***Why does homelessness still occur in the uk?***

*Homelessness* (**noun**) *is the state of having no home.* (Google Definition) homelessness occurs in the UK for several reasons for example lack of job, capitalism, domestic violence, addiction, and poor upbringing. These problems are divided into two categories: individuals that are self -inflicted or structural, caused by society or the government/ council. There are many different types of homelessness in the UK these are some examples: rough sleeping, sofa surfing and squatting. In this essay I am going to go talk in depth about homelessness, how it affects people and how it occurs in the UK. I will also discuss the different viewpoints on what homeless people hold and some possible resolutions. *As for the number of people rough sleeping the latest official found a total of 2,688 people were estimated to be sleeping rough on one single night in autumn 2020*. The big issue (2021) Many people blame the government and the lack of budget they give to the issue of homelessness and ‘hidden homeless’ as of 21st of December 2020 the pledge to spend a further £310 million on ‘resolving’ this issue. For my first paragraph I’m going to talk about how homelessness affects people in the UK and how the government plan to resolve this issue.

How does homelessness affect people in the UK? It can affect people in many ways from taking a toll on people's physical health for example becoming ill from exposure to the elements, this may lead to many underlying health conditions that could worsen with staying on the streets. To reduced social skills that entails: lack of trust due to people stealing from them as people are on survival mode. This creates a very chaotic lifestyle, that in turn increases anxiety and could lead them to staying on the streets due to worsened mental health making them feel low and depressed. It *creates an odd danger of abuse and violence. Being homeless in the UK is destabilizing, demoralising, and depressing.* Dayn (2018).

Domestic violence is a type of hidden homelessness because even though they live in a house they are not in a safe environment and causes many women to flee these situations because they do not feel safe. *On average 1,288,018 domestic abuse cases are reported each year*. Stripe (2020). So, these women flee to women shelters. These places are safe, warm and a ‘quick’ way to get out, but it is only a temporary place that is few and far between. They also provide little support for after they leave the shelters and for staying away from abusive relationships. This contributes to homelessness occurring in the UK because they only help a minority of women, as some women do not know about coercive relationships because of a lack of education for older generations. Another reason why this type of homelessness occurs is because some women may not know that help is out there for them, as they are so isolated. This may be because of lack of funding in the Charities or lack of knowledge in society about these charities. They may also stay in these relationships because of children in the family unit, they may feel like they are ‘splitting up the family’ by reaching out for help. Also, many women return to these relationships for financial reasons or have been threatened or miss the perpetrator. This still means they are homeless because they are no in a safe place and still in harm's way.

Moving to a new country would be very scary especially when you are leaving for problems you cannot control for example political reasons, persecution, or conflict. These people are called asylum seekers that means they are waiting for their request for protection from persecution. Their request has not been processed yet this may be because of the sheer volume of people that request asylum. *In the UK, at the end of 2019, there were 133,094 refugees and 61,968 pending asylum cases.* UNHCR*,* (2020). People who live in these countries are affected by displacement and have the right to seek asylum in another country. The process is a long, and stressful one while their application is being reviewed. Many stay in the country they have fled for longer than they should even though they have the right to essentials like food, water, and a warm place to sleep many do not. This is due to language barrier, finances, or lack of knowledge of how to live. Many of these people get lost in the world of squatting while they wait for their application to be verified. Squatting is illegally staying in an unoccupied building. This feeds into homelessness occurring in the UK because there is lack of support for these people when they arrive in the UK and If they get ‘lost’ in the sea of homelessness they will be able to stay in that country and not deal with the complicated Government processes.

People leave prison with £52 in their pocket which is given to them by the government to help them get their life back on track or commence them on a life outside crime. This is a very small amount, and many go back to reoffend to get money because they have a criminal record and find it difficult to gain employment. *11 million people in the UK have got a criminal record. UCAS (2018).* In times of austerity there is a greater demand for jobs and so people with a criminal record will find it harder to gain employment after being let out of prison. They then cannot afford accommodation, so they become homeless. This could be sleeping on a friend's sofa (sofa surfing), homeless shelters or sleeping rough. Many people move to halfway houses which are places some move into after you have been to prison. They are there to provide support to divert offenders from continuing with criminal activities, but you are only there for a short amount of time and are surrounded by other people with troubling backgrounds. Criminal records are causes for homelessness to occur in the UK because there is no rehabilitation system in place for people to live life outside crime which makes homelessness more likely.

The government plays a huge role in homelessness and why it occurs in the UK. They control the benefit system and who is entitled to support. The government is also run by Upper-class people who have had no experience of homelessness or poverty. They also favour a capitalist society because it benefits the regime. This type of government suits to the top 2% of the population at the cost of the poor people in society, for example homeless people, because they are ‘swept under the rug ‘and left to fend for themselves and are given very little support. For instance, in 2017 the homeless reduction act was brought in to help people out of homelessness this is a guide which is given to an individual to go away and solve their situation on their own. Most of the time they give the same guide to most people, but everyone's situation of how they got there is different. So, the government's role in homelessness and why it occurs is immense, as they give very little support, do not understand how homelessness affects people and why they are homeless.

One way homelessness can be decreased in the U.K is by educating children and teenagers on coercive relationships and how it can be prevented from continuing. Also setting support to help prevent them going back to the perpetrator, the systems will help people to get counselling to help peoples progress with what they have been through, helping families get back on their feet with financial aid and lessons on healthy family relationships. Programmes would need to be set up with government funding so that they will have enough to keep open and provide support for the most vulnerable people in society. This programme will also provide national support being set up all over the country. Hopefully, this would help the issue with homelessness occurring in the UK because it will provide constant support to people who need it.

The criminal justice system needs to change. People being held accountable for things they did as a teenager. Which affects them for the rest of their lives. Many of these people change and become better people but still have a criminal record so they struggle to get jobs and live a normal life. Reformation of the criminal justice system will decrease homelessness in the UK by less people using the government's money and more people in the workforce helping the economy grow. They can reform the justice system by using Rehabilitation to help people become better and re-join society to become adequate citizens. Making rehabilitation more mainstream they will help people with drug and alcohol usage and give education to people in prison and people who have faced legal issues, these lessons will be taught by teachers and will be given a qualification. The offenders will also be given enough money to live on when they leave prison and will also be supported to get a job, find accommodation, and have continued support until their probation has ended. This will decrease homelessness occurring because less people because they have been rehabilitated into good citizens and have gained employment.

Some People view homelessness as people who are less of a person because they are homeless. These views are supported by some types of media. Media plays mind games with people and coerces people into believing certain things. For example, the saying trial by the media is an example of how much control the media has over people's opinions. Many people also believe because it is in the media it must be true. This is not the case at all, most of the time they embellish the truth to sell copies of their article. Many people with a liberal way of thinking believe the homelessness is a structural issue with some individual causes. Whereas a more Conservative belief tis more an individual cause then a structural cause. *More than a quarter of people in the UK (28%) Believe people sleeping rough have themselves to blame for it up on the streets*. Involve housing *(2018).* This could be why homelessness occurs in the UK because people may not have any motivation to get out of this situation because people will still think they are ‘less’ of a person because they have lived on the street.

In conclusion, how much homelessness occurs in the UK is due to a mixture of things from individual causes e.g., addiction (drug, gambling, alcohol) this is one of the biggest problems that homeless people face. Many homeless people fall into debt because of their addictions which lead them to become homeless. *2/3 of homeless people cite drug or alcohol use as a reason for first becoming homeless. Crisis (2021)*. Also, many homeless people become addicted to drugs while living on the street because they find it ‘helps’ them cope with being homeless. To structural problems e.g. Failure in the care system in the care system. *Care leavers mark up 25% of the homeless population and 25% of the adult prison population. Home for good (2021).* Homelessness occurs because there is not enough funding being put into this issue. it does not matter if the person put themselves in that situation or if they were accidentally forced into this kind of life. We as a society should take more accountability for the most vulnerable people in this country and should support them. It does not matter if it is a sandwich you buy for the, lobbying your M.P for legislation change, or donating to a local homeless charity. We should all try to help people when they are struggling as everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

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