

SpotLight

Jane - a Resident at Streets2Homes



Life at the Streets2Homes cottages

Jane is a Mum and has been a resident at the cottages in Harlow for three months. After tragically suffering the loss of her youngest child, six months ago, she became homeless.

She took the time to tell us what life is like for her at the cottages.

Q: What do you like about the cottages?

A: First of all, I really like the atmosphere here. There are lots of people to talk to and many are in similar situations to me. We're all from different backgrounds, some are working, some were on the streets, but we've all got one thing in common - being here together.

Q: Do you share the tasks?

A: Yes, we do, because everybody gets on at the cottages. I was really worried whether people would keep the living spaces clean and if people would be as clean as me. But it's really clean because we all take turns.

Q: What about the food?

A: The people that get up first will ask the others if they want coffee. We share all the food, whether its food that we've bought or has been donated to us. We've decided that all the food gets put together in the communal kitchen for everybody to share. That way everybody always gets a meal.

Q: What are the staff at the cottages like?

A: I actually look forward to the staff coming in every day. I have all my favourites, but for different reasons - there's one that I might go to for a heart-to-heart chat for all the emotional stuff, then there's another one that will lift my spirits if I am having a rubbish day. There's one that will take me to appointments.

They all have different personalities, and they are all my favourites. Every day I ask who's coming in tomorrow. They've helped me get registered with my doctor and dentist and sort out my Universal Credit. They really help with everything that needs to be done to get me where I need to be.

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We need this place, because I wouldn't be here without them. When the council couldn't help me, Streets2Homes helped me straight away.



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Q: Have you made any friends here?

A: I've got a best friend here called Tara. She had gone through a tough time when she was homeless. When she moved in, we quickly became friends and we enjoy having girly chats.

All the residents are really friendly. We all share the TV and say 'good morning' to each other. Being with others in my situation and talking about their experiences takes my mind off of what I have been through.

Q: What things do the staff help you with?

A: If I didn't have the people here, I'd be very low. Because I'd lost my son, I was going through a lot of mental health problems before I became homeless. I'm waiting to start bereavement counselling, and the staff are going to take me to a bereavement café, for people who have lost children. They will drive me there and sit with me before bringing me back. Without being here and having their support, there was definitely an other way that I probably would have gone!

The staff have kept my mind occupied and made me see a way out, that I didn't see before.

The staff are helping me to get my mental health straight. They help me pick up medication, make sure I don't miss appointments, make phone calls with me or for me. To be honest, some days I don't want to get out of bed and when there are things I need to do, without them, it wouldn't get done.

Q: Why do you think people should support Streets2Homes?

A: I know from experience that it doesn't matter what background you come from; anyone can end up homeless.

Without Streets2Homes, I don't think many of us could see a way out. Poor mental health and emotional state of mind means that without Streets2Home we could easily go the other (bad) way.