



Community Social Care

Homelessness: Danny's story

Originally from Northern Ireland Danny is another man sleeping rough in Swansea. Now in his late 40's he moved to Wales some years ago.

Danny:

Well I bought a house with my then girlfriend, Naomi, well the relationship after a year didn't work out. I broke a window in a shop and I got jail in Swansea, six months, all I did was three months, but when I come out I couldn't go back home, couldn't go back to Ireland so I just stayed in Swansea. And then I started shoplifting, kept getting busted, pilfering little bits of this, little bits of that and every time I got picked up I'd go to jail. And then I thought to myself, well f—k it, I'll stay here, so I've been here ever since, roughly seven years. I don't judge it day by day, but day by day goes: the County Hall, the bus station, I can't get accommodation so I've just got to sleep rough, though I prefer to sleep indoors if I could get in, but I'm reluctant even trying. I've got a reputation as being an alcoholic and swings about, and so I try and I just keep getting knocked back. I mean I've seen several Christmases go, the County security guards they see me through a few Christmases, and they look after me generously – Christmas dinner, bottle of wine, packet of fags – every Christmas – they're tidy people, I know them all after this next time, so I'm quite happy to stay down there. There is a problem though, too many people have got to know that I'm staying down there, and how easy I get off with it, if easy is the word, and they've started turning up, and they're f-----g it up, so they're coming down now. I was there the other day, there were sixteen people there. Do you think the security guards going to take sixteen people, so they just told us all to f—k off, well not exactly, excuse my word, but words to that effect: time you moved. So that was it. I'm lucky though, some people do look after me. The Cyrenians give me blankets, I know various people in there, they give me a blanket now and again. What happens when it comes to them all, six o'clock and I go for a drink 'cos I'm an alcoholic, 'cos it's cheaper, alcohol keeps me going. So I nip up to the off licence, take my blankets and come back, half an hour later the blankets are gone and I'm on my a—se again. I should be dead by now, well I was given six months to live, but I've done them. Well they give me weekly benefit but there again my benefit is benefiting other people 'cos they come down and they take it all off me and I get eighty quid. I buy a drink, make sure I've got a half a bottle of vodka, and after I've had that I start to nod, obviously after a bottle of vodka, just go and do it, empty my pockets and that's it, gone by midday I've got nothing, so I've got to go begging myself. Ah c'est la vie, c'est le jour, it's life, this is death. It can be embarrassing, especially when I'm hung-over and I'm not feeling too good, I walk around and I've built up my confidence as best I can. You know what it's like with a hangover though, excuse me mate, any small change please? F—k off, get yourself a job, I've got to work for mine. So what do you say, you know you can't turn round and kick 'em up the a-se although you might feel like it, just have to swallow it and carry on. I was begging and it was p-----g down with rain on Sunday night and this guy nearly battered the hell out of me, but a bloke across the road saw what was happening, he came across and he says are you alright? I says yeah, I think so. He says I saw what happened, get yourself a drink, give me five quid. You see when I've got a quid I know I've got a can, so that's going to calm my system down, so I get a quid and I'll run off to the off licence, buy a can, that'll do me. Oh I don't go top shelf unless I've got the money, like on pay day I'll go for a vodka, little bottle, I'll take myself out of the way. But you see on pay day you get the hangers-on and they know who gets paid when, and so they turn up just to get the money, so they expect a fiver, but they don't do it one at a time, they come en masse so a fiver isn't enough, it's got to be a tenner, well that's a percentage of your money....never see them again til the next week, that's what p----s me off.