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The Good Practice Guide to Teaching Homelessness

This Good Practice Guide aims to cover a wide range of topics surrounding how to teach the about homelessness. The following is a list of the Table of Contents:

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Introduction

This Good Practice Guide is directed towards teachers, parents, and students to help fulfill their needs when it comes to teaching the subject of homelessness. The goal of the guide is to function as a concise, easy to follow resource for both teachers and parents wanting to effectively teach about homelessness. It directs readers to the appropriate lesson plans, where to find specific resources for teaching about homelessness, and offers advice on teaching the topic. It is in the form of a document so that it can easily be downloaded as a PDF.

The materials and resources in this guide book are the product of a collaborative effort by the Museum of Homelessness (MoH) and a team of four students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. This guidebook is intended to provide information and materials that will allow teachers to receive guidance and access to other teachers and educators through a set of educational resources. The educational materials cover a broad range of topics and are designed to develop understanding, tolerance and empathy as well and reinforce the museum's mission to combat the stereotypes and narrow understandings that exist around homelessness.

Chapter 1: Homelessness in 2017

Homelessness is an ever-present problem in the United Kingdom and one that has been growing of late as a result of the economy and housing policies. At the end of 2015, 63.5 million people were considered displaced, and the number of rough sleepers had increased by 102% since 2010. Despite the U.K.'s governmental efforts to alleviate the growing number of homeless, many of those affected do not benefit from the direct results of these initiatives, and the homeless population continuously faces challenges daily. People are not always able to realize these rights as citizens of the United Kingdom. Some of the biggest obstacles that the homeless face are stigmatization and discrimination. The homeless are often treated poorly by members of the general public who fail to understand or empathize with their plight.

Due to the current political state of the United Kingdom and the social economic shift in the housing market, the number of homeless people is continuing to increase. Government austerity measures and the failure of social housing policies are two of the major reasons for increasing homelessness in the last 30 years. The U.K. government's austerity drive seeks to garner public support for the reduction or withdrawal of welfare entitlements. The country has spent more than it has made, resulting in large deficits. In order to balance the budget, the government dramatically cut the funding for welfare programs. In regards to the lack of housing, housing over the past 100 years has significantly evolved. In 1914, 90% of the English population rented homes, today 66% of people own their own homes. However majority of the people cannot afford to own their own homes. This increase in those who cannot afford to own a home have created the "generation rent" (M. Turtle, personal interview, April, 18, 2017).

Despite government efforts to combat homelessness, it is an issue that continues to grow in the U.K. as represented in Figure 1. It is a difficult issue to address because no one cause explains the ongoing problem or the recent increase in homelessness. Of the 57,730 households accepted for assistance in England by local authorities in 2016, 28% became homeless when their short-term lease expired, 26% were no longer accommodated by friends or relatives, 20% had a relationship breakdown with their partner (14% of those cases being violent), 7% lost their rented housing or their home was repossessed, 3% had rent arrears, and 18% became homeless for other unspecified reasons (*Live Tables*, 2016).



Figure 1: Number of Households Determined Legally Homeless 2007-2016

There is not one singular cause for the recent rise in the numbers in the homeless population. Homelessness can take many forms, some not as visible as others. Over the past 200 years, the government have enacted many policies to address and aid some of the nation’s most vulnerable populations, while various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) formed to petition for and provide additional services they felt the government was lacking.

Giving a voice to people who have been silenced throughout history, especially with regards to the homeless community, is a principle to which the Museum of Homelessness was founded. Teaching homelessness in schools will not only help schools fulfill a part of the citizenship curriculum, but also increase awareness on such an urgent issue. Educating students about homelessness may be one way to enhance public empathy for the homeless in the long term and help eliminate some of the stigmas associated with homelessness.

Chapter 2: What Is Out There (1000-2000 words)

In addition to the MoH there are other organizations and providers in existence that raise awareness and provide services. Some of the service providers include:

Tes;
BBC;
Shelter;
Groundswell;
Crisis; and,
The National Homeless Organization.

Tes is an online community where teachers world-wide can connect and share resources. The website enables teachers to make an account, thus gaining partial access to the resources. However, teachers have to pay to be granted access to the entire collection of resources. These teaching materials can easily be downloaded and integrated with other webpages/collaboration-based websites (such as Wikispaces).

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has a webpage related to the PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education) and Citizenship curricula on the “Young and Homeless.” The website is currently archived and will no longer be updated however it is still accessible and offers a variety of resources such as lesson plan handouts and activities. The BBC link is

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/pshe_and_citizenship/personal_wellbeing/relationships/challenging_discrimination/pages/young_and_homeless.shtml. The lesson on the webpage explores the reasons why young people find themselves homeless and aims for students to analyze the advice and support available.

The National Coalition For The Homeless (NCH--also known as the National Homeless Organization) The NCH is an American based organization and a network of people (activists, and advocates community-based service providers, and others) who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness that work towards their mission of preventing and ending homelessness while protecting homeless people’s civil rights. The NCH website is:

<http://nationalhomeless.org/issues/housing/>. The NCH website has various resources on homelessness and provides links to several publications and documents on topics such as a U.S. Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), preventing homelessness, and restoring housing voucher funding.

Shelter is a housing and homeless charity that has resource material to teach secondary school-aged students about homelessness and why people find themselves in need of housing. On their website, Shelter has created a resource bank of activities and lesson plans in their classroom kits. Shelter's online classroom kit offers free teaching resources about home and homelessness structured to fit the National Curriculum objectives for primary and secondary school students. They have lesson plans ranging from Key Stage 1-Key Stage 4. The KS 3 lesson plans focus on citizenship and uses games, debate cards, video and case studies as a way of encouraging students to learn more about homelessness. The KS 4 lesson plans focus on both the citizenship curriculum and PSHE material. These lesson plans encourage discussion and debate as well as challenge the opinions of young homeless people and their housing options. The link to this Shelter Classroom Kit is: <http://www.shelterclassroomkit.org.uk/>

Groundswell is a charity that was created in 1996 that “exists to enable homeless people to take more control of their lives, have a greater influence on services, and to play a full role in our community” (*About Groundswell* 2015). They run peer education and advocacy projects centered on health and homelessness. Groundswell's service called Homeless Health Peer Advocacy (HHPA) offers one-to-one support for people experiencing homelessness, especially providing guidance in making and attending health appointments and overcoming the pre-existing practical, personal, and systemic barrier which prevent them from addressing their health needs. The Peer Advocates serve as mentors and are volunteers, all of whom have experienced homelessness. In addition to accompanying their mentees to various appointments Peer Advocates serve to help their mentees gain the skills necessary to access health services on their own.

Crisis is a national charity for single homeless people. Crisis has thought-provoking PowerPoints, with accompanying lesson plans, on the problem of hidden homelessness, which

looks at the cost of privately renting a room in a shared house, and the meaning of homelessness.

Find these resources and more at: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/>

Chapter 3: Teaching Homelessness

Preparation Before Teaching

Teaching about homelessness is a very sensitive topic and requires some preparation before teaching it in a classroom. In the section **Chapter 4: Lesson Plans**, there are specific instructions and guidance outlining how to teach a specific lesson followed by corresponding PowerPoints and worksheets. **The following are possible approaches one can take towards teaching homelessness:**

Before teaching students it is recommended take the time to **reflect** on your personal experiences with homelessness. This increases your ability to discuss and be open about the topic of homelessness because everyone has experienced or know someone who has experienced homelessness. You can keep your thoughts private, or share with your class if you think it would be beneficial.

Also it is important to note that homelessness can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, race and social status. It is not something that is caused by laziness or a choice. Homelessness comes in many forms, and by developing a better understanding about homeless people through educations and exploration it can help combat negative stereotypes and assumptions.

Sensitivity and Framing: While there are certain aspects of homelessness that are difficult to discuss (such as alcohol and substance abuse or domestic violence), that does not mean that difficult/sensitive topics should be avoided. The wording and framing of things needs to be carefully framed depending on the age group. For younger students such as KS 3, probably a more general overview and brief introduction to the more sensitive topics such as drugs and alcohol abuse.

Formally Teaching Homelessness in the Classroom

Visually representing information is essential for teaching secondary students. By using video clips you are able to keep the attention of students. Having videos where students can hear the voices of people who experienced homelessness can humanize concepts and make the issue real

to students. Perhaps using a video accompanied by a worksheet with questions about the video would be a useful exercise.

Case Studies serve as a powerful tool to use when teaching students about homelessness. They humanize homelessness and encourage empathy by asking students to consider the things they take for granted each day. In the Further Links/Enrichments Activities section of this guidebook it lists several useful case studies to use depending on the lesson you chose to teach.

Guest Speakers have also been shown to be extremely beneficial. Guest speakers are best utilized when their visit is time with the corresponding topic and if they are experienced in talking to secondary students. This allows students to ask questions they may have been shy to ask their teacher and get a response from an expert in the homelessness sector.

Discussions that are open ended give students time to form individual thoughts and opinions. A lot of people would like to engage in free conversation. A good way to begin a discussion about homelessness is to present Key Assumptions and Myths then afterwards shatter those perceived stereotypes and misunderstandings with an explanation of the reality that homeless people face and the challenges they endure. After discussing the Assumptions and Myths and then presenting the facts you can open the discussion up to the students and ask for their thoughts.

Concluding Homelessness

Pre-Post Test Evaluation: Be mindful that pre-post tests are not the only way to measure and evaluate how much a student has learned. However if pre-post tests are to be used they should be done in a less structured manner. The pre-post tests could include both closed and open ended questions, so you will be able to evaluate both on factual information and still allow the students to respond to the material in a more abstract and emotional way. The test could analyze a shift in perception focusing on empathy and compassion, to a person's responsibility as a citizen.

Potential questions to be included:

What was a student's perception shift?

What do you do for yourself?

What do you do for your peers/friends?

What is your responsibility on a wider scale?

It might be beneficial to have a **creative outcome** such as a poster competition on topics surrounding homelessness. This allows the students create something that represents their reaction/experience with the lesson.

The process of getting **support** is also important to consider when teaching about homelessness in schools. Due to the sensitive nature of homelessness and the various emotional responses it can elicit, having a support worker or counselor present would be ideal. Should any topic strike someone and make them feel uncomfortable he/she should be able to speak with a professional if needed.

A Brief Overview of the Types of Homelessness:

Rough Sleeping is the most visible and refer to a person sleeping in open air, such as streets and alleyways.

In Temporary Accommodation means a person stays in a temporary house that is assigned by the council before he/she moves to a settled accommodation. The length of time people can stay in temporary accommodations ranges significantly. People could stay as little as one night to an indefinite amount of nights. Each type of temporary accommodation is independent and have its own set of rules and regulations in terms of access and lengths of stay. Even if a person has temporary accommodation it may not always be the appropriate place for the individuals staying in them. There are a number of different types of temporary accommodation. The following are some examples:

Night/winter shelters

Hostels

B&Bs

Woman refuges

Private and Social Housing

Hidden Homelessness refers to homeless people that do not show up in the official statistics. They chose to handle their situation on informally. This consists of staying with family and friends, sofa surfing, and living in unsuitable housing.

Statutory Homeless refers to when approaching local authorities for support those deemed in 'priority need. 'It is a household considered to be homeless.

Various subsets of homelessness branch out of the above types:

Welfare Reform People experience homelessness due to the change in welfare policies

Youth Homelessness is a group of people who experience homelessness in a young age

LGBT population refers to homeless people that are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgendered.

Ex Armed Forces refers to people become homeless after leaving the military.

Chapter 4: Lesson Plans

To introduce homelessness to the citizenship curriculum, a set of lesson plans for Key Stages 3 and 4 were created that draw upon content developed and held by the MoH. Each of the lesson plans will have a corresponding PowerPoint and set of worksheets that will be cohesive, but can also stand alone. The set of lesson plans are adaptable with enrichment activities for students who work faster, or show more interest in the topic. Each plan is designed to fit into the PSHE/Citizenship curriculum denoted at the top of each page so teachers can introduce the topic when appropriate in their classroom.

The Lesson Plans Include:

- Individual Concept Maps with selected objects from the MoH's Archived Collection, detailing the lesson plan
- Corresponding PowerPoints
- Activities and exercises related to homelessness

The lessons were molded around objects from the museum collection that were chosen from the archive that the team archived, as well as items that has testimonial videos that could be used in a classroom. The items that have been used in current development of materials for this project are:

- The Glue Pony's: A Collection of Short Stories by Chris Wilson;
- The ASBO, and;
- The Naloxone Kit.

These pieces were chosen because of their adaptability to the classroom and the materials. Although there were only three items chosen, there is a fourth lesson plan that focuses on the housing crisis, but does not use a collection piece to emphasize the information. Along with the lesson plans are a set of Key Stage concept maps, the concept maps outline the key questions and goals for each of the lessons. The questions are the basis for the objectives that the lessons are built around. There are four lesson plans in total. Two are focused on the KS3 curriculum and two are focused on the KS4.

The **table** below outlines the overview and overall goals for each of the four plans.

Lesson Plan	Aims	Learning Outcomes
Background (KS4)	Expose students to stories and narratives of people who have experienced homelessness. Through poetry, and short stories students can reflect on their views of the homeless	Students will be able to identify with people their own age who have or are experiencing homelessness They will work on creatively interpreting the material that they read from the excerpts.
Housing (KS3)	There is a housing-shift from renting to owning, and has led to a change in what people are able to afford with high housing prices.	Identify the difference between a house and a home. Understand the shift in housing tendencies in the last 40 years.
Living (KS3)	The purpose of this lesson is to introduce what an ASBO is, and have students learn through role play the effects that displacement has on homeless individuals.	Learn basic daily needs in mindset of a homeless individual Discover the significance behind receiving an ASBO and what an ASBO is
Opioids (KS4)	Explain the effects that drugs and alcohol can have on the community, both homeless and housed individuals. Discuss how an individual's drug abuse can affect friends and family and become a public health problem for society at large.	Students will be able to identify the use of Naloxone and the effects of addiction on the homeless community.

The background lesson plan details important information that is a groundwork for what the lesson entails. The remainder of the lesson presents poems and short stories from two publications that are in the museum's collection. Students read and analyze the material they read, and are then asked to write their own poetry based on their interpretation of the material.

Lesson Plan: The Background (KS4)

The Background is geared towards Key Stage 4, but could be adapted to KS3 with different excerpts from the publication.

Lesson Plan: Housing (KS3)

This lesson plan pertains to housing in the United Kingdom, and does not include an object from the collection, rather focuses on the legislation and shift in the housing market. The lesson targets KS3 students opening the door to information about homelessness. This lesson is broken

down into two activities. The first activity lets students create a definition for the words house and home. Defining these two words leads students into the next exercise where they are given a set income as well as a list of flats to choose from. The circumstances vary, and it forces students to make decisions on what they would consider home.

Lesson Plan: Living (KS3)

The titled Living (KS3) uses a testimonial video for an ASBO (anti-social behavior order) and asks students to contemplate what they would do as a displaced homeless person in central London. This role-playing gives students the opportunity to understand the situations that are reality for so many who live on the streets.

Lesson Plan: Opioids (KS4)

The opioid lesson is geared solely at KS4 due to the content of the material to be presented. The lesson goes into detail discussing not only the physiological effects of drug use, but also the social consequences as well. To go with the PowerPoint and video, there is a worksheet that has key questions outlined on it so students can follow the lesson and keep notes as it progresses.

Chapter 5: Further Links/Enrichment Activities

If interested in learning more and additional useful resources the following is a list of additional resources:

MoH online webpage

The online web page acts as a resource for teachers, parents, and students that will broaden understandings about teaching and discussing homelessness. The pages will signpost existing resources and case studies that are specifically targeted at teachers, parents, and students. The teachers' tab will contain the materials for bringing the topic of homelessness into classrooms. The parents' page will contain information on how to open up the conversation about homelessness with their child. The students' page will include ways to take action, get involved, and find out more information on the topic. This page will help the MoH website become a center for materials rather than solely presenting information

MoH Archived Collection Database (Add link to Database)

A catalogued database of the current items in the MoH's Collection. There are a total of 120 items catalogued, these pieces include works of art, books, publications, scrapbooks, and diaries that represent the homeless experience in an emotional rather than factual way. These items have the potential for being used in a lesson plan.

MoH School Database (*Add link to database)

A database of schools that teach the citizenship curriculum is a critical resource that can help teachers network and contact other teachers teaching the citizenship/PSHE curriculum. The database consists of schools in Westminster, Kensington, Chelsea, Hammersmith, and Fulham.

LankellyChase Study (*Add link)

For further information and statistics on the problems the homeless population face this report has useful statistics. It discusses how people who are homeless are very likely to suffer from a mental health problem, poor health generally, addiction and/or an association with the criminal justice system.

Groundswell the Escape Plan Study (*add link)

A booklet available in PDF form, that aims to "create an evidence base of the critical factors that have enabled people to move on from homelessness." Research was conducted by people who have experienced homelessness themselves in the hopes of helping others move on from homelessness. As a result of the range of factors and variety of people there was no one solution, but found seven key themes which if addressed, they believe will support people on their journey out of homelessness.

Groundswell Homeless and Health (*Add link)

This is a toolkit to encourage and support people to engage in peer activity around homelessness and health. This toolkit provides advice, inspiration and examples of peer activity in action.

Chapter 6: Taking Action

Some solutions require government leadership, but there are ways that everyone can help and make a difference.

Learn about the causes of homelessness at Crisis's website: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/>

and Shelter's website: http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/homelessness

Support projects in your neighborhood providing homes for people who need them.

Contact the Museum of Homelessness for further referral to the various homelessness organizations and service providers.

Co-Founders: Matt and Jess Turtle

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Contact elected Members of Parliament (MP) that represent your area.

To contact your MP simply visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-an-mp-or-lord/contact-your-mp/>

On the website above you can find out who your local MP is and the best way to get in contact with them.

You can also **Sign Up with Crisis's Everybody in Program** where upon signing up real-life stories and the possible actions you can take are send directly to your inbox.

<https://www.crisis.org.uk/get-involved/everybody-in/>

Be Respectful and courteous to homeless people.

Get Involved with the MoH:

Come to an event: The MoH holds events year round, we'd love to welcome you to one.

Contribute: Do you have an object or story you'd like to share with the MoH? The MoH is looking for material to add to our collection.

Workshops: The MoH are developing heritage workshops for people interested in the collection and archive. If you are interested in attending or hosting one of these please do get in touch.

Volunteer: The MoH programmes events all year round. If you are interested in volunteering please contact us.

Talk to your family, friends, and colleagues about the growing issue of homelessness. Spread awareness and increase the general public's empathy and understanding.

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