



RESPONDING TO HOMELESSNESS IN FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

A TOOLKIT 2026



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INTRODUCTION

Arts & Homelessness International is the global network for the arts and homelessness sector.

This toolkit has been co-created through the Arts & Homelessness International University Peer Network on Homelessness and prepared by Natasha Steer and Matt Peacock. The toolkit came about as a response to the fact that there is no centralised body or resource looking specifically at homelessness in university settings.

The toolkit provides a framework for universities, educational institutions, and other higher education establishments to help embed awareness of how homelessness and housing insecurity can impact students and staff, and how they can help. It has been co-created by people with lived experience, university/institution staff, people working within homelessness, people working for arts organisations, students, and recent graduates. See page 3 for a list of contributors.

When the toolkit references homelessness, we are referring to all forms of this, including hostels, houses of multiple occupancy, refuges, temporary accommodation, sofa surfing, and rough sleeping. This can also include poor accommodation that does not meet the basic standards that should be ensured for good health and wellbeing.

NATASHA STEER AND MATT PEACOCK

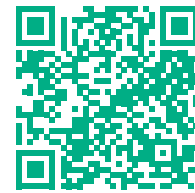
Arts & Homelessness International

'I've had students raise concerns about homelessness in the past and have found few institutional resources available beyond what I could offer through my own doctoral research. There is a real gap in higher education around this issue, despite longstanding evidence that homelessness presents in multifaceted ways. This toolkit is a vital step towards addressing that gap'.

DR ADRIENNE BENNIE

Senior Lecturer and Researcher in Design at University of the Arts London.

To attend
our University
Peer Network on
Homelessness,
please follow our
events on Eventbrite.



To be added to the
Arts & Homelessness
International mailing
list please scan here



MANIFESTO

This toolkit is designed for higher education institutions seeking to provide support for students and staff experiencing homelessness.

The University Peer Network on Homelessness believes that:

Education is something everyone should be able to access, regardless of their personal circumstances.

Homelessness might be seen and experienced in different ways in various cultures, and we want to ensure everyone feels able to ask for help and be heard.

The use of arts and creativity in times of distress is vital for supporting wellbeing, including those facing or experiencing homelessness.

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GUIDE

This toolkit covers 7 key considerations for reducing university homelessness followed by an appendix.

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TALK

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Tackle the stigma by creating a culture where homelessness is more openly discussed throughout the university/institution. For some examples, please see the appendix.
- Include topics of homelessness in lectures – but not only visible homelessness.
- Be aware that there are international students where homelessness is taboo or talked about differently – encourage conversations about this and combine it into studies.
- Raise awareness with university/institution staff that anyone, no matter wealth or race, can experience homelessness, but that some individuals are more vulnerable to experience it than others.
- Not all students may want to actively disclose homelessness – but there may be other signs (which is covered under 'Listen').
- Provide posters on campus that explain who to talk to if you are having challenges with housing or homelessness. Put these in places such as the Student Union etc.

FOR UNIVERSITIES WITH FACULTIES IN HEALTH AND WELLBEING:

- Within healthcare studies, encourage student selective components that address homelessness in collaboration with charities working in that sector. Include patient engagement, lived experience / expert-by-experience.
- In health inequalities seminars, consider including homelessness in **Schwartz Rounds** (structured, monthly one-hour sessions for healthcare staff to discuss the emotional and social aspects of patient care. They provide a platform for staff from all disciplines to share their experiences, reflect on challenges and rewards, and connect with colleagues in a supportive environment).

DISCUSSION POINT:

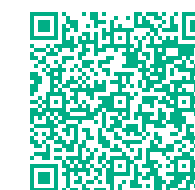
'University homelessness happens frequently in places like Africa due to dorms being closed during holidays, yet they are the only secure living space for some poorer students'

LISA OGUN'

Associate Alumni and Producer
of the African Arts and Homelessness Hub

Although this toolkit is about homelessness which may exist in universities, universities have a significant opportunity to be more open to understanding and talking about homelessness in general. The report '**Could Universities Do More to End Homelessness?**' by Greg Hurst (2022) explains this more:

'It is important that universities teach their students about homelessness, especially in courses whose graduates are likely to engage with homelessness in a professional capacity such as Medicine, Education, Social Work and many others. Curriculum content should be accurate, reflect the current evidence base, and be candid about what we do not yet know. The language and images used when teaching about homelessness should be calibrated with care to avoid reinforcing stereotypes and dehumanising individuals impacted by homelessness. There is a broader argument, however, beyond saying simply that universities ought to deal with homelessness in the delivery of their founding objects. A strong case exists for suggesting that universities have a civic duty above and beyond their core objectives to relieve and prevent homelessness in the places in which they are anchored through their roles as dominant players in their communities and local economies.'



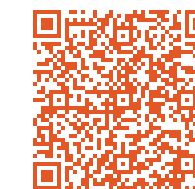
Could Universities Do More to End Homelessness?
Greg Hurst, Centre for Homelessness Impact (2022)

Scan to read more

University of Roehampton

Led by academic staff members Ann David and Michal Garapich, the university staged a Homelessness Awareness Week in 2022 in partnership with the President of the Student Union.

This included a programme of activities, lectures, discussions and a sleep-out which raised money for local charities. They also engaged and paid a Poet in Residence 'Surfing Sofa's' for the week who created and performed work during the programme. The university remains committed to researching homelessness.



Scan to
find out more

LOOK OUT AND LISTEN

A significant part of ‘look out and listen’ is combined with usual safeguarding practices, making this chapter particularly relevant for university safeguarding leads.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Listen to students who have lived experience of homelessness and co-create services and support with them – including module design.
- Students who are care leavers, care experienced or estranged from their family may be at a higher risk of homelessness – listen out for these students so that support can be given if requested.
- Listen for students talking about issues about their accommodation, access to food or mental health support – this could be an early warning sign.
- Recognise that both students and staff may be impacted by homelessness.
- Do not presume the wealth of any student, look out for signs of concern.
- Look out and listen for hidden barriers that could hinder the success of students and staff experiencing homelessness.
- Look out and listen for bias, assumptions and actions that patronise.
- Look out and listen for opportunities to truthfully and respectfully show lived experience.
- Look out and listen for good news; don’t always frame the conversation negatively.
- Look out for students experiencing homelessness and then being excluded by peers.
- Look out for students who might not have a fixed address or may not have a safe place to stay even with a fixed address – for example people may be sofa surfing as refuge from domestic abuse.
- Look out for students who are regularly staying in libraries and labs until closing time.



Co-Created Songwriting with Underground Lights Project
Photo by Nadine Holdsworth

USEFUL RESOURCES:

Homelessness in Higher Education: Supporting Students in London, Joseph Usher, 2025 – London School of Economics

This report examines the growing and often hidden issue of student homelessness in London, drawing on a literature review, analysis of policies from ten London universities, and findings from a multi-stakeholder roundtable. It highlights how rising housing costs, inadequate student finance, and fragmented support systems are pushing many students into housing insecurity – particularly care leavers, estranged students, international students, and those from widening participation backgrounds. The report identifies significant gaps in data, policy, and provision, alongside examples of emerging good practice, and concludes with clear recommendations for universities, local authorities, and partners to improve recognition, coordination, and practical support for students at risk of or experiencing homelessness.



Scan to read more

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE:

New York University

At New York University, the Office of the Dean of Students collaborates with university partners to support students experiencing basic needs insecurity, such as food security, stable housing, caregiving resources and mental health and wellness. They provide a **basic needs assessment form** on their website for students to raise a concern, which can be completed either independently or with staff assistance.

Find out more at <https://perma.cc/5YUP-ST5K>.

They also have various food insecurity resources across the university. **Food Insecurity Resources** and **The fight for food security at NYU – Washington Square News**.

‘In higher education, housing security isn’t just a basic need, it’s a lifeline. When we uplift those at risk of homelessness, we foster a community where everyone has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their circumstances. Safe and suitable housing is the foundation of the hierarchy of needs. When housing is uncertain, everything else becomes uncertain as well.

Ensuring housing stability for students and staff at risk of homelessness is a crucial step toward fostering equitable access to opportunities and enabling success in higher education.

When higher education institutions provide support to those at risk of homelessness, they’re not only investing in individual futures, but in the future of our communities as a whole.’

DR. DIANA MARGOT ROSENTHAL
*School of Global Public Health,
New York University*

TRAIN

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure the subject of homelessness is included in staff induction training and that this includes training around trauma conscious practice.
- Reduce the stigma by encouraging an atmosphere of talking more openly about the risk of homelessness.
- Train staff to spot the warning signs of poor accommodation and homelessness.
- Ensure homelessness is embedded in safeguarding policies, and that staff know what to do when a concern is raised.
- Ensure that all staff, including lecturers, are adequately informed about poverty, the cost of living, austerity, inequalities, injustices, and the direct impact on students.
- Be mindful of the intersectional discrimination of homelessness – including gender, disability, mental health and sexuality.

Arts & Homelessness International are developing training for educational institutions based on this toolkit.

If you are interested in this get in touch with katie@artshomelessint.com

Workshopping with collaborators for the Constellations of HOME exhibition
University of Warwick 2022
Photo by Nadine Holdsworth

PROVIDE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Information about potential changes to benefit entitlement during registration and how students can check this at the application stage.
- Provide a personalised induction journey for people with lived experience of homelessness and / or at risk of homelessness.
- Provide safe / discreet spaces for students to talk about homelessness.
- Ensure students know who to speak to (internally and externally) if they are homeless or at risk of homelessness – this can be part of freshers' weeks and induction.
- Inform students about places they can study for free or ways they can access data.
- Provide study opportunities for people who are homeless through scholarships.
- Provide bursaries towards graduation costs – gown hire, photography and transport.
- Ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plans and Access and Participation plans include information about homelessness and the risk of homelessness.
- Consider creating a Homelessness Strategy/ Homelessness Prevention Strategy.
- Look at providing a 'studying when homeless' guide which includes information on who can help support and advocate for individuals i.e. housing surgeries, food provisions, grants and how they can access tech for free to support their studies.
- Regularly audit wellbeing resources available to students and how easy it is to find and access these.
- Explore if 'dwell spaces' (warm space, showers, chargers, hygiene products, food, WIFI study space) can be provided outside of campus.
- Ensure help is available for students experiencing digital poverty e.g. access to equipment, hardship grants and financial help. Be open about how students can access this.
- Provide opportunities for people to express themselves and their experience through creativity and the arts.
- Provide information about free entitlements – such as free eyesight checks and prescriptions.
- Peer support is essential to wellbeing, look at how the institution supports this through programmes such as buddy systems (on and off campus).
- Explore how storage could be provided for students who find themselves homeless.

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE:

State University of New York

The State University of New York has designated a staff member on every one of its 64 campuses to work with homeless students. The National Centre for Education Statistics in 2020 revealed that around 8% of undergraduates and nearly 5% of graduate students reported experiencing homelessness.



Scan to read more

Chichester University

The 'From Adversity to University' initiative revolves around the Bridging Course – a non-traditional route into higher education that hopes to create equality of opportunity and to help students reach their unrecognised potential. The Bridging Course is taught in small groups and is designed to develop academic knowledge and skills based on the lived experience of participants. Successful completion of the module allows students to apply for degree courses at the University of Chichester.

<https://www.chi.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/from-adversity-to-university/>

Brunel University of London

Brunel provides a page with information for students if they are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Advice includes information on rent arrears and eviction.

<https://brunelstudents.com/advice/housing/homelessness/>

Glasgow University

The Student Representative Council has a page for students who are at risk of homelessness and need support.

<https://www.glasgowunsrc.org/advice/accommodation/emergency/>

The SRU also has The Glasgow Uni Homeless Service (GUSH) which works with local charities so students can support homeless people in the community.

The University of Kent

The University of Kent offers The Kent Foyer and 'Homeless' Student Pack which includes:

- Guaranteed access to accommodation for the duration of your course, including the summer vacation, subject to remaining in good financial standing with the university.
- A one-off, £600 cash bursary towards the costs of starting life at university.
- A one-off payment of £100 towards graduation costs for students who attend their graduation ceremony.
- Possible provision for travel in advance to attend university interviews.
<https://student.kent.ac.uk/support/additional-student-funding/homeless-students>

The Open University

The OU offers a range of scholarships, including opportunities for care experienced and people in the UK who have been displaced from their homeland.

<https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/>

Room Too

Room Too, a bold, youth-driven project led by Oluferanmi Balogun, tackles the inequality of overcrowded housing by transforming underused spaces into safe, inspiring study zones for young people. Over 1 million Londoners live in overcrowded homes, with more than half being children. A National Housing Federation Report reveals that **many young people have no quiet or dedicated space to study at home**, which profoundly impacts their education, mental health, and future aspirations (National Housing Federation Report). In nearly half (48%) of these homes, children struggle to do homework due to a lack of space. Many are forced to study in unconventional places like bathrooms, staircases, or cars, or wait until late at night for peace and quiet.

Olu, the founder, grew up in a two-bedroom flat with a large family and often had to study in the bathroom to find quiet. This personal experience motivated her to create Room Too, a solution that transforms underused community spaces into quiet and creative zones. She has already co-designed the initiative with over 20 young people, parents, and professionals and secured support from her local council and initial funding. Room Too has gained recognition from professionals and organisations across London and has secured two pilot spaces in Southwark to test its model. They are continuing to develop and refine their approach, ensuring that it is shaped by and for young people.



Room Too

The initiative has received support and funding from organisations including The Ardonagh Trust and Active Communities Network. Room Too's impact and potential has also been recognised nationally: They were awarded the Big Change **Bright Sparks Award**, became a finalist for the **Conduit Innovator Awards 2025**, and were voted Top People's Choice Award at The Conduit. Our vision is that every young person has access to a Room Too in their local area with access to opportunities, a supportive community, and a place to build healthy, lasting relationships in inspiring environments.

USEFUL RESOURCE:

How To Beat A Cost of Learning Crisis – Universities Support for Students Josh Freeman (2023)

Prepared by Josh Freeman at the Higher Education Policy Institute, this report demonstrates initiatives universities have created to support students during austerity. Examples include provisions of free or subsidised food and drink, access to warm spaces during the winter months, support for travel, digital access and health products such as contraceptives and period products.



My experience as a distance-learning student, studying whilst homeless

BY RUTH HENNELL

I became homeless during my time studying with The Open University, due to needing accessible housing. It was really important to me and my wellbeing to have something else to focus on and think about. I remember staying somewhere, not knowing where I would stay in a few days and jumping out of bed to solve some JavaScript I was stuck with, appreciating the puzzle as a mental break. When you are homeless, there are so many forms and systems which I struggled with. I found myself assessing these for accessibility and usability using my module materials, which helped detach myself a bit. I felt less alone in my struggle, as I could see how the forms I was using were designed in a way that made things harder and more stressful, rather than me being 'stupid'. This also helped me advocate for myself and my needs. I even shared my user experience of attempting to register to vote with no fixed abode on social media and received messages of feedback from government designers who found this useful.

I was housed in emergency (later temporary) accommodation through my local council, near the end of the academic year, moving from sofa surfing. Just before this move, I had to prepare and submit a risk assessment as part of a uni project plan. I remember I spent £8 to upload it via mobile data. Creating the risk assessment helped me identify high risks to project completion around technology, internet access, facilities, and health, prompting me to reach out to defer the assessment. This is something I wouldn't have felt confident to do otherwise, as the university website said moving house wasn't eligible to defer end-of-module assessments, since it is something that can be planned.

The room I was moved into (with two hours' notice) had no furniture, except a bed (and kitchenette area) and was far away from anyone I knew. I was able to apply to a student support fund to get a second-hand folding desk I could use in the tiny space and to pay for mobile internet, as you can't install broadband in temporary accommodation. However, I had to purchase a mobile router myself and was using a borrowed laptop. I contacted Knowle West Media Centre, a community media centre nearby, and they arranged space for me to study in their training room one day a week. I later found out they had worked with OU academics and thought, 'Wow, there is scope for greater collaboration with organisations like this to support students'. Being able to defer the assessment to set these things up allowed me to complete the project properly and get a distinction in the module, as well as being much better for my mental health and stability.

Unfortunately, my DSA (Disabled Students' Allowance) mentor had a lack of understanding of homelessness. This resulted in constant upsetting questions on my study days, which made me feel like I had to defend myself, rather than focusing on things that would help in the moment and my access needs. I would end up in tears in a public study space, which was embarrassing and affected my ability to study. I also struggled with some module materials that wrote about homeless people and digital exclusion with the assumption we hadn't experienced it, e.g. 'Imagine ...'. My experience of homelessness has influenced my academic choices. I subsequently chose to study a module in IT Systems as I was curious about the way housing-related techno-socio-legal systems operate. I have now found opportunities to combine this learning with my lived experience and creative design practice, to explore the lived experience of these systems in different, creative ways.

BE CREATIVE AND COLLABORATE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Where possible, bring the lived experiences of homelessness into lectures and module material to reduce stigma.
- Find departments at the university/college/ institution which can help to address homelessness in new ways.
- Forge partnerships between homelessness organisations and universities in the local area.
- Provide lectures or talks by people with lived experience of homelessness.
- Create safe, creative spaces by establishing student-led clubs (e.g. film, craft, creative cafes) and partnering with arts organisations to offer inclusive programmes such as drama, spoken word, poetry, street art, sewing, textiles, knitting, music, and comedy. These types of provisions build community connections and wellbeing.
- Record the benefits of arts to add to the ongoing body of evidence around how this supports wellbeing, mental health, trauma recovery and reducing pain.
- Look at using podcasts to share experiences (for those who want to).
- Co-create resources with students.
- Provide and share knowledge of online creative tools.
- Look into providing creative respite opportunities away from campus – visits to galleries / museums etc regardless of the area of study.

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE:

University of Warwick

Co-created Songwriting with Underground Lights

In 2025, the University of Warwick’s Institute of Engagement funded a project through its Collaboration and Co-Production fund that enabled a collaboration between Professor Nadine Holdsworth, two MA Applied Theatre students and Underground Lights (a Coventry based community theatre company working with adults experiencing homelessness, mental health distress and social isolation). During the project, members of Underground Lights created drama scenes and explored song writing, co-created lyrics and recorded songs together. The project culminated in a performance that was reported by the BBC (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c20d0146lnxo>) and an exhibition at the Warwick Arts Centre that documented the trauma-conscious, participatory, inclusive and co-created methodologies employed in the project. Underground Lights members were welcomed onto campus to see the exhibition and to celebrate their achievements together.



Co-Created Songwriting with Underground Lights Project
Photo by Fai Banks

‘To get involved in making songs like this is all a new experience for me. I feel very proud to have been able to share. I’ve actually written a song, which is the first time I’ve ever written a song...’

Quote from participant.

The Open University

Doodle Club

‘In my previous role at The Open University, I ran approximately 9x mindfulness doodling sessions. Although the sessions were more pitched at OU staff, the context was about navigating complexity and uncertainty, especially as many staff members within the HEI sector have been facing redundancy, including myself’.

KULVIR



Nottingham Trent University

Framework Podcast

Thirty-eight students from Nottingham Trent University (NTU) collaborated with their local charity, ‘Framework Housing Association’, to produce the ‘Framework Podcast’.

Undergraduate students studying Broadcast Journalism conducted interviews with a diverse range of individuals working behind the scenes in numerous services provided by the charity across the East Midlands and South Yorkshire. This project illuminates the charity’s approach to assisting individuals in securing long-term accommodation, accessing healthcare, education, and training, thereby enabling them to attain a more secure future.



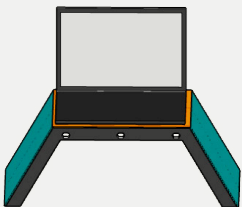
You can listen to the Podcast here

Knowle West Media Centre

Welcome Box Lapdesk

‘The Housing Welcome Box Lapdesk concept was developed as part of a Future Makers programme at Knowle West Media Centre: The Factory. It was a response for a brief for ‘We Can Make Homes’ community-led housing and was inspired by my own experience of moving into very compact emergency accommodation whilst studying with the Open University and not having anywhere to study from, eat from etc.’

RUTH HENNELL



RESEARCH

RECOMMENDATIONS:

There are still considerable gaps within research relating to student and staff homelessness within universities and higher education institutions – here are some we feel need to be addressed:

- Situations where students can fall into a gap in provision – for example those on benefits and background in trauma and poverty.
- How to reduce barriers to support, such as students needing to prove they are not in touch with their parents.
- How to ensure students are made aware of the impact to their benefits when they become students.
- Pay people with lived experience to be involved in research and policy making.
- Look at researching homelessness on campus.

USEFUL RESOURCES:

Homelessness in Higher Education: Supporting Students in London, London School of Economics (Usher, 2025)

The LSE's Homelessness Initiative Activity Fund awarded a grant to LSE Housing and Communities in late 2024 to carry out research, bringing together relevant stakeholders to help universities in London better understand how they can support students who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. This report examines why student homelessness is a growing issue that remains under-researched and under recognised in higher education policy. Joseph Usher (supported by Ellie Benton) highlighted different sector specific policies and housing developments that are contributing to and alleviating student homelessness.

This report summarises the findings from three strands of work: Desk-based research (including a literature review), analysis of existing provision to support students facing homelessness in London and a roundtable event.



Scan to view report

Homelessness Amongst Students in UK

Moss and Moss (2024)

This article discusses how there is a significant lack of research into how poverty impacts students, especially post COVID-19 and calls for more research to be carried out. It explains how in 2023, an audit carried out by Higher Education Policy Institute (Freeman, 2023) reported that out of 140 universities surveyed in the UK, 27% run food banks with 11% giving out vouchers and 50% supply food at a discounted price. Evidence suggests that where this might impact student retention, universities are encouraged, due to monitoring from the Office for Students, to look into the quality of courses rather than the economic and social surroundings of why students drop out.



Scan to view report

'I get up in the night to cry'

Atkins and Cox (2017)

This article explains how student homelessness is a significant and under-researched barrier to students reaching their potential. The problem is explored and illuminated by a focus group alongside a series of interviews involving 16 students from one school at a post-1992 London university. The impact of homelessness was far-reaching in terms of their emotional wellbeing and ability to fully participate in university life. Challenges included pressure on time, limited financial resources, inability to fully focus on studies as well as limited engagement with fellow students and the wider university experience.

Mulrenan, P., Atkins, J., and Cox, S. (2017). 'I get up in the night to cry': The impact of homelessness on higher education students in London, UK. Critical Social Policy, 38(1), 143–154.(Online)



Scan to view article (Original work published 2018)

Post-Secondary Student Homelessness in Canada: Informing Prevention Through Qualitative Analysis

Weismann et al. (2025)

The Post-Secondary Student Homelessness in Canada report highlights the alarming prevalence of housing insecurity among post-secondary students. This research reveals significant academic, financial, and mental health impacts, particularly among marginalized students, and emphasizes the lack of institutional and policy support. The report advocates for increased awareness, better access to services, and systemic policy changes to address this crisis to ensure stable housing for all students.

<https://homelesshub.ca/resource/post-secondary-student-homelessness-in->

CAMPAIGN

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- For improved living conditions for students. Student accommodation may be worse than private rentals.
- Against the need for a whole term of rent being needed upfront (or sometimes a whole year if you are studying outside of your home country).
- For students to retain benefits when they become students.
- For fewer requirements for students to evidence their circumstances, such as estranged students proving they have no contact with family.

Poverty Unpacked Podcast and 'The Empathy Fix'- Dr Keetie Roelen

<https://poverty-unpacked.org/category/podcast-episodes/>

In conversation with scholars, policy makers, activists and those who are affected by poverty, Keetie Roelen unpacks the hidden dimensions of poverty on an international basis. The podcast casts a critical eye on common understandings and misconceptions and challenges conventional wisdom about how poverty can or should be addressed. Roelens book 'The Empathy Fix' sits alongside these podcasts. In this book, Keetie Roelen draws on decades of experience working on global poverty to create a nuanced and intricate portrait of the problem and efforts to combat it, from the overly automated bureaucracy that undermines access to benefits, to the immeasurable impact of cash transfers and human-centered support.

APPENDIX

EXAMPLES OF CREATIVE APPROACHES TO HOMELESSNESS LED BY UNIVERSITIES

Here are some brief examples of university projects that have carried out work to de-stigmatise homelessness or approach the issue more holistically through creative approaches – often alongside people with lived experience. Although the examples are not specific to reducing student homelessness, they show examples of how students and academics are engaging in the subject of homelessness.

This is a developing document, if you feel we are missing a good example of de-stigmatising homelessness in universities please email these to matt@artshomelessint.com

Archives in Absentia, LSE Library and Arts & Homelessness International

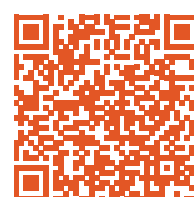
'Archives in Absentia, The Arts & Homelessness Art and Archive project' was a collaborative initiative led by the London School of Economics Library in partnership with Arts & Homelessness International. The project engaged three artists with lived experience of homelessness: Gemma Lees, Amerah Saleh, and Bengy Speer, who worked closely with LSE curators, archivists and a homelessness facilitator to explore and creatively respond to archival collections. The project culminated in their work being included in the library's digital archive and a public showcase. It received overwhelmingly positive feedback from staff, artists, and audiences and successfully demonstrated how inclusive, participatory practice can diversify archival narratives, build community, and support professional development for all involved.



Group photo of artists Gemma Lees, Amerah Saheh, and Bengy Speer in LSE Library archives.
Photo by Chelsea Collision

Arts, Creativity and Homelessness, University of Warwick

Professor Nadine Holdsworth, Professor of Theatre and Performance, has a particular specialism in arts and homelessness and how arts and creativity can change perceptions, policy and outcomes for those who are or have been homeless. She has not only researched the topic and produced papers and projects such as the Homeless Monopoly board game but has also been active in Coventry and the surrounding area supporting projects and giving them platforms at the Faculty of Arts Building. Professor Holdsworth also enabled a creative in the community who has lived experience of homelessness to gain a place to study at the Faculty of Arts.



You can scan to see the projects here

Action Homeless, De Montfort University

In 2017, De Montfort University (DMU) in Leicester worked with their local charity 'Action Homeless' to survey street homelessness in Leicester – something that had not been carried out for 16 years. This partnership involved students throughout the training sessions, the interviews, the data inputting, and the community report event the week after. On one night, over eighty students from DMU volunteered and interviewed 31 homeless people.



Action Homeless ESH Leicester, Photo by David Weight

This project demonstrates how universities and their students can be involved with their local neighborhoods to help map and address homelessness. This project was included in the 2015-2018 Impact Report as part of the European End Street Homelessness Campaign, led by World Habitat.

<https://www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/about-dmu-documents/news/eeshc-impact-report-2015-181-1.pdf>

Constellations of HOME, University of Warwick

Funded by the Warwick Institute of Engagement, Constellations of HOME was a legacy project from Agency, a part of the HOME: Arts and Homelessness festival that took place as part of Coventry UK City of Culture 8 - 16 October 2021. Agency was created by the socially engaged artist Anthony Luvera in collaboration with people who have experienced homelessness in Coventry.

Throughout 2021, Luvera invited participants to use disposable cameras to document their experiences and places in the city that were significant for them. Participants also used digital medium format camera equipment to produce a self-portrait for Luvera's ongoing series of Assisted Self-Portraits.

Constellations of Home
Photo by Richard Nelmes



After the Agency project concluded, participants continued to meet as the Agency Photography Group in creative workshops facilitated by Luvera along with Ben Davenport (then arts worker with Coventry Crisis Skylight) as well as Arts and Social Science researchers Professor Nadine Holdsworth and Dr Jennifer Verson.

The Constellations of HOME exhibition (3 - 27 October 2022 at the University of Warwick) featured Agency self-portraits together with other photographs from personal, professional and community networks taken during the HOME festival and beyond, co-curated by participants. Members of the Agency Photography Group also reflected on their experience of the HOME festival and what it meant for them to have their creativity and their city valued and showcased. People who experience homelessness are often excluded, overly spoken for, or depicted in ways they have little control over. By inviting people who are or have been homeless to use photography and first-person narratives to represent themselves, this project sought to challenge preconceptions about homelessness and invite people to engage differently with those experiencing it.

Homeful, De Montfort University

<https://www.homeful.uk/research/>

Launched by Jo Richardson, Professor of Housing and Social Inclusion at De Montfort University, Leicester, and President of the Chartered Institute of Housing 2021-2022, this project aimed to explore housing-led approaches to resolving and preventing homelessness.

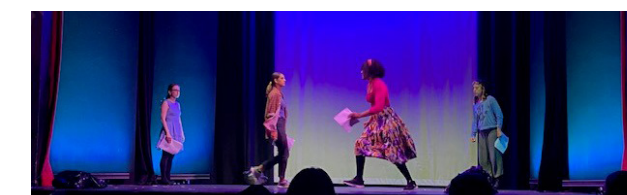


Photo from 'In Her Strength'

The project encompassed not only rough sleeping, overcrowding, and hidden homelessness, but also all the ways in which people feel disconnected from the sense of being 'at home'. The project involved a scratch theatre production called 'In Her Strength' with women in Leicester, and a photovoice project with 'People of the Streets'.

A final scratch production of 'In Her Strength' was performed at the Y Theatre in Leicester in July 2022. To watch this performance, please use the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pzQTFGwx9w>

**The LSE Homelessness Initiative,
London School of Economics**

The LSE Homelessness Initiative is a community of staff and students who want to take action on homelessness. LSEHI is a collaboration between the School and the Students' Union to empower the LSE community to play a meaningful, active, and leading role in alleviating homelessness in our local community and to support efforts to end homelessness in society.

<https://info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/Assets/Articles/LSEs-work-on-homelessness/The-LSE-Homelessness-Initiative>

**Media Representation of Homelessness,
University of Lincoln**

Dr Owen Clayton specialises in the representation of homeless people in literature and images. He has been proactive in helping to spread these conversations through the homelessness sector, including through conferences and a new set of guidelines on ethical representation of homeless people in photography and film with Streetwise Opera and photographer Anthony Luvera.

<https://reframinghomelessness.com/>

**Meaning of Home podcast,
Loughborough University**

The Meaning of Home podcast ran from 2022–24. Hosted by Sara Christou, it sought to dismantle stereotypes around homelessness and amplify unheard voices.

<https://open.spotify.com/show/1X4lQQOR6b53Sdp9JqMoTT>

Loughborough University also has the HOME Centre for doctoral training which brings together a collaboration of creative disciplines in the university to address homelessness.

<https://www.lboro.ac.uk/schools/design-creative-arts/research-innovation/projects/home-centre-for-doctoral-training/>

See Me North, Northumbria University

The 'See Me North' research project led by Professor Monique Lhussier and Dr Christina Cooper is one of the largest research projects combining creativity and homelessness. It aims to develop and evidence an integrated creative care model for people with experience of homelessness. The project funded by the UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), is co-created, trauma-informed and takes a broad and holistic view of health. <https://www.seemenorth.org>

In 2024, Northumbria University also began the research project 'Making Every Community Asset Count: Improving health and reducing inequalities for people experiencing homelessness' which is part of the third phase of projects funded through the Mobilising Community Assets to Tackle Health Inequalities programme. The UKRI programme is led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in collaboration with the National Centre for Creative Health.

**Sociabilidades por los Márgenes -
University of Buenos Aires**

Sociabilidades por los Márgenes is a co-research team of the University of Buenos Aires that brings together people who are homeless, students, teachers & activists. They have recently published a book with homeless centre Abrigar Derechos, Las Mil y Una Noches en Calle (One Thousand and one Nights on the Street). The book brings together photographs, drawings & writing created by homeless people in the city.

To get in touch via email
sociabilidadesxlosmargenes@gmail.com



Sociabilidades por los Márgenes

USEFUL READS:

**Advocacy and Research Centre
for Homelessness, Tokyo**

Originally set up in 2015 by researchers from the Tokyo Institute of Technology, ARCH is a nonprofit organisation that works with communities to promote social change towards an inclusive society.

Since January 2016, they have run a bi-annual **Tokyo Street Count** which has engaged more than 800 volunteers in learning and discussions about homelessness, and it has found that about 2.5 times more people are sleeping rough in central Tokyo at night than the official figure produced through daytime counts.

<https://www.archhomelessness.org>

EJ Art, Osaka

EJ (Equality and Justice) Art was founded by Osaka Public University's Graduate School of Urban Management as an initial 3-year course for social art coordinators. In Osaka, there are a number of not-for-profit arts organisations that respond to social issues such as environmental issues, poverty and isolation of day labourers, and discrimination against LGBTQ and immigrants. At the same time, there are challenges in nurturing the next generation of coordinators to run projects and the formation of networks. The course included working with Cocoroom, one of the leading arts and homelessness organisations in Japan which combines a 'University of the Arts' programme for people who are homeless in the area with a social enterprise guest house.

<https://eandjart.jp/2024>

**'From Homelessness to Higher Education:
A University's Approach to Housing Students'**

Radohl et al. (2024)

This study describes a pilot in the United States of a collaborative effort among a local youth shelter, mental health center, and a private university that provides housing and a college education simultaneously for college students experiencing homelessness. The programme evaluates whether students who participate experience and maintain increases in life satisfaction, wellbeing, and resilience.

Students were asked to complete scaled surveys that assessed resilience and life satisfaction. Results suggest that universities have the resources and networks to provide wrap-around services to students facing homelessness, increasing overall life satisfaction and resilience, and improving the likelihood of graduation.



**Journal is
available here**

**'How these schools worked with community
groups to fight college homelessness'**

In 2024, California launched the country's largest campus-community strategy to address student homelessness with its commitment of \$31.1 million annually to college-focused rapid rehousing (CFRR) programs in the University of California, California State University, and California Community College systems.

The College focused rapid rehousing builds on the Rapid Rehousing (RRH) model to support college students experiencing homelessness, particularly those with long-term housing and food insecurity and complex trauma. The programme provides intensive, wrap-around support aimed at improving not only academic success and housing stability, but also financial security and physical and emotional wellbeing. Central to the model is a partnership between colleges and community housing organisations, which helps students access permanent housing through time-limited rental subsidies while they are enrolled.

Alongside housing support, students receive services such as case management, budgeting, employment support, mental health referrals, and academic counselling, enabling them to sustain housing during their studies and live independently after graduation.



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