

The following was posted on Facebook a few days ago by a young chap who I?ve not actually met but who I know ?On-line? I have amended the language and grammar slightly but other than that it is word-for-word.

Please read it and then read my personal views on this situation:-

?Every second of every day is a pure battle to stay alive. Fighting my own mind on a daily basis is getting to me but trying to fight everyday life seems to be more impossible. Regardless {of} how hard I've worked over the past couple of years turns out it really was a waste of time. From next week on { I } am gunna be back on the streets {and} this is a case of facing my worst fear. I cant do this shit again I promised myself I wouldn't sleep another night on the streets but hey doesn't matter how hard I try or what I do for other people fact of the matter is my life has been made impossible from day 1. Growing up was met with addiction my father a drinker { and } my ma a smack head so what { xxxxxx } chance did I have?? Ideally I woulda loved to be a paramedic lifelong dream but people like me aren't privileged enough to have an education so my childhood dream got further n further from reach. I lowered my expectations to wanting to be a social worker { and } again I was turned down a college place because I was { in } a hostel. my life has been in and out of supported housing with people trying to dictate my life and steer me away from my dreams and potential. well here well done cos now am beat n don't know where to turn. Again my future is in the hands of a charity that are about to make me homeless again regardless to how hard I've tried to put my life back together. A hostel trying to charge me £760 a month for a room and charging for support costs when they don't actually support me in getting where I want my life to go. I want to work with people that are facing homelessness and mental health and help practically but I find the people that are working in this sector haven't got a { xxxxxx } clue. Not saying { I?m } better qualified by any means but I do know what the homeless and less fortunate need and I know how to help but being in my position I don't have the capitol to do anything

about it. Am about to lose my home for about the 10th time because I went back to work. What kinda society gives you a room in a hostel for free when your not working but then rape the { xxxx } out of you as soon as you start working again the whole system is backwards n that's coming from an Irishman. £760 for a { xxxxxx } room and { xxxx }all support never ever trust a { Charity } that's all I'll say.?

Clearly a very angry and embittered man. For obvious reasons.

My thoughts:-

(1) The system of support for those who are most in need in our country is disjointed at best and in some locations designed to be repellent. If for whatever reason you find yourself homeless the local authorities will do whatever is in their powers to wash their hands of you. In our case they used the all encompassing phrase ?Intentionally Homeless? because we left a self employed position with accommodation where I had been threatened with physical violence and evicted, leaving Sue to fulfil a two person role alone with serious health issues. In the most honest terms Sue would have died if she had remained.

(2) Charities have to attempt to fill in the gaps. However their hands are tied. They don?t have endless fiscal resources and have an ever increasing number of people who desperately need their assistance. In our case it was The Salvation Army who had the ability to force the local authority to reverse their ?Intentionally Homeless? ruling. This triggered a ?One time offer? system. As it happened we love our little flat and will do everything possible to remain here for the rest of our lives. But other people in this situation are offered housing which is grossly unsuitable. One example was a single man and his young son who were forced to take a four bedroom house in a village which is ten miles from his place of work. The additional Council Tax cost and travel expense meant that this was possibly the beginning of another route to homelessness as it was inviable for him to feed them both and pay their household bills.

(3) Homeless hostels are run in a similar way to an open prison. The presumption is that their inmates are addicts, criminals and mentally inept. In our experience the hostel was unfit for human habitation due to failure to maintain the property. The staff offered no advice whatsoever towards finding suitable long term accommodation and actively prevented access to a list of available properties which they were provided with on a weekly basis. They offered no advice

about the various local organisations who could have assisted us and as we were not brought up in this city we had no prior knowledge of these services. The overwhelming feel of homeless hostels is that you are the one in the wrong ? you created your own demise. In addition they impose structures which most people in settle accommodation would not accept and which further dehumanise you. Weekly ?Room Checks?, ?No visitors including family? etc. We were even told we were not allowed a fryer as we might cause a fire! Strangely Sue has worked in commercial kitchens for the greater part of her working life and not once has she incinerated her place of work?..

(4) Universal Credit is a death sentence to people who are trying to escape homelessness. The cost of hostel accommodation far outweighs the amount provided by Universal Credit. Which means that you effectively have to use money which should feed and clothe you to top up the rent and service charges. If you take a job your life is thrown into even greater disarray. All housing cost support is withdrawn immediately as soon as you declare you have worked a single day. In a hostel situation the conflicting systems make it almost impossible to retain a roof over your head. Universal Credit insist that you take any work possible and the hostel costs if you do so are crippling and leave you unable to feed yourself.

Whilst Eat Well as an entity doesn?t have any political stance. I do. I know which political party is to blame for this situation. But that, I guess, is for another day?..

I have personally contacted the author of this Facebook Post and provided contact details for people and services which I hope will assist him. We can?t provided a home, but we can provide information and support if he chooses to take it.