

THE JOURNEY HOME

VISUALISING THE JOURNEY

Since 2013, IPPR North and Justlife Foundation have been speaking to people living in unsupported temporary accommodation (UTA) – the hidden homeless – to discover what life is really like for them. We have conducted 45 in-depth interviews, and have uncovered the bleak reality of life in this type of accommodation.

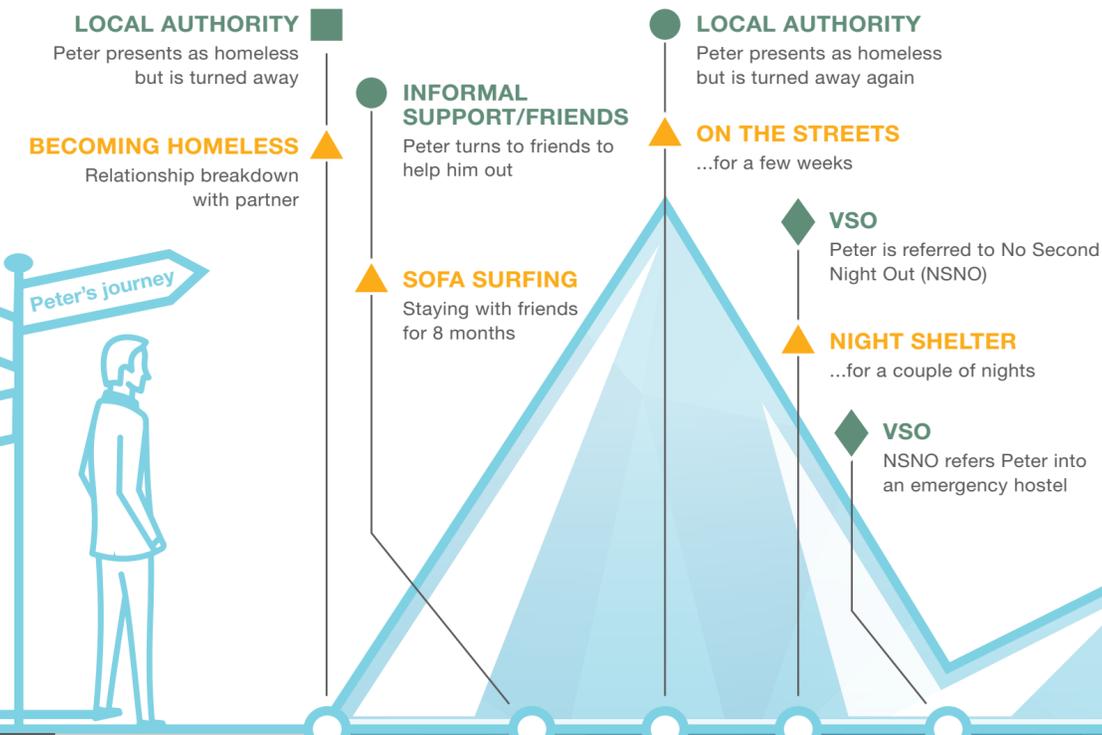
This reality is visualised as a user journey in this wallchart. ‘Peter’s’ experience of moving into and out of UTA is represented by an iceberg, both above and below the waterline. This journey moves through the four stages outlined in our latest summary report, *The journey home: Building a solution to unsupported temporary accommodation* – finding a bed, moving in and the first month, living in UTA, and moving out and moving on – plotting Peter’s unique journey across the ‘typical’ movement into and out of UTA. Although this shows one individual’s journey, it represents the experience of this type of accommodation that is broadly typical of the 45 people interviewed throughout the course of our research. It is therefore annotated at the bottom of each section by statistics and quotes from the other 44 individuals interviewed as part of this research.

In our visualisation, the peaks rising above the waterline represent the level of external support that Peter receives at each point in his journey, while the expanse below the water represents what’s going on ‘under the surface’ – specifically mental health deterioration and loss of control. The different types of support that Peter receives are denoted by three different symbols: ● = informal support, ■ = statutory support, and ◆ = voluntary sector organisation (VSO) support. The journey highlights the reality that service involvement falls away once an individual finds their way into UTA, and it is from this point that many people reported worsening mental health and increased lack of control over their lives. Of the 45 residents interviewed, 38 reported deteriorating mental health, and 39 felt a lack of control, therefore intensifying their negative experiences of UTA.

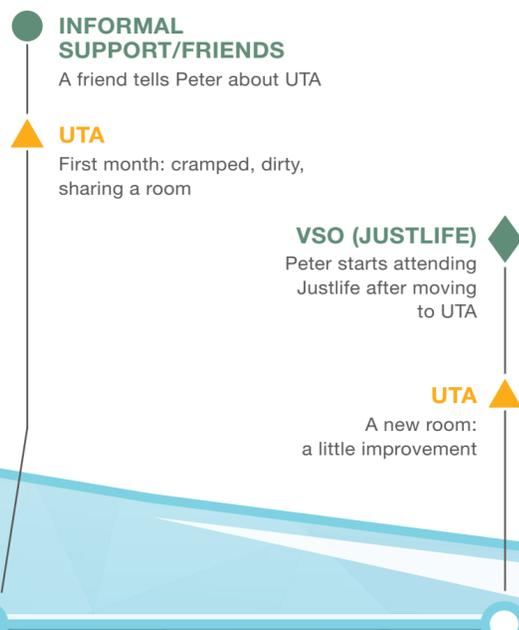
It is important to note that this research is qualitative, based on individuals’ retellings of their experiences within UTA.

PETER'S JOURNEY

STAGE 1: FINDING A BED



STAGE 2: MOVING IN & THE FIRST MONTH



STAGE 3: LIVING IN UNSUPPORTED TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION



STAGE 4: MOVING OUT & MOVING ON



LOSS OF CONTROL & DETERIORATING MENTAL HEALTH

BACK AT HOME
Back with partner but relationship breaks down again after a few weeks

30 PEOPLE
had no access to a kitchen, or felt the food was poor

27 PEOPLE
had witnessed or experienced violence

14 PEOPLE
were victims of crime

33 PEOPLE
wanted to be rehoused but were constantly waiting

QUOTES:

- "I went to the housing so many times but it is just demoralising because you think, 'What's the point in you trying?' - I mean, I've worked all my life, paid my taxes all my life, I'm not doing anything wrong."
- "I felt I couldn't rely on my friends forever - they were beginning to get sick of me."
- "We were both sharing a room... just a box room, single bed in it. Cold, damp everywhere. No heating at all."
- "It's supposed to be a B&B, now all [the landlord] buys is a loaf of bread and a pack of eggs every two days... Don't forget, there are 10, 11, 12 people living in there."
- "We are not a priority within the housing association. I mean, I've got a housing number, but when I bid for flats I've got no chance. It was 4 or 5, but it's gone up now so it's a lot harder."
- "I got these red marks all over my skin and all that, since I moved in there. Now, bites, bugs, whatever."
- "I do feel threatened where I'm living. I don't even really know around here."
- "I'm better because I'm out of places like that. In there it's so demoralising, it makes you feel so low."
- "I was drinking a lot of alcohol, but since I've moved here, I'm doing my college work. I'm just enjoying life a lot more than I was when I was there."

TABLE: How people found a bed in UTA

Prison/probation	4
Referred by charity	5
Referred by local authority housing options team	10
Referred by local authority housing discharge team	6
Referred by friend	5
Self referred	8
Police referred	2
Signposted by council	3
Signposted by charity	2

"I called in to Shelter and I saw someone there... They mentioned [UTA] and phoned the manager. I had no money to get there, I didn't know where I was going, and Shelter gave me £5 for the key... So I got the £5 and the manager was just sitting there on the settee when I walked through the door."

23 PEOPLE
had either no lock or a broken one on their door

"But in there I don't even drink, because I could be sleeping and someone could come in and attack me whilst I'm sleeping and kill me in there. With that lock, my life is completely on the line. I don't feel secure at all."

27 PEOPLE
felt that nothing was ever fixed in the property

"There should be something done against landlords what have properties as squalid as that - horrible, damp, cold, freezing, people are freezing. There is an old fella in there and he sits down with a blanket and just waits for his tea all day. It's not good, it's not good at all."

22 PEOPLE
felt that their physical health deteriorated

"You know you pay a certain amount of contribution on top of whoever pays the rent - what for? No hot water... the place was in disrepair, it wanted shutting down and redoing properly. There were no real facilities... The beds were terrible, I mean literally you couldn't sleep on them properly, they were a sort of £10 mattress."

38 PEOPLE
felt that drug and alcohol use was endemic and problematic

"To be honest with you you're better off on the streets, because your life is different there, you can walk away from the drugs, from the drink, but in there you can't because it's everywhere... You walk in the place and the weed is stinking the place out so even if you weren't a druggie you're gonna come out a druggie."

34 PEOPLE
felt that management was either bad, intimidating or bullying

"If you don't pay your rent, you're out. You've got a very unsympathetic landlord who wants his rent every two weeks. And if you don't pay it, you're out boy. You've not got stability, you've not got your own place."

4 PEOPLE
didn't want to move

"To me it's home, it's a roof above my head, it's better than being on the street... But to me it's my home, that room is my home."