which would hinder people's progress.<sup>16</sup>

“ It’s like a little family, a homeless family, we look after each other. ”

(Homeless Person)

“ For people to trust you, you need to try and understand them, listen to them without judging or trying to solve their problems. ”

(Service Provider)

“ I believe no case is hopeless. ”

(Service Provider)

## COMMUNITY

The homeless community can be both positive and negative in a person's journey out of homelessness. Friends help each other out, but they also hold each other back unintentionally. People often take on substance abuse when their peers do. And the sense of community makes people want to stay in the same area and situation. Origin Housing has found that supporting a group of friends can be better than one person alone. When friends are housed close to each other, they help each other out. If they are alone, they feel isolated and go back to the streets. The downside of helping a group of friends instead of an individual is that when one person drops out, all of them do.<sup>17</sup>



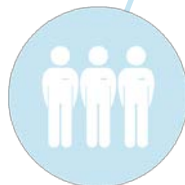
## FAMILY

People can be homeless despite their parents being supportive and helpful.<sup>19</sup> They don't necessarily inform their family to maintain their pride. They also might not want to return to their families because of conflict or abuse. People who are homeless and have children often have their children taken away from them, which is a cause of pain for them.<sup>18</sup> Many homeless people also don't want to be in contact with their children or are not able to, because they are ashamed. They don't want their children to know they are homeless.<sup>10</sup>



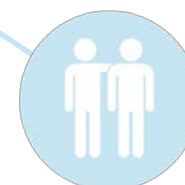
## RESIDENTS

Residents can be prejudiced against rough sleepers and lack empathy towards them. They can even abuse them. But other residents give homeless people spare change, donate to charities, volunteer, or even launch their own grassroots initiatives. Residents also who alert the presence of rough sleepers to outreach teams, whether it is because they are worried about them, or because they are bothered by their anti-social behaviour.<sup>10</sup>



## SERVICE PROVIDERS

Homeless people can be wary of service providers if they've had bad past experiences with others. But by taking the time to get to know each individual, staff can gain their trust. Service providers find it important to understand each person, learn about their skills, their aspirations, and what motivates them. When staff treat rough sleepers with respect it empowers them.



## MENTORS

Mentors are very inspiring for homeless people. Mentorship schemes allow people to witness a peer's success and receive advice on how to improve their own situation. Mentor programs can be difficult to manage though. They come with a lot of ethical and boundary issues. They can go wrong if the relationships aren't monitored closely enough or if the objective isn't clearly established. It can be difficult to match people together since service providers can't know everything about them. Also, peer mentors need more support than a regular staff member, so can be more costly.<sup>15</sup>

# ENGAGEMENT

Many factors keep homeless people from wanting to engage with services. People often won't identify as homeless and will try to stay hidden because of the shame and stigma associated with being homeless.

Other factors that may keep people from getting help are the discomfort felt when engaging with certain services. For example women and LGBT people may feel uncomfortable approaching certain services; whilst some homeless people don't like approaching hostels because of the other residents living there.

This section looks at some of the reasons why homeless people may refuse help or feel uncomfortable with using services.

## SHAME & STIGMA

People are often too ashamed or embarrassed to say that they are homeless or don't identify as such. They distance themselves from engaging with any services that are designed to help homeless people. The feelings of shame perpetuate the issue of hidden homelessness as people fail to talk about their situation or seek help. The Somers Town Job Hub works with many people who are borderline homeless due to situations that are beyond their control, with many disclosing that they are presently staying with friends (sofa surfing). There are also many who will not admit being homeless because of how they feel it may impact on them getting a job. Homeless people fear the discrimination they will face if people know of their situation.<sup>14</sup>

## HIDDEN HOMELESS

Outreach teams have a hard time locating young homeless people on the streets as they are hidden from sight. Young rough sleepers hide to avoid the dangers of the streets. But this keeps services from being able to help them. Women also tend to stay hidden, as they sofa-surf or may become involved in prostitution.

## GENDER AND ORIENTATION

Sometimes the service providers themselves are a barrier. Male security guards or staff for example, can keep women who have been victims of abuse, from wanting to enter a building.<sup>15</sup> Faith-groups can also constitute a barrier for LGBT communities, even if the service is open to all beliefs. Camden Safer Streets Team chose to wear rainbow lanyards to make rough sleepers they approach more comfortable and more likely to disclose their gender identity or orientation.<sup>10</sup>

## HOSTELS

There are many reasons why homeless people can dislike hostels and would rather live on the streets or couch-surf. For one, those with a history of imprisonment don't want to feel stuck in a room. People also tend to dislike other residents, and struggle with their mental health issues or addictions. Young people feel that there is a huge age gap with other residents, as well as completely different life experience from entrenched rough sleepers who are institutionalised. People might also refuse to go to a hostel because they are in conflict with many of the residents there, who they already know.<sup>10</sup> Sofa-surfers refuse to use shelters and hostels because they want to keep the freedom to choose where they sleep and who they sleep with. Sofa surfing provides people with a sense of normality.

## RELOCATION

Since social housing isn't always available within their area, people are sometimes forced to relocate. But this can be challenging as people develop a community and don't want to lose those ties.<sup>17</sup> People can refuse to be relocated, or go back to the streets because they feel lonely.

## ACCESS TO SERVICES

Even when homeless people want to be helped, they may find it challenging. They may for example lack awareness of services open to them, and how to access them.

They also tend to struggle with the complexity of scheduling their lives around opening hours, managing appointments and being referred from one service to another.

If they have a wide array of needs, they also face difficulties getting appropriate help for all of them.

## COMMUNICATION

People are often unaware of services available to them. Homeless people often don't know where to go for help. Some Homeless people don't want to be handed leaflets because they may lose them. When organizations hand homeless people leaflets, it can make them feel like people aren't actually interested in addressing their problems, but rather redirecting them to other organizations.<sup>20</sup> Word of mouth is used a lot within the homeless community. However, methods of communication need to be adapted for young people, who prefer to search for information on their phones. Like all other young people their age, young homeless people live in a digital world; they rely on technology for information and communication. But putting information online isn't necessarily enough. Some websites can be difficult to navigate and too long to read, especially for those who have a short attention span. Also, information tends to be scattered across different websites, which makes it difficult to determine what are the options available to them.<sup>21</sup>

## OPENING HOURS

Homeless people tend to be nocturnal but services are generally open during the day, when they sleep. Rough sleepers avoid sleeping at night because it's cold and dangerous. Services are built in part around the needs of the people who work there. This can be difficult for homeless people when service providers are on holiday. During the time between one service closing and another opening a rough sleeper might have nowhere to go apart from the streets.

## APPOINTMENTS

Appointments can be hard to keep for people who live on the streets. Rough sleepers can struggle to stick to a schedule or take a long time walking from one service to another.

## REFERRALS

Homeless people can feel pushed around because they constantly get referred from one service to another. Most services require people to be referred by another organization, which can limit or complicate people's access to those services. When referring, organizations are often competing with several other referrals for one bed space.

## MULTIPLE NEEDS

Many issues need to be addressed for someone to exit homelessness. These needs require individual attention. It's a problem because it takes homeless people a lot of time to go from one service to the other. People become exhausted from walking long distances.<sup>22</sup> It's difficult for rough sleepers to navigate the system whilst maintaining their street lifestyle. Also, many homeless people have multiple complex needs, but most services aren't built to accommodate all of those needs. On top of that, the amount of support that people receive can make them reliant.<sup>14</sup> The process of rebuilding a stable life is therefore a long one, which can take years.

## LOGGING-IN

A lot of online services require users to own an e-mail account, create an account, fill in forms, or log-in each time they want to access the service. These requirements constitute barriers that keep people from engaging, especially when people prefer to remain anonymous.

## BUREAUCRACY

Eligibility, formality, and the benefit system are all major barriers to rough sleepers improving their situation. In order to access most services, people have to meet a certain set of criteria. The main criteria that keeps homeless people from benefiting from council services is the need for a local connection. People are referred to a different council unless they've lived in the area for at least 6 out of the last 12 months,, are working in the area, or have close family living in the area.<sup>23</sup> This section explores some of these barriers.

Another bureaucratic difficulty homeless people face, is claiming welfare benefits. Rough sleepers may, depending on their circumstances, be able to claim Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), or as it rolls out, Universal Credit. Universal Credit is the UK Government's new benefits system that combines several benefits into one. Despite aiming to simplify the benefits system, charities are concerned that Universal Credit is making life more difficult for homeless people and putting others at risk of losing their home.<sup>24</sup>

## ELIGIBILITY

Homeless people often aren't eligible to access all services. Some organisations restrict their access to people without serious mental health or substance abuse issues for example. This makes it very difficult for homeless people to access services, as many of them have multiple complex needs.<sup>18</sup> But organisations have these requirements because they might not have the necessary expertise to manage all of a homeless person's needs, or depend heavily on volunteers who aren't trained to manage these challenges.<sup>10-25</sup> Some services are also designed to get homeless people a job and a home within a limited time frame, which isn't possible for people with serious mental health or substance abuse issues. When trying to access government services, many people are told that they are intentionally homeless.<sup>26-27</sup> The council determines if people are intentionally homeless by establishing whether they lost their last settled home through no fault of their own. Sadly, this doesn't necessarily take into account the complex reasons that pushed people to leave their home.<sup>26</sup>

## GEOGRAPHIC LIMITATIONS

Councils send people without a 'local connection' back to their home area. But they try to act in unison with other boroughs so they are not just displacing people.<sup>7</sup> Most rough sleepers in central London come from elsewhere in the UK or Europe. But services are only provided to previous residents of the borough, despite homeless people wanting to escape their previous life. Safer London responded to this issue of people moving within London by creating swap schemes between housing organisations of different boroughs, so that women who are fleeing violence can be housed further away from their abuser. People who come from outside of the UK however, have no access to social services. The services that are in place for non Camden residents, are mainly about connecting them back to their home city or country.

## PAPERS

Rough sleepers often don't have any identification documents, because they lost it or it got stolen. This prevents them from having a bank account, which in turn prevents them from getting a job. It is also very difficult for people to find accommodation without any identification documents since landlords are liable for a fine of up to £3000 if they don't check tenants immigration status.<sup>28</sup> Many common services require a physical address, an email or a phone number. But homeless people might not have this. This can keep them from using the Internet in the British Library for example.

## FORMALITY

There is an issue of trust between rough sleepers and public service providers. Some homeless people believe that councils and local authorities feed the stigma that rough sleepers are violent. Despite big organizations offering more comprehensive services, many rough sleepers prefer smaller initiatives. Public services need to ask questions and fill in forms to know what they need to do to help individuals and to show results of who they are helping. They also need to monitor their activity to continue to receive funding. Small initiatives that allow homeless people to remain anonymous are more welcoming. They can also be easier to access because they don't set conditions. By not asking questions, they give people the chance to feel at ease. Some soup kitchens, for example, are open to everyone, not just homeless people, which makes everyone feel like they are being treated equally and with respect. This allows rough sleepers to build real genuine relationships with staff and volunteers.

## FORMS

The necessity to fill in long and complex forms can keep people from accessing services. For example, City Harvest, an organization that distributes surplus food, could cater to far more soup kitchens, if it weren't for their long application form. Some soup kitchens are reticent to commit to a complicated registration process or give up half way through. Referral forms are also an issue. Some homeless people find it too difficult to answer all the questions about their mental state or their addictions because it forces them to relive their traumatic experiences. But organisations need to ask these questions in order to know what kind of help people need.

## FUNDING

Private funding allows independent charities to make free decisions. The “no questions asked policy” of grassroots initiatives makes them accessible to all. Camden Safer Streets Team mentioned that they work differently from other organizations because they are constrained by their funding. Since they have a contractual arrangement with the council they have to show the results of their work according to certain criteria. Independent charities which raise their own money have more freedom.<sup>1</sup>

## UNIVERSAL CREDIT

The transition to the new benefit system, Universal Credit, has caused many people to become homeless, and is making it harder to put an end to homelessness.<sup>9-10</sup> Universal Credit was supposed to simplify the system by merging six separate benefits into one, but many of the service providers who we interviewed called it a “nightmare”.<sup>14-25</sup> This benefit system is very flawed and keeps people from working sometimes. Single mothers, for example, feel like they shouldn't work because they make less money when they do.<sup>14</sup> The new system gives more responsibilities to people which has caused a huge increase in rent arrears, evictions, and use of food banks. But some people are too proud to ask for help from statutory services.<sup>29-30</sup> And once people become homeless, they often don't claim benefits because they need an address to do so. Most people don't know that several services can be used as “care of” address.<sup>8</sup>

## JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE

The immediate ending of a Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) when someone gets a new job, can cause a gap in finances before the first paycheck arrives. At the same time, housing benefits get reduced and the hostel price rises, which leads to financial insecurity. Homeless people often aren't aware that as soon as they get a job, their benefits will be cut, especially younger people because they haven't had these experiences yet.<sup>8</sup> Similar issues occur when people work too many hours. This leads people to start getting into and owing money to their hostel. These challenges can cause service users to fall back into rough sleeping.

“ I got JSA, but it finished because I got a job. Now I have got no money, so I have got to go to food banks. I think they should know that the first-week pay is not going to be in your hand. ”

(Service User)

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# OPPORTUNITIES

This section lists some of the things that seem to help homeless people effectively. Examples of initiatives taken by service providers show how we can overcome some of the previously stated barriers.

2.4

## ACCESSING SERVICES



## APPROACH



### SHARED INFORMATION

Sharing information about work done with rough sleepers and about their needs, helps organisations ensure that people receive the most appropriate support and that efforts are not duplicated. For this reason, St Mungo's created CHAIN, a multi-agency database where organisations can record information about people sleeping rough.<sup>4</sup>

### OUTREACH

Outreach teams can approach hidden homeless by targeting areas where young people stay like side streets and night buses, or reaching out to couch-surfers online. Practices must be updated as patterns in rough sleeping change.<sup>2</sup>

### ACCESS

Services that have low-entry barriers are more likely to be used by homeless people. Low-entry barriers include not asking questions, not limiting access by geographical location or nationality, and being available when rough sleepers are awake.<sup>9</sup>

### COMMUNICATION

Communication is most efficient when it adapts to the users needs. For young people, that means avoiding the stigma of homelessness. For smart-phone users, it means providing more condensed information online.<sup>9</sup> For rough sleepers, it means avoiding an extensive amount of paper, which they won't want to carry around.

### INDIVIDUALITY

Everybody has a slightly different story, so service providers can't have a generic approach. The Somers Town Job Hub, for example, has embraced this by taking the time to get to know the person they are trying to help. Understanding their aspirations, skills, desires and past allows service providers to offer more appropriate training and opportunities.<sup>1</sup> Being humane and flexible is important when dealing with vulnerable people.

### TRUST

Those who are currently homeless or sleeping rough are, unsurprisingly, affected by loneliness. Many feel left out and lose trust in others. Finding services where they feel safe can be a challenge and when those places are not found, that can undermine further attempts to ask for help. This explains why so many service providers insist on the importance of building a relationship of trust with people. Respectful staff earn people's trust by taking the time to get to know and understand each individual.<sup>10-11</sup>

### FAMILIAR ENVIRONMENT

Many small grassroots initiatives like the American Church soup kitchen offer a sense of belonging to its guests. By being open to everyone, anonymous, and welcoming, soup kitchen staff are respected and trusted by rough sleepers. The familial atmosphere allows people to build relationships that can lead rough sleepers to ask for help.<sup>12</sup>

## INTERACTIONS



## EMPLOYMENT



## HOUSING

### COMMUNITY

Some services view the sense of community as a strength to be leveraged. Origin housing has, in the past, brought in homeless friends together, which led to the creation of a self-organising support network. Origin Housing also recognizes the benefit of adding communal spaces, within social housing, so that people can socialise and support each other. We shouldn't just think of what users can take from services but also how they can contribute to the community and feel that they are a part of it.<sup>11</sup>

### MENTORS

Sharing ex-rough sleepers success is very inspiring for others.<sup>10</sup> Making people in the homeless community ambassadors or mentors in befriending schemes gives hope to those who are still struggling.<sup>13-14</sup> The Single Homeless Project, for example, runs a peer mentor scheme, in which volunteers with first-hand experience develop a relationship of trust with mentees. The hostel residents of the North London YMCA elect social representatives to support them.<sup>15</sup> However, mentors don't necessarily need to be ex-rough sleepers. C4WS partners with employees from local businesses to help homeless people with CVs, interviews, skills, and motivation.<sup>14</sup>

### ENGAGEMENT

Some services prefer to ask homeless people to contribute, rather than giving everything out for free. They find that the culture of dependency generated by hand-outs isn't empowering. Making people pay or work for something makes them value their reward more. Centrepoin puts this into practice in their social supermarket, as people pay 3 pounds for 15 items.<sup>16</sup> Hostel residents who volunteer at Fat Macy's accumulate credit, which is paid into a deposit that is used to pay for a private rented accommodation once they have accumulated enough.<sup>15</sup> Trading resources for time spent volunteering is another good way of engaging rough sleepers. City harvest for example gives volunteering opportunities to people who are in need, and compensates them with food.<sup>12</sup>

### TRAINING

Successfully preparing people for work entails building people's confidence and independence, as well as discovering what their current skills and motivations are. Homeless people often also need help with financial and life skills.<sup>1-10</sup>

### WORK

Homeless people have a much higher chance of finding a job when employers don't require a lot of paperwork. Some employers, like Pret, do this by not requesting a proof of address.<sup>1</sup> Paying people weekly instead of monthly, would help people whose Job Seekers Allowance is ending, to make it through the month.<sup>10</sup>

### COMPLEX NEEDS

People facing multiple disadvantage may experience several overlapping problems, such as addiction and mental-health issues. People with these needs tend to fall through the gaps because they struggle to navigate a 'maze' of services that are overly complex. Flic (Fulfilling Lives in Islington and Camden), addresses this by supporting people who have multiple complex needs.<sup>5</sup> The Psychology in Hostels project implements Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) approach that enables high engagement with previously hard to reach homeless clients with multiple complex needs.<sup>6-7</sup>

### GENDERED SERVICES

The necessity for female-only hostels and services was expressed in several interviews.<sup>7-8</sup> St Mungo's North London Women's Hostel is one of the few specialist hostels for women.

### HOUSING

Some services overcome the barrier of local authority boundaries. Safer London, for example, does this by running the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal which forms partnerships with housing organisations from different boroughs, to allow them to rehouse victims of abuse away from their perpetrator. They use a housing exchange model to rehouse people in another borough.<sup>7</sup> Many service providers also mentioned the success of housing first models in other countries, which house homeless people in flats without making them go through emergency accommodation first.

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7. Safer London (2018). Interview in person.
8. Women's Hidden Homeless Project (2018). Interview in person.
9. Ha, Y., Bazian, Y., Gao, C., & Zhu, X. (2019). Young, Homeless & Out of Reach: How to Connect with an Invisible Group. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/homelessdesigns>
10. Blake, A., Yamanaka, A., Kanakia, S., & Ge, Y. (2019). Launch - Rough Sleeping in the Borough of Camden. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/homelessdesigns>
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15. Josefsberg, S., Parekh, A., Hsu, S., & Feng, F. (2019). Revibe. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/homelessdesigns>
16. Gasser, J., Jin, C., Kim, P., & Zhu, J. (2019). Spark - Re-defining Young Rough Sleepers by their Dreams. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/homelessdesigns>

# PROPOSALS

The following pages summarize and explain the 7 service design ideas proposed by students from London College of Communication. Each team of students based their proposal on interviews they held with homeless people and service providers, and developed their concept during co-design workshops with stakeholders. They then validated and improved their final designs by collecting feedback on their prototypes.

The paragraph preceding each proposal describes why the service is necessary and how it works. If you wish to read more information about the projects follow this link: <http://bit.ly/homelessdesign>  
If your organisation seeks to develop or implement one of these concepts contact Sarah Elie MBE, the executive director of Somers Town Community Association: [sarah@somerstown.org.uk](mailto:sarah@somerstown.org.uk)

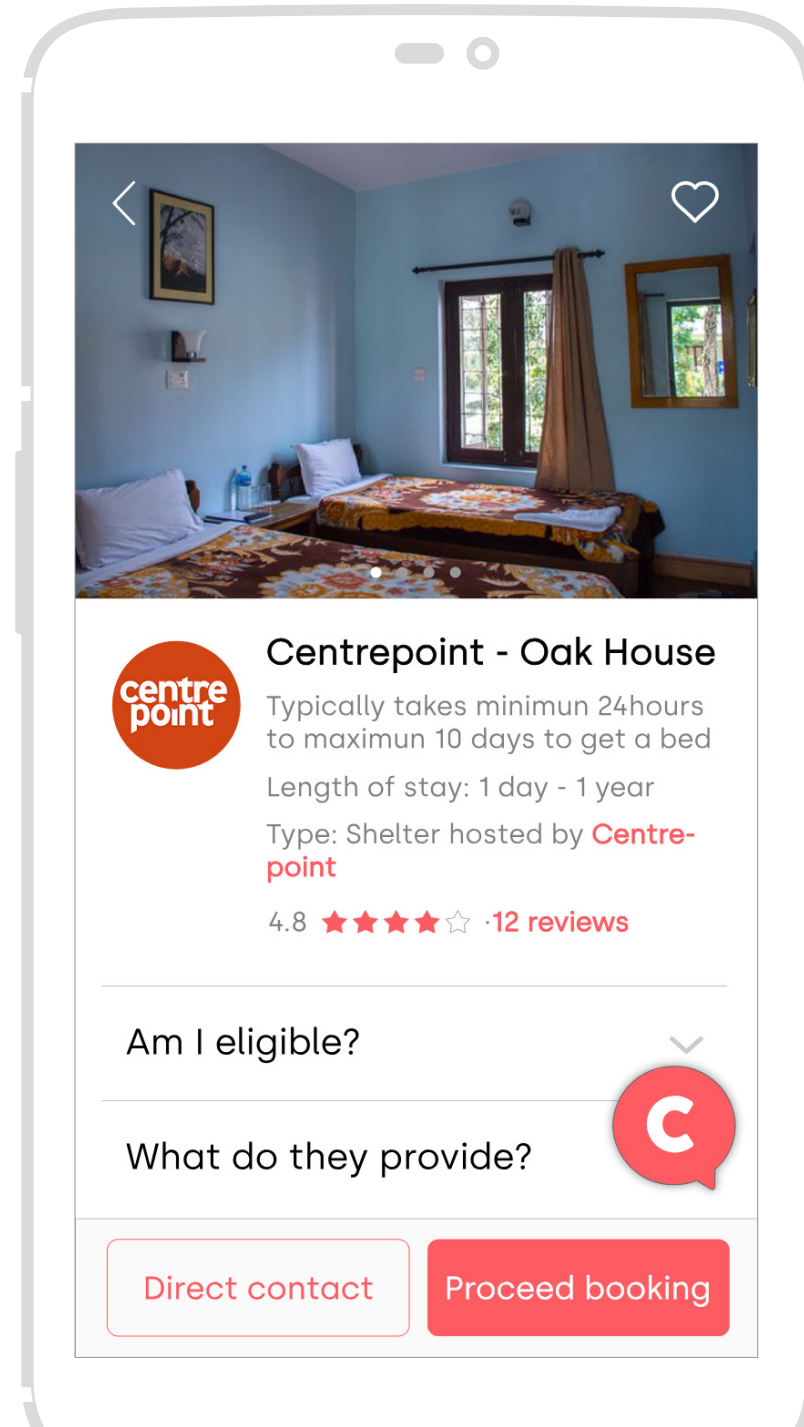




Homeless organisations struggle to find young homeless people and are therefore unable to help them. These young people want a safe place to sleep but they don't seek it through statutory services because they don't know about them and don't identify as homeless. Rather, they resort to dating apps and couch-surfing websites, seeking instancy, independence, control and normalcy. However, these solutions are not sustainable because they are short term, unsafe and may put them at risk of abuse or ending up on the streets. Cody is a low barrier to entry app that encourages young homeless people to seek help from authorized service providers. On this app, young couch-surfers are presented with options of places to sleep, shower, eat, find clothes, etc. These services aren't advertised as homeless services since that term is stigmatizing. Users could have a conversation with a chatbot to determine what type of accommodation or services they would like to access. The chatbot would then propose a couple of options and put the user in touch with homeless outreach teams.

## DESIGNERS

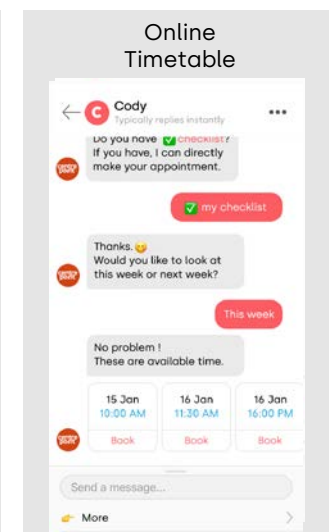
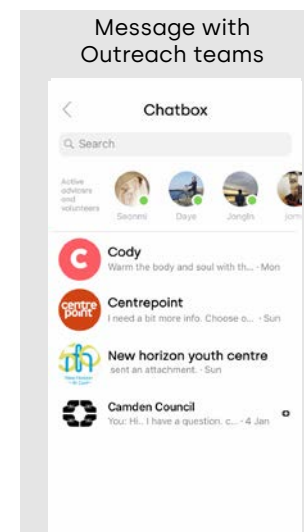
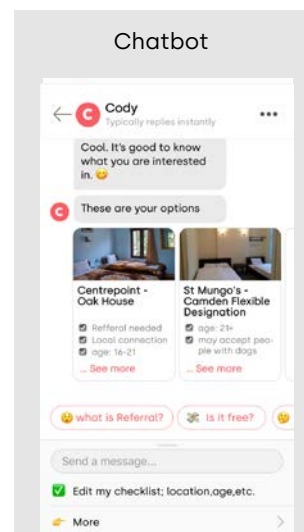
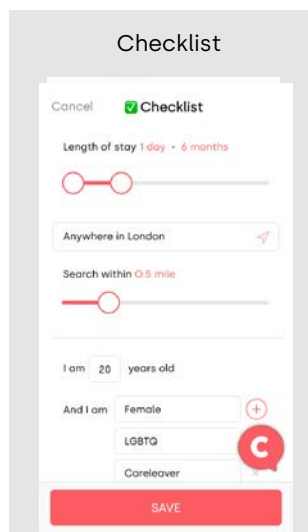
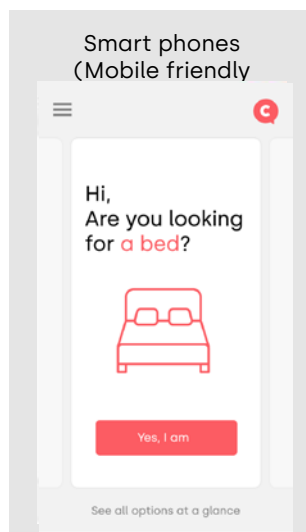
Yoora Ha  
Yasmeen Bazian  
Changyue Gao  
Xiaowen Zhu





## TOUCHPOINTS

Wifi hotspot pop-up in McDonalds, Starbucks, and TFL



Aware of the service

Start to use the platform

Set expectations  
Input basic info

Interact/chat with  
Cody (+visibility)

Get connected

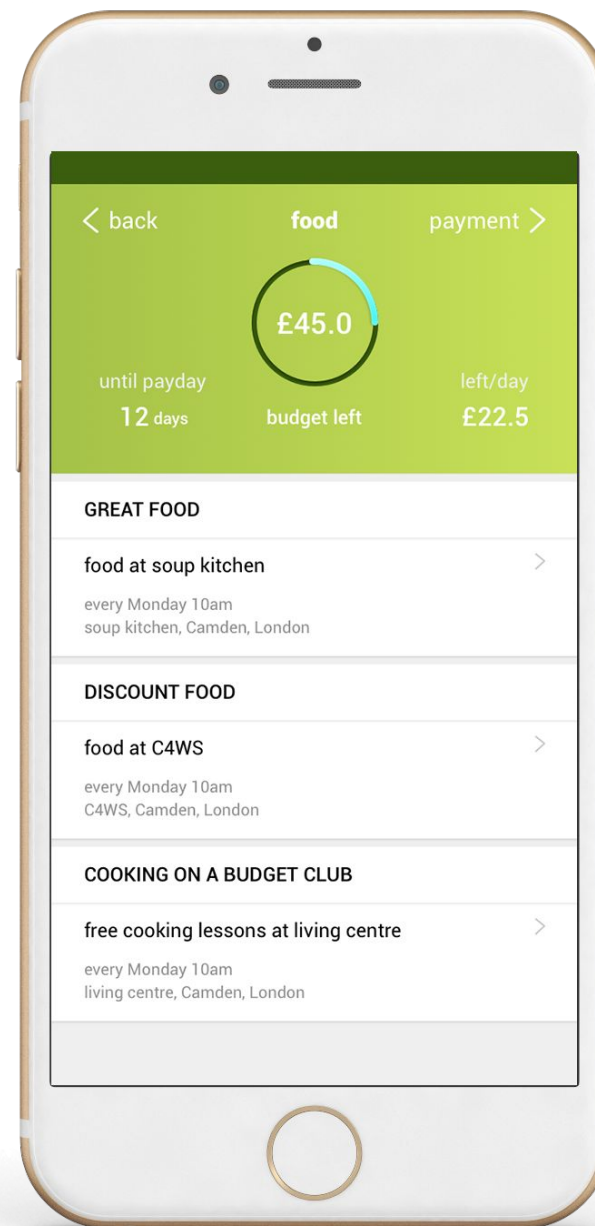
Make appointments

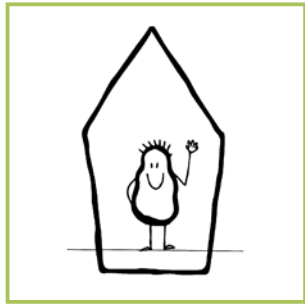


The end of Jobseeker's Allowance can cause a gap in finances. Many users fall back to homelessness while waiting for their first paycheck. The financial insecurity of this transitional period can make people feel overwhelmed and can hinder their progress. Launch is an app that helps individuals who have experienced sleeping rough, manage their finances when their Jobseekers Allowance ends. It helps with personal budgeting and suggests local solutions in times of crisis. A case worker helps with setting up an initial budget. The app then offers opportunities (vouchers, food banks, cooking classes, money management advice...) and provides support from an online buddy.

## DESIGNERS

Ali Blake  
Ai Yamanaka  
Shikha Kanakia  
Yiqiu Ge





Josh lives in a hostel and has a new job.



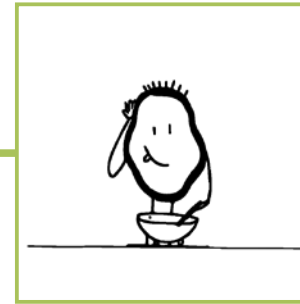
His JSA ends and he is overwhelmed by his expenses.



Josh's speaks with his key worker at the day centre who him set a budget on the app.



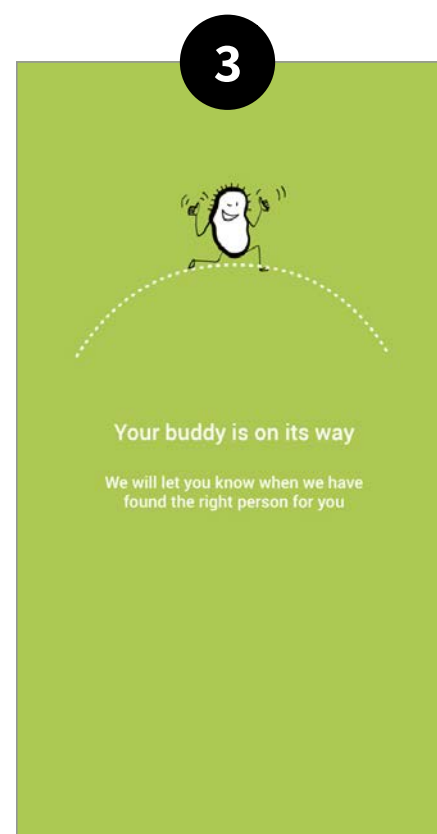
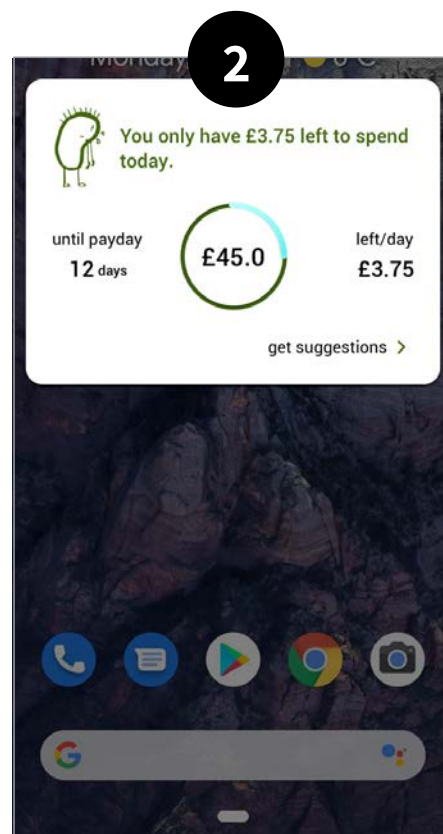
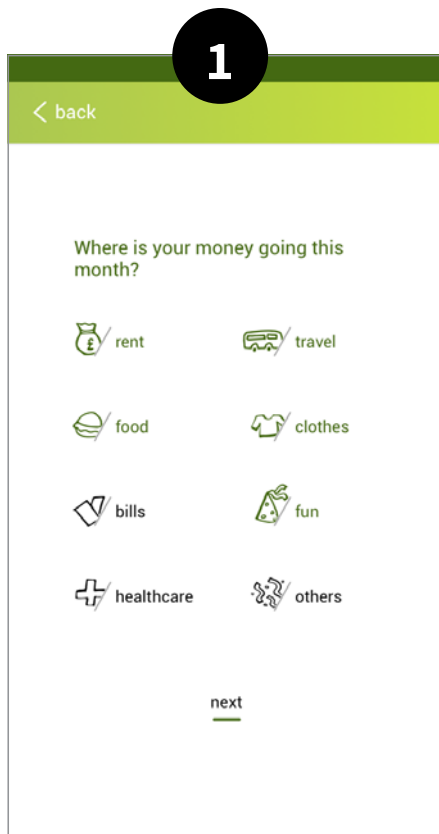
Josh knows that when he comes into hard times the app will suggest local solutions for him.



As well as instant solutions, there is also long term fixes, like cooking on a budget.



Josh's first paycheck comes in. He made it through this challenging period.



1 - A key worker who has built a relationship of trust with the user helps him set up his initial budget.

2 - The app proposes solutions in times of crisis. For example, it notifies the user of opportunities to save money on food.

3- The app provides support from an online buddy because users trust information that comes from their peers more than from service providers.

# REVIBE

Residents of the North London YMCA hostel are seeking opportunities which might enable them to move onto the next stage of their life. But they often lack important information to understand what can help support them in moving on. Without information they end up getting into debt or other kinds of trouble, and isolate themselves. This causes them to lose hope and give up. This project aims to create a space of empowerment for the hostel residents to 'revibe' themselves. This welcome pack is meant to be handed out by the representatives within the first week of residents arrival at the hostel. These representatives are a human touchpoint, who are further along in the journey to move out of the hostel and are trusted by the other residents. Contained in this package are basic hygiene essentials ranked as a priority by residents from the hostel in co-design sessions. The packs also consist of a series of cards which would help direct residents to the right source of information. The welcome packs fosters engagement from the start of a residents journey, provides them with access to information and creates a sense of positive future.

## DESIGNERS

Sarah Josefsberg  
Aashna Parekh  
Stacy Hsu  
Frenny Feng




Hey! Come here!  
Call me and talk to me when you  
feel not so good!  
We will always be here!  
TEL:44-8888-8888



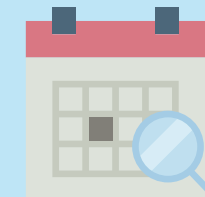
Feel free to call me if you have  
any question or problem about  
your life! Just call me!  
TEL:44-6666-6666

Watch me :)  
I could give you some financial  
suggestions and services.  
Looking forward to talk to you :)



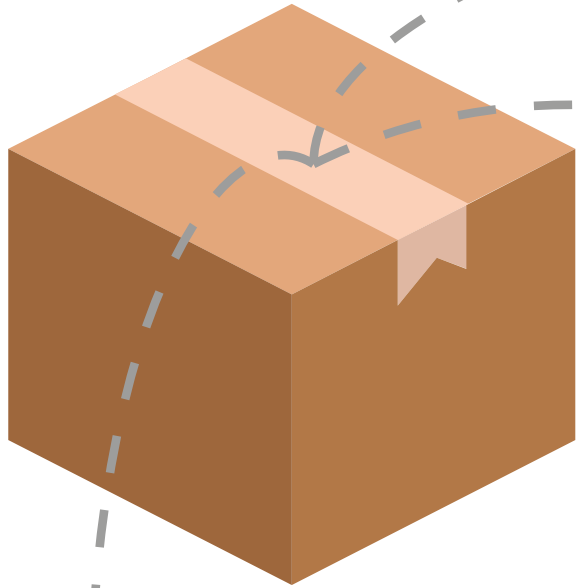
Scan me!!!  
Scan me!!!  
Scan me!!!  
  
We are waiting for you!  
There are something could solve  
your problems about money, skills  
or life.

Want to know the latest sessions  
and workshops information?  
Just one step to get the calendar!  
Tell us your email!



Via: send email to [ymca@gmail.com](mailto:ymca@gmail.com)  
Via: visiting reception and tell the staff!  
Via: call us:444-6868-6868

## THE WELCOME PACK



## INFORMATION CARDS

The welcome pack includes cards with basic information on the residence; emergency calling numbers; how to contact social workers or staffs; and online chatbot. The cards offer a better and summed up information access to all new residents.



## HYGIENE KIT

The hygiene kit includes shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush and washing powder. Aiming at offering basic daily support for new residents.



## ART KIT

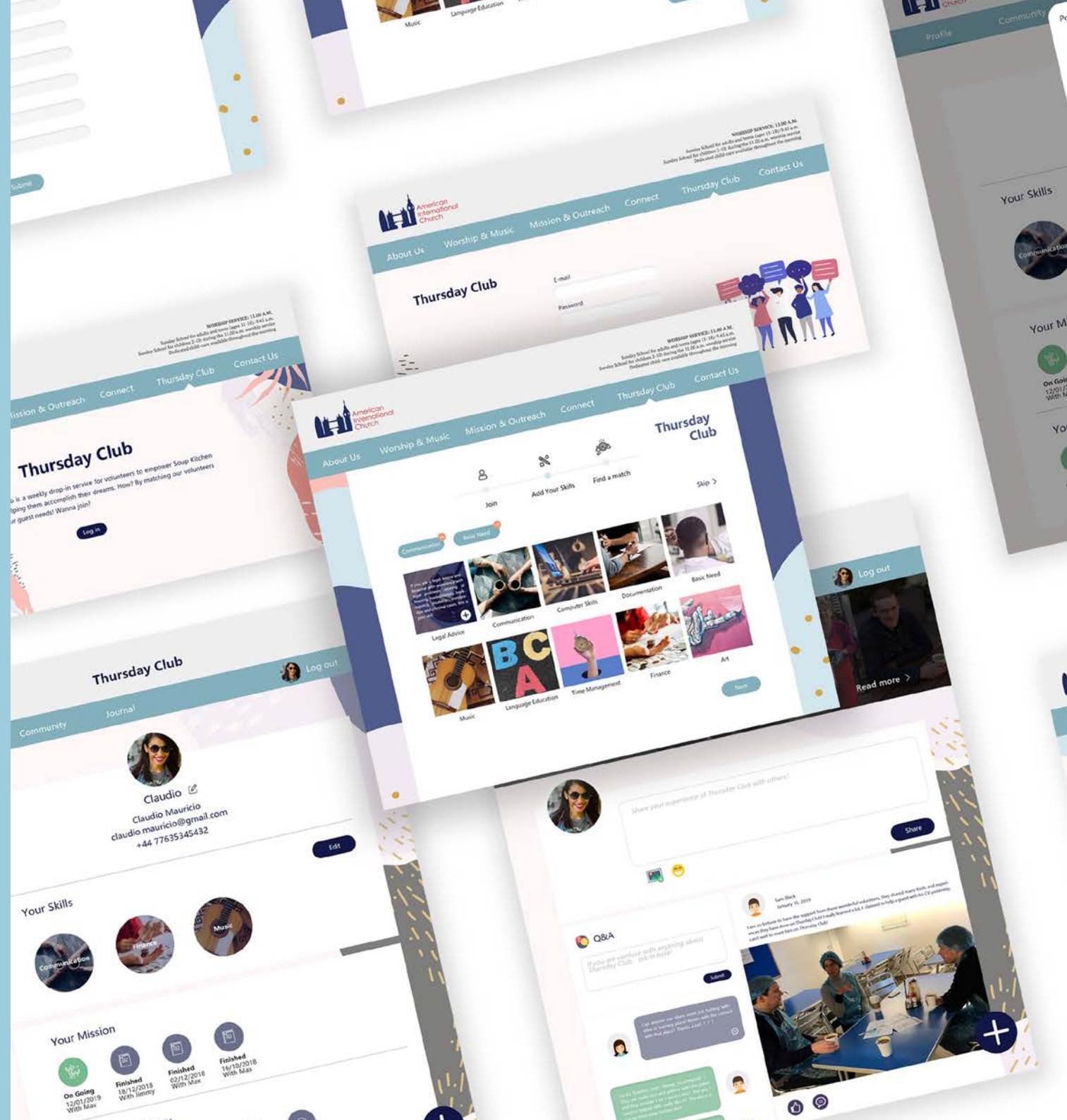
The art kit includes pencils, color pens and a notebook. It aims to provoke the residents' passion to create and encourage them to take part in relevant recreation sessions.

# Thursday Club

The Soup Kitchen at the American Church doesn't just offer food to its guests; it's a safe environment where people feel at ease, and get the opportunity to connect and build a sense of community. Thursday Club was developed in response to three simultaneous realizations. Firstly, many of the Soup Kitchen guests have the skills and motivation to go back to working life but are faced with barriers and lack the resources needed to overcome them. Secondly, the Soup kitchen director gets asked for help from the guests but he doesn't have the time to help everyone. Finally, volunteers are passionate about the cause they support and are willing to go the extra mile but don't know how. Thursday Club offers a time and space for guest to accomplish their needs with volunteers guidance. The website centralizes all resources that currently exist in the soup kitchen and directs them to the right people to better support each guest that request help. Those requests get matched to volunteers' skills, who get offered shifts on Thursdays so they can help specific guests.

## DESIGNERS

Na Du  
Yuxi Gao  
Maria Garreud  
Mariana Monteiro  
Gene Xu

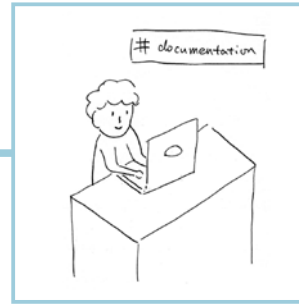




Mike needs a CV.



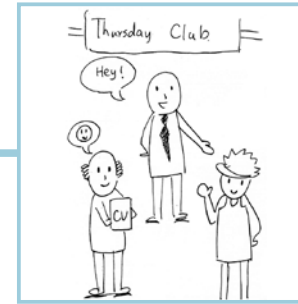
He asks a volunteer for help who tells him to come back next Thursday Club.



The volunteer posts a request for help online.



Another volunteer who has CV writing skills receives the request and claims the shift.



Mike gets introduced to him at Thursday Club.



Mike receives help to write his CV.

[About Us](#)
[Worship & Music](#)
[Mission & Outreach](#)
[Connect](#)
[Thursday Club](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Join
Add Your Skills
Find a match

Communication
Basic Need

Skip >

If you are a legal advice professional with experience with legal problems relating to housing, homelessness, bankruptcy, disability, immigration and criminal cases, this is your skill.

Legal Advice

Communication

Computer Skills

Documentation

Basic Need

Music

Language Education

Time Management

Finance

Art

×

Post a request

1

2

3

Create a subject for the request!

Name of the guest

Max. P

Subject

Need help create CV

Next



Many young people who sleep rough are highly-motivated and skilled, but don't know how to reach their dreams. On the other hand, social enterprises which hire young people are very difficult to find. This online training and career platform helps young people (age 18-24) re-identify with their dreams and aspirations, (not with their homelessness, lack of formal education or current situation). By helping them re-imagine themselves in a positive light, Spark offers young people personalized, friendly, safe support and engages them in step by step guidance along the path to their future career. Using the framework 'Discover it, Try It, Do It, Build It' this service will help people at whatever stage they are in their journey. Spark allows users to discover more about themselves, try new activities, and through continuous commitment, build a clear road map to their dream career.

## DESIGNERS

Jen Gasser  
Chenyin Jin  
Peter Kim  
Judy Zhu

"I'd do anything to get opportunities... My dream is to be a mechanic."



**John (22)**

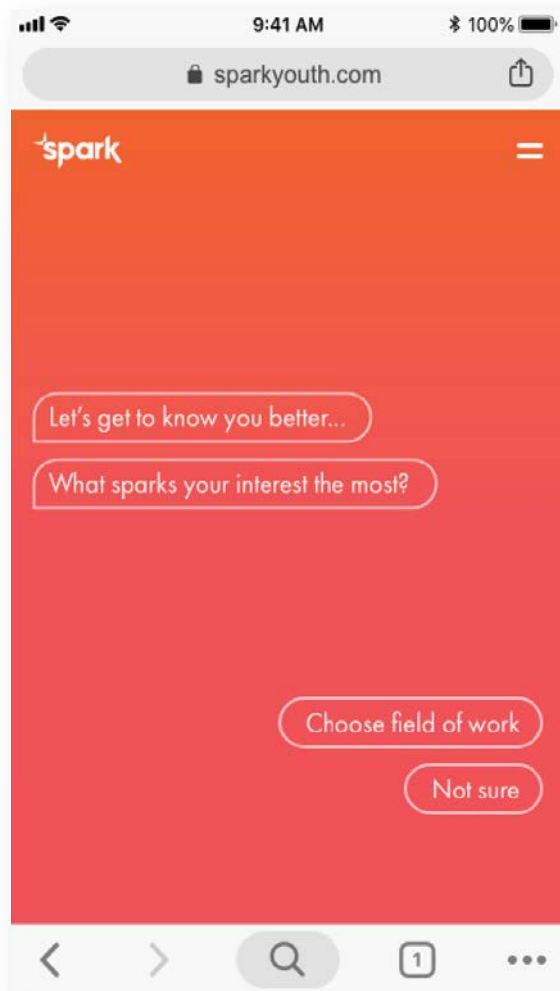
Young Couch Surfer

"If I had clear information before, I would've received help a long time ago instead of trying to avoid the system."



**Kate (18)**

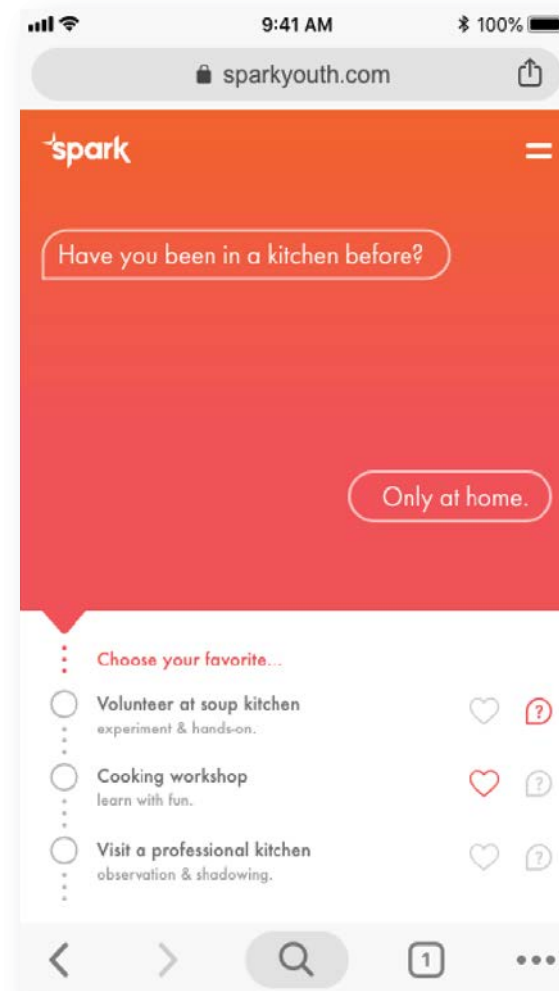
Young Rough Sleeper



Easy Chatbot Sign-up



Selection of Interests



List of Opportunities

# Camden United

Many service providers emphasize the importance of giving purpose to people who are homeless and building connections off of the streets. A lot of front-line organizations are trying to tackle that need by building classes that aim to help people take back control of their situation. But each charity has developed its own closed system. Camden United aims to connect all those classes to create a cluster of employment, training and support in Camden. This learning environment would transform Camden into an open air university made of scattered colleges settled in available spaces: the British Library, the Methodist & Baptist Churches, the Living Centre, etc. Rough sleepers placed in temporary accommodation would have the opportunity to manage their time and learn new skills matching local job opportunities. They could, with the help of their hostel support officer, sign-up to classes and locate them online. To facilitate the implementation of this service, it would be run using only open-source software.

## DESIGNERS

Alicja Halbryt  
Youky Ding  
Silin Liu  
Pierre Rault  
Yutong Xiao

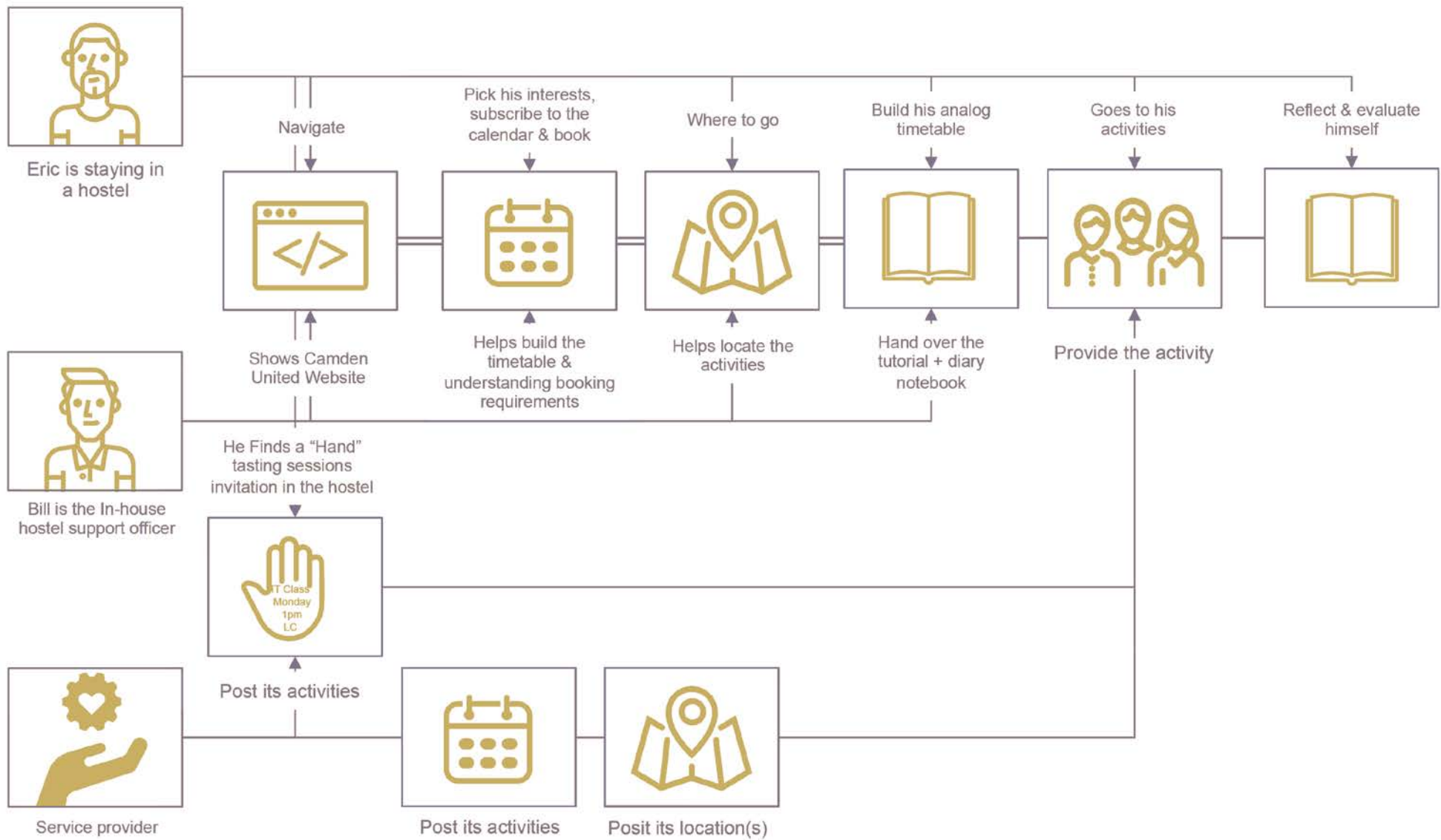
The screenshot displays the Camden United website interface. At the top, the logo and navigation links (Home, Contribute, CU Map, CU Calendar) are visible. The main header features the text "WELCOME TO CAMDEN UNITED" over a background image of hands clasped together. Below the header is a map of Camden with a pop-up window for the "Methodist church FRIDAY CLUB". The pop-up lists activities (book club, movie screening) and a requirement (Be a registered member). To the right of the map is a list of services including Living center, C4WS, British library, Methodist church, Training link, New Horizon Youth Ce..., Photography competit..., Entrepreneurship Web..., Advice Clinic, Job application - CV ..., Social Enterprise prog..., English conversation c..., and ESOL English class le... Below the map and list is the "CAMDEN UNITED CALENDAR" for January 2019. The calendar shows events for various days, including English classes, fitness classes, and a Friday club.

**Methodist church FRIDAY CLUB**  
Social club with various activities including:  
book club,  
movie screening  
**REQUIREMENT:**  
Be a registered member

**CAMDEN UNITED CALENDAR**  
Camden United  
Today January 2019  
Print Week Month Agenda

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1 Jan	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1 Feb	2

Events listed in the calendar include:  
11am English Discussi  
1:30pm Fitness class  
3:30pm ESOL English cl  
1:30pm Fitness class  
4pm JOBS CLUB  
1:30pm Fitness class  
4pm Admin class  
2pm Job HUB English  
4pm IT class  
1:30pm Friday club  
1:30pm Fitness class  
2:30pm ESOL English c  
1:30pm Fitness class  
3:30pm ESOL English cl  
1:30pm Fitness class  
4pm JOBS CLUB  
1:30pm Fitness class  
4pm Admin class  
2pm Job HUB English  
1:30pm Friday club  
1:30pm Fitness class  
2:30pm ESOL English c

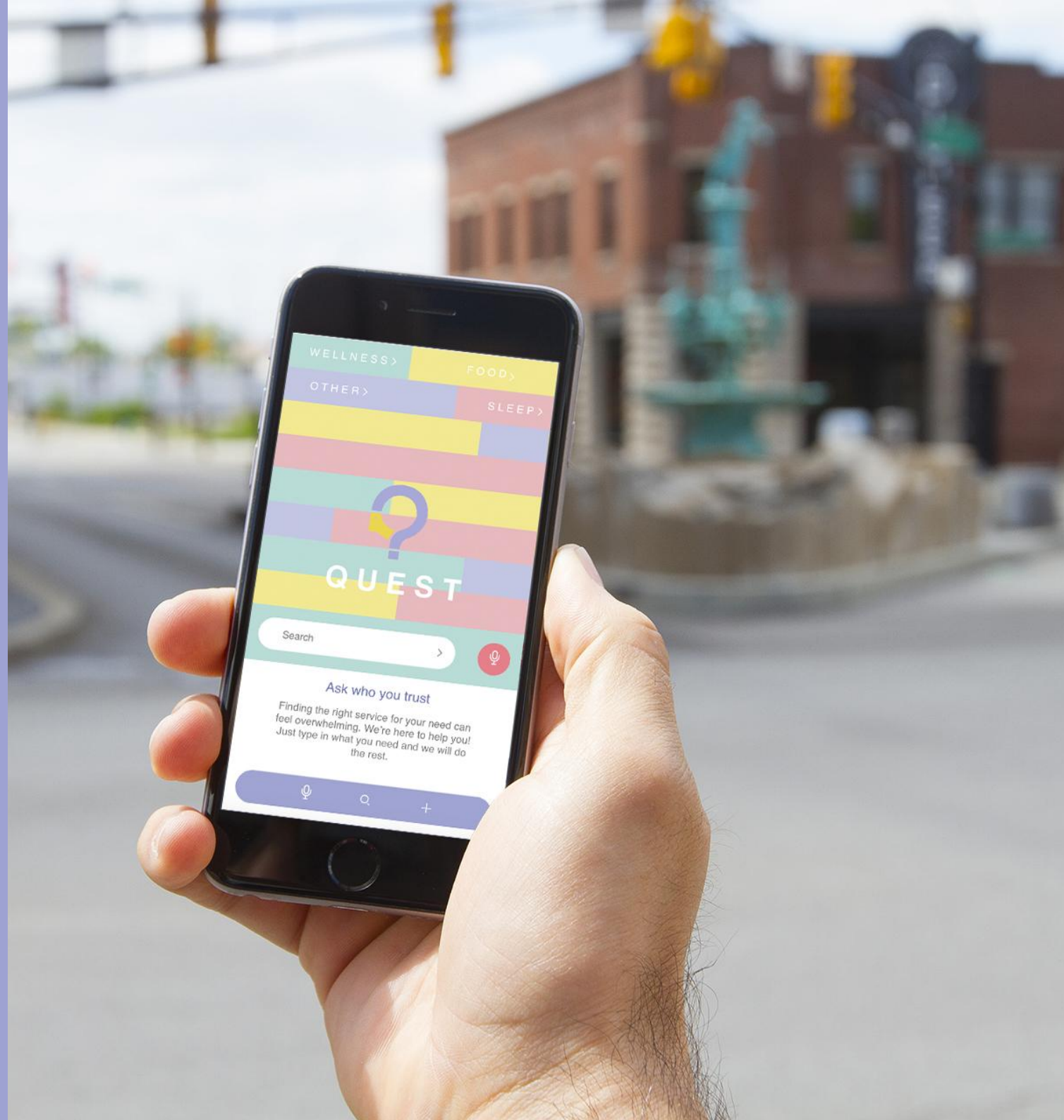




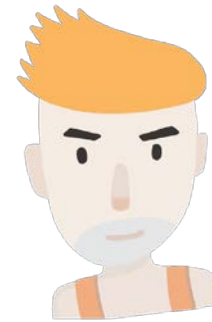
People currently sleeping rough have no time to plan their future, because they keep moving around everyday which is exhausting. Rough sleepers can walk for hours to go to a soup kitchen, a shelter, or showers. Because of this barrier, people often fail to access all the services they would benefit from. This project aims to improve users' access to services and find the ones that are closest to them. Quest is a digital platform that helps people currently sleeping rough quickly find the nearest support services, suggests the most relevant services for their specific demographic, generates a customized route and allows users to suggest, rate and provide feedback on existing services. The review system was integrated into the design because service providers struggled to collect honest feedback. This feature also gives a voice to rough sleepers.

## DESIGNERS

Gazbia Sorour  
Jianxun Lai  
Maria Wang Brandt  
Yiwen Zhu

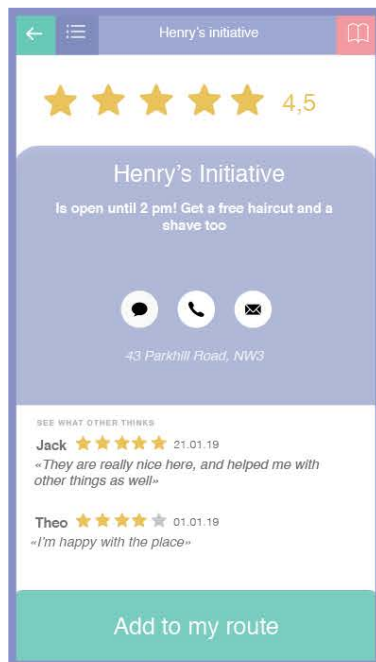


"It's so hard to get 1 meal a day, I have to walk to the other side of the city."



"I spend the whole day walking to get access to basic needs, I have no time or mental energy to figure out my life."

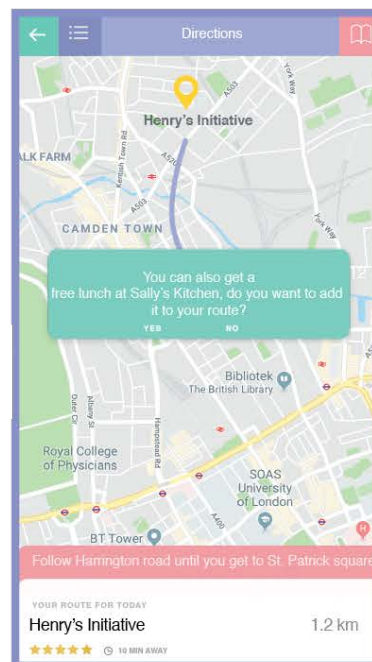
## Browsing Services



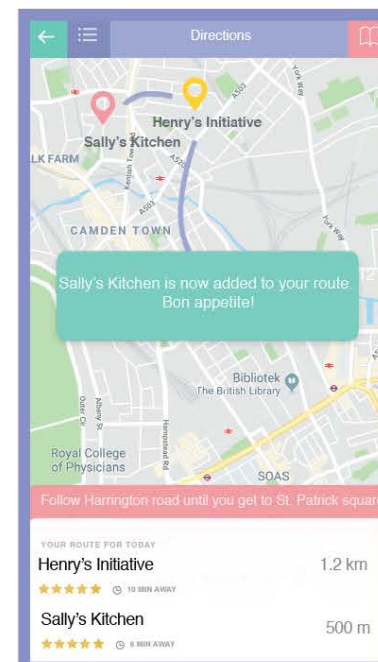
## Determining Route



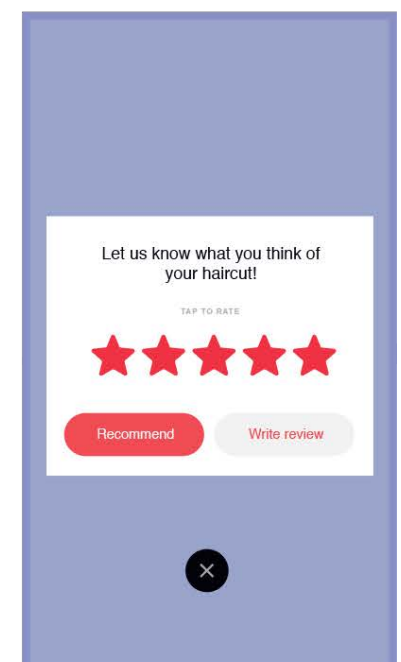
## Receiving Suggestions



## Planning Journey



## Giving Feedback



# NEXT STEPS

This piece of work has led to the creation of 7 service design proposals that could help alleviate homelessness. If your organisation seeks to develop or implement one of these concepts contact Sarah Elie MBE, the executive director of Somers Town Community Association: [sarah@somerstown.org.uk](mailto:sarah@somerstown.org.uk)



# THANK YOU

**We would like to thank all of the organisations who took the time to speak to us and made this project possible:**

American Church's Soup Kitchen

C4WS

Camden & Islington NHS Foundation Trust

Camden Council

Camden Safer Streets Team

Centrepont

Change Please

Change, Grow, Live

Christian Church

Christians Against Poverty

City Harvest London

Emmaus

Fat Macy's

Food Brigade

Food Cycle

Hare Krishna

King's Cross Baptist Church

King's Cross Methodist Church

London Jesus Centre

New Horizons

North London YMCA

Origin Housing

Safer London

Shelter From The Storm

Simon Community

Single Homeless Project

Somers Town Living Centre

Somers Town Job Hub

Spectrum Day Centre

Training Link

Training link

Women@TheWell

Women's Hidden Homeless Project