

SpotLight

Sheona - a resident at **Streets2Homes**



Being a Harlow-based charity, Streets2Homes helps Harlow's homeless. However, sometimes people, that are not originally from Harlow, become homeless here.

Sheona came from Ireland and was sleeping rough on the streets of Harlow. She took the time to tell us her story.



Q: What was your life like on the streets of Harlow?

A: It was tough. I came to Harlow from Ireland – I'd been sleeping rough outside Tesco in Harlow for a couple of months. To cut a long story short, living on the streets in Harlow was a very lonely time in my life. I had no-one. I was on my own. It was scary, sitting alone and keeping awake all night from fear. It was so cold too. I had to experience a lot of people look at me like I was nothing. It felt like I didn't exist.

That was really hard. But one day I had two staff members approach me from Streets2Homes (one of them was Alice – see her spotlight too). I had a chat with Alice, and she asked if I wanted to come and get cleaned up – have a shower and get something to eat. She gave me her card. I thought about it for a minute – because I have trust issues, I was afraid of the unknown – but I took the opportunity with both hands and said to myself, "I'm going to trust Alice and go with her".

Q: What happened when you arrived at the Streets2Homes office?

A: As soon as I got to Streets2Homes everyone was really friendly. They offered me a shower straight away with clean towel and clean clothes too. They did everything they could for me. I even spoke to Kerrie, the CEO, and I got on so well with her. I told Kerrie a lot about my story, my life and what it was like on the streets in Harlow. Kerrie said I could come to the Streets2Homes accommodation and when I arrived, I was greeted so well. Everyone was really friendly.

The support that was given was amazing. Like nothing I'd had before. Happiness came through me – although I took it day by day at the start. Things are going really well at the moment.

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Sheona - a resident at **Streets2Homes**

We've no money of our own to buy clothes or toiletries, so we rely on donations.



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Q: What would make life better for you now?

A: I really wish we had funding to do some more activities though. Sometimes the days are a bit long here and we'd love to do something to pass the time – like go swimming or have day trips out. Having said that, I'm really, really grateful for the help I've had. Someone is donating some board games and I'm looking forward to using them.

We've no money of our own to buy clothes or toiletries, so we rely on donations. It would be lovely to be able to wear something new and to be able to freshen up with nice products.

Q: What would you say to anyone that is homeless in Harlow?

A: If anyone reading this is homeless – I want to let you know that I know what it's like to be homeless, lonely and have no hope and be scared.

But I can promise you from the bottom of my heart, approach Streets2Homes and I promise they will care for you and help you. I've been at that low point where you think there is no hope at all, but there really is.

I wouldn't be who I am today if it wasn't for Streets2Homes.