Home life: the meaning of home for people who have experienced homelessness

By:

Sarah Elizabeth Coward

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield
Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Sociological Studies

September 2018

Abstract

'Home' is widely used to describe a positive experience of a dwelling place (shelter). It is about a positive emotional connection to a dwelling place, feeling at 'home' in a dwelling place, where both physiological and psychological needs can be fulfilled. This portrayal of 'home', however, is not always how a dwelling place is experienced. A dwelling place can be a negative environment, i.e. 'not-home', or there may be no emotional attachment or investment in a dwelling place at all. Both circumstances receive little attention in the literature. This research explores the realities of 'home' by delving into the 'home' lives of seventeen individuals who had experienced a range of different housing situations, including recent homelessness, moving to a (resettlement) sole tenancy and then moving on from that tenancy.

Participants were asked to recall their housing histories, from their first housing memory as a child up to the time of interviewing. For each housing episode, they were asked to describe the circumstances of their life at the time, for example relationships, employment and education. They were also asked to reflect on their housing experiences. Similarities and differences of experience are explored according to gender and type of housing situation. This research tells the story of lives characterised by housing and social instability, often triggered by a significant change in social context in childhood. As such, the fulfilment of both physiological and psychological needs was often constrained, and experiences of a dwelling place were more likely to be negative rather than positive, although 'home' could be found in the most challenging of circumstances, and often in the most unlikely of places. The participants' constructions of 'home' and 'not-home' were largely focused on a singular feature, unlike the broader social constructions of 'home'. 'Not-home' was characterised by physical insecurity, whereas 'home' was characterised by emotional security, with many characteristics mirroring human needs, of which 'positive relationships' was the most common feature. Many participants, however, had limited experience of, and/or struggled to forge and maintain, 'positive relationships', they lacked 'social capital', which meant having to navigate through a life of instability pretty much alone. As such, this research proposes a new narrative of 'relationship poverty', in which a lack of 'positive relationships' hinders the fulfilment of needs, and therefore the possibility of feeling at 'home' in any dwelling place.

Contents

Appendices **243**

List of figures and tables

<u>Figures</u>

<u>Tables</u>

Acknowledgments

To all the participants, a very big thank you for sharing your stories and inspiring me.

To my supervisor Professor Richard Jenkins, a big thank you for sharing your expertise, and for all your guidance and encouragement.

To my second supervisor, Professor Sue White, thank you for helping me enhance my PhD.

To Professor Tony Warnes and Dr Maureen Crane, thank you for giving me with the opportunity to do my PhD.

To my husband Simon, thank you for believing in me. I couldn't have done it without your support, encouragement, and love.

To my very good friend Elaine, thank you for being a great sounding board and for sharing my enthusiasm for the subject area.

Thank you to my wonderful five year old daughter Elizabeth, who provided me with motivation to keep-going when she sat at my desk and said "I'm doing my PhD."

And finally to my parents, a huge thank you for taking such great care of Elizabeth whilst I worked on my PhD.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.0   Background to the study

Over the last 15 years of my professional (housing practitioner) and academic (research) careers I have developed a strong understanding of and interest in the housing, health and social care needs of vulnerable groups, particularly homeless people, who often have complex/multiple needs. I worked as a Research Associate at Sheffield Hallam University (2002-05) and The University of Nottingham (2006-07). My MA thesis explored Hidden Homelessness in Sheffield. I specialise in qualitative research and for the past seven years have been working for Kings College London on a number of homelessness studies. The premise for this PhD study stemmed from working as Principal Research Associate at The University of Sheffield (from April 2007 – January 2011) on the ESRC funded FOR-HOME project - *Factors in the outcomes of the resettlement of homeless people* (Grant RES-062-23-0255, Sheffield Institute for Studies on Aging, The University of Sheffield).

The FOR-HOME project followed the experiences of 400 single homeless people aged 16+ years who were resettled from hostel or other temporary accommodation into independent tenancies in London, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire (Crane *et al.,* 2011, p. iii). The study was conducted 2007-2010 in collaboration with six homelessness service-provider organisations (Broadway, Centrepoint, St Mungo's and Thames Reach in London; Framework in Nottinghamshire; and St Anne's Community Services in Yorkshire) (*ibid.*, p. 7). During the study's recruitment period (2007/2008), the Supporting People programme was the principal source of public funding for housing-related support services, which emphasised resettlement practice, with an assumption that hostel residents would be ready to move on within two years. The timing of resettlement varied greatly, influenced by factors such as housing availability and the level of housing priority given to individual residents. In preparing residents for independent living, all six organisations provided some form of resettlement support, covering areas such as finances (tackling debts, budgeting, paying bills), cooking and home maintenance, addressing mental health and substance misuse issues, and involvement in education, training and/or employment. Levels of engagement with such support varied, as did provision of, and engagement with tenancy support services post-resettlement. Attempts to prevent, reduce and manage homelessness are always reliant upon the direction of national and local policy which are often dictated by funding levels.

The sample members were interviewed in-depth on three occasions (*ibid.*, p. iii): just before resettlement, after six months and after 15/18 months (*ibid.,* p. 8); they were given a (cash) 'thank-you' payment at each interview (*ibid.,* p. 9). Data was collected during semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, which covered housing, homelessness and employment histories; finances and debts; engagement in work, training and other activities; health and addiction problems; family and social networks; the characteristics of the resettlement accommodation and housing satisfaction; help and support pre and post-resettlement; experiences in the new accommodation; morale and settledness; and future plans and aspirations (*ibid.*, p. 9).

I managed the recruitment and tracking of 177 participants in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire and conducted the majority of interviews in both areas at each stage of the research which allowed for continuity between 'researcher' and 'participant'. Working on the FOR-HOME project, and reading literature concerned with the resettlement and housing of homeless people, initially triggered an interest in the meaning of 'home' for homeless people. The 'before resettlement' interview documented a brief housing history (covering the previous two years) from which I recognised that many participants had experienced, in addition to homelessness and institutional placements, a number of different housing situations. For example, when I was contacting participants for their follow-up interviews, some had moved on from their resettlement tenancy.

This sparked an interest in how experiences of 'home' and the meaning of 'home' may differ across different housing situations and over time, in this case, given the availability of a sample of potential research subjects particularly among people who have experienced (recent) homelessness. The particular value of the data collected from this small sample for an inquiry into the meaning(s) of 'home' is twofold: first, the range of their experiences of different housing situations - including homelessness - allows light to be shed on those meanings from a range of different directions, and second, what 'home' means may come into clear perspective when it is absent. I was, therefore, particularly interested in how the changing context of people's lives framed their experiences of 'home'. I identified a noticeable gap in the 'home' literature pertaining to how the meaning of 'home' may change over time in accordance with differing housing and social circumstances, and among a group of people who have experienced a variety of housing situations and personal vulnerabilities, as homeless people often have. A narrative around the need for 'home' was lacking in both the 'home' and 'homelessness' literature.   From my experience, I also recognised an absence in local, and national housing and homelessness policy of any recognition or understanding of

the value of 'home' in reducing social exclusion. There was little evidence of strategies that promoted a sense of 'home' among former homeless people. Housing/homelessness policy then, and now, tends to look at the short term, objective solution: the provision of shelter/housing; a physical 'house'. Similarly, resettlement practice tends to focus on the practicalities of running and maintaining a roof over one's head. Thus, I saw a particular need for evidence that focused on a person's emotional, subjective connection to a dwelling place to inform housing and homelessness policy about the merits of promoting 'home' among homeless and formerly homeless people and other vulnerable groups, with the aim of promoting lasting housing and social stability for individuals and the wider society.

I proposed to the FOR-HOME project principal directors (Dr Maureen Crane and Professor Tony Warnes) that I undertake a PhD study entitled *The meaning of 'home' for people with experience of homelessness*, drawing on a sub-sample of the FOR-HOME study sample, so adding value to, and complementing the work of the ESRC study. The ESRC were informed about my proposal and raised no objections.

1.1   Focus and scope of the study

A limited number of studies have examined experiences of 'home' over time, across different housing situations, and in relation to social context (see Gurney, 1997, 1996, for example). Insight into people's 'home' trajectories - detailed accounts of personal housing histories documenting every housing episode and the social context of each episode – is largely absent. This research goes some way to filling this gap, by exploring the meaning of 'home' for seventeen people who had recently moved on from homelessness into a (resettlement) sole tenancy and then moved from that tenancy. The sample is made up of twelve males and five females: the age range was between 18-49 years old, with clusters of people aged between 18-25 years old (6), 26-39 years old (7), and 40+ years old (4), with the female sample being a lot younger than the male sample. Housing and social circumstances were diverse, but with some pattern. Homelessness, for example, was common place but the context of the situation was unique; sleeping on a friend's floor, for example could mean just that and being asked to leave the house in the day time, whereas sleeping on your aunt's sofa could be more of a familial situation. Many participants engaged in negative behaviour, for example crime and/or substance misuse, but to varying degrees and with individual consequences. All seventeen participants experienced housing and social instability but the particulars of the situation were different and the impact and affect was particular to the individual, as no one person's circumstances are the same as another's. A detailed profile of the participants is built up throughout the succeeding chapters.

A qualitative approach was taken, which employed face-to face interviews with participants, asking them to recount their housing and personal histories (providing good material about the context in which these histories can be understood), from their first childhood memories up to the time of interviewing. In reflecting on their housing experiences, participants were able to identify housing episodes/situations that were experienced as 'home', and what made it 'home' for them. As Mallet (2004, p. 70) notes, the experiential memory of 'home' encapsulated in housing histories is crucial to understanding the meaning of 'home'.

This thesis is, therefore, a study of the meaning and experience of 'home' – and indeed, 'not-home' – over time for people who, unlike most of the rest of the population, have experienced homelessness. This experience makes them particularly appropriate for exploring the meanings of 'home' and 'not-home'. It tells the story of seventeen people who have experienced a variety of challenging social circumstances whilst living in a range of different, often temporary/insecure housing situations, including homelessness. It tells a story of both similar yet distinct housing and social histories, in which the experience of 'home' is chiefly a historical childhood memory and rarely a recent reality. So the focus of this study is not on 'homelessness'; it is, rather, on the meaning(s) of 'home', in a range of housing situations. However, drawing on the experiences of people who have experienced homelessness may allow an interesting light to be shed on the meaning(s) of home (and 'not-home'), and necessarily also on the experience of homelessness, in contemporary British society. In essence, the study provides an insight into the context of housing and 'home' trajectories.

Owing to the methods employed, and the approach taken in the analysis of data, a significant amount of detail was gathered regarding the housing and social histories of the seventeen participants, from early childhood through to adulthood. This information is summarised in a 'housing history' table transferred into a 'history of home' template. Such time frames - a continuum from childhood to adulthood - have rarely been studied in detail before. Taken together, the participants' 'housing history' tables revealed a surprising and unexpectedly high number of housing episodes: over 370, averaging 22 housing episodes each. The frequency of housing episodes has enabled the examination, analysis and presentation of individual 'home' trajectories, and subsequent comparison between participants' trajectories, from which generalisations have been drawn. This process revealed a number of striking trends, based on the high number of housing episodes, which allow generalisations to be made about this group of people. The data provide many new insights

that are relevant to debates about 'home' and homelessness. The material challenges portrayals of 'home' in the general societal sense and in the existing literature, which could be said to take for granted the meaning of 'home', and in particular, the meaning of, and experience of 'home' for people who have experienced homelessness.

Most significantly, participants' stories clearly illustrate the need for housing, homelessness and social care policies to take a new direction in fulfilling their obligations to enhance the housing and social circumstances of vulnerable groups in society, such as people who have experienced homelessness. In reality, policy and practice is focused on providing the basics of physical shelter and takes little account of the ingredients that can make a dwelling place 'home', and it does not talk about the need for 'home'. Thus, it could be suggested that policy and practice actually addresses 'shelterlessness' and not 'homelessness': focusing on physical needs and not really considering emotional needs.   Similarly, the 'home' and 'homelessness' literature lacks any substantive consideration of implications for policy and practice as to how the need for 'home' could be fulfilled. The remainder of this section outlines, in brief, the main contributions this study makes, which are fully examined and substantiated in the succeeding findings, discussion and conclusions chapters.

This study started as a story of 'home' but revealed an underlying story of housing and social instability which was not a recipe for 'home'. After a significant change in social situation in childhood, often triggering the breakdown, severing or loss of relationships with parents, the majority of participants' housing careers became characterised by high rates of movement between, and within, different housing situations, which, for most, continued into adulthood. Movement was fuelled by high rates of homelessness, and dominated by frequent short stays in informal/hidden homelessness situations, which were often the only viable housing option available, since there is no statutory duty to assist single homeless people who are not classed as 'vulnerable' according to statutory priority need criteria. The 'housing history' tables reveal the dominance of homelessness in participants' trajectories, accounting for the largest proportion of housing episodes (37 per cent). Examination of frequent moving and different forms of homelessness in relation to experiences of 'home' is rare in the 'home' literature. You have to look outside the 'home' literature, to the looked after children and mobility literature, for example, to find evidence of the impact of frequent moving on experiences of 'home'. This literature will be drawn upon in the succeeding chapters.

Housing instability was more often than not coupled with social instability, with many participants experiencing multiple challenges from childhood onwards, including disrupted schooling, substance misuse, unemployment, criminal behaviour, death of a parent, social

care, relationship breakdown, parents splitting-up, and limited emotional support. It seems that housing and social instability went hand-in-hand, that they drove/triggered each other, with participants' bouncing from one 'crisis' to another, one hit after another, a web of situations which suggests a pattern of 'path dependency'. Some works have argued that people experience 'turning points', 'significant events' in their lives which impact on experiences of 'home' (discussed in Chapter 4). Other research has identified links between childhood experiences of 'home' and those in adulthood (discussed in Chapters 3 and 4). There has, however, been little or no detailed examination of a set of individuals' housing trajectories, encompassing all of their housing episodes and their 'home' and 'not-home' experiences. This is what this study uniquely provides. The methods used, and the approach taken in this study help to piece together a properly contextualised picture of the meaning of 'home' and 'not-home' for these participants, across a range of housing situations. Their stories show how particular social contexts can frame how a dwelling place is experienced, and, in some cases, make questions of 'home' and 'not-home' totally irrelevant.

Participants were vulnerable on a number of different levels, particularly emotionally, a vulnerability which seems to have been perpetuated by a lack of support. Experiences of state support, such as formal homeless accommodation and stays in social care in childhood, differed according to gender, with females seeming to receive more stable, and longer-term housing placements and support. A lack of personal support was common place, i.e. there was often no consistent positive relationships with family, friends and/or support services, and positive social networks were limited, i.e. a lack of 'social capital'. Many participants did not have people around them who they felt cared about them and would take care of them, people they could rely on to be there for them, to turn to for support and guidance. This meant that participant's were often coping alone, heavily reliant on the state for financial assistance and accommodation, and on third-sector organisations for day-to-day support, such as food, hygiene facilities and advice. Such support is often focused on practical rather than emotional support, so emotional needs were often not met. The existing 'home' literature rarely looks beyond familial relationships and does not really consider how the absence of positive/supportive relationships can influence experiences of 'home'.

The first experience of 'home' for nearly all participants was in childhood, in all cases while living with parents or a parent, or in a similar 'familial' situation. Similarly, the first experience of 'not-home' for over half of participants' was also in childhood, for half these while living with parents, a parent, or other family members. After childhood, most dwelling places didn't come close to being 'home'. Any emotional connection toward a dwelling place

was more than twice as likely to be negative – 'not-home' - than positive - 'home'. This pattern challenges stereotypes of 'home', in that all housing situations, apart from 'living with parents or a parent during childhood', were most likely to be experienced as 'not-home'. The dominance of 'not-home' across a variety of housing situations, and the significance of such an emotion for this group of people highlights an important line of enquiry for the debate about 'home', which places little emphasis on the experience and meaning of 'not-home'. Interestingly, housing situations often presumed to be negative, such as prison, homelessness and social care, were not necessarily experienced as 'not-home' or viewed as a negative experience. Thus conventional assumptions about desirable and undesirable housing situations did not always ring true for participants; undesirable places could function as 'home', for example formal homeless accommodation or prison.

The detail of each housing episode helped to identify both differences and similarities in experiences of 'home' and 'not-home' across different housing situations. This, too, is lacking in other studies. Participants' feelings were particularly stark with regard to what made a dwelling place 'home' or 'not-home'. Given the high number of housing episodes experienced, two features can be confidently identified as dominating their experiences: 'positive relationships' most frequently made a dwelling place 'home', while 'not being permanent' was most likely to make a dwelling place 'not-home'. The participants' constructions of 'home' were largely focused on a singular feature, unlike the broader social construction of 'home'. This polarisation is not identified in the existing literature, nor is there much dialogue in terms of what promotes or hinders the creation of 'home'. The participants' evaluations of their housing experiences clearly show that 'home' is about satisfying emotional needs, whereas 'not-home' is about the lack of fulfilment of the physical need for permanent shelter: emotional security *vs*. physical insecurity. For these participants, feelings of 'home' and 'not-home' were not direct opposites, contrasting positive or negative emotions, as much of the literature suggests. Even more significant is the lack of emotion participants had toward their dwelling places, with no emotions, categorised as 'no strong feelings', being expressed toward nearly half (44 per cent) of housing episodes, despite many participants' having the vocabulary for 'home' from their childhood. This adds a new dimension to the 'home' debate.

The present study illustrates the role that dwelling places and social relationships played in the trajectories of the seventeen individuals in question. Emotional attachment to people was central to emotional attachment to a dwelling place (home): connect to people then connect to place. Thus, an unexpected consequence of this research is the clear

indication that for this group of people, and possibly for others who might experience similar personal circumstances, the lack of an emotional connection to other people, i.e. consistent, positive, supportive, close and caring relationships, contributed to experiences of housing and social instability, and negative and/or ambivalent feelings toward dwelling places. This insight contributes to new ways of thinking about how meaning is, or is not, attributed to experiences of dwelling places, and helps develop a deeper theoretical understanding of the notion of 'home', with clear implications for policy and practice. The relevant literature will be explored, and any criticisms substantiated, in subsequent chapters.

1.2   Aims and objectives

The overall aims of this PhD are: (a) explore the meaning of 'home' over time for people with experience of homelessness; and (b) explore substantively the factors that influence and contribute to people's experiences and perceptions of 'home'.

The objectives are to explore:

1. what 'home' is, including meaning, common characteristics and the role of 'home';
2. what makes different housing situations/experiences 'home' or 'not-home';
3. what 'home' is for different people;
4. the context and temporal nature of 'home'; and
5. how 'home' fulfils human needs.

1.3   Conceptual frameworks

This study is an interdisciplinary piece of empirical social research drawing on a range of disciplinary literatures, with a particular focus on needs. Central to this study is a sociological perspective on needs, although is not purely a piece of sociological research. Key works are drawn on, for example Doyal and Gough (1991) and De Swaan (2001), who add a new dimension to the needs debate, arguing that human needs are also subjective and not purely objective, and that the fulfilment of needs has changed in relation to societal changes, which have made needs much more individual/personal and thus subjective.

The notion of needs is central to the analysis that unfolds in this thesis. Some *basic needs* are concerned with the physiology of the human body; the need to survive by maintaining the body through sustenance and nutrition, and shelter from the elements and harm. Shelter, in turn, provides a base from which to function i.e. eat, wash, rest/sleep. *Psychological needs* go in tandem with physiological needs. The human mind/psyche is part

of the physical being and thus has basic functional needs. Sustenance and nutrition help keep the mind alive in the most basic terms but the mind/psyche has other needs that, if fulfilled, enable it to operate effectively. The mind/psyche needs to be fed in other ways, however, by stimulation and learning, all of which can be achieved directly or indirectly through interaction with other humans and the world. Doyal and Gough (1991, p. 59) also see autonomy as a basic need. In its most basic sense, autonomy is defined as 'personal freedom' (by the Concise Oxford Dictionary). Autonomy is the intellectual capacity to formulate aims and beliefs, which instil a capacity to make informed choices in life in the individual's interest, and to communicate them to others (Doyal and Gough, 1991, pp. 53-63). Levels of autonomy can differ and thus affect the amount of choice one has to fulfil other needs.

A person's concept of 'home' is best understood as a relationship to their dwelling environment (Hayward, 1977, p. 11), in which an individual experiences 'home' via an emotional process connecting themselves and place; making sense of 'home' is an emotional process (Gurney, 1997, p. 384). As such, the basic notions that are wrapped up in the idea of 'home' have consistently been identified by research as privacy, security, family, intimacy, comfort, and control (Moore, 2000, p. 210). Further recurrent descriptions of 'home' relate to house, family, haven, self, gender and journeying (Mallet, 2004, p. 62). Thus, different disciplines consistently depict 'home' as a positive place, a place that provides personal space to live and experience life from, in which an individual can be their self, make their own choices, and participate in activities and social relationships. A house, however, is not necessarily nor automatically a 'home' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 3). 'Home' can also be a negative experience, in which the dweller may have a less positive relationship with the dwelling place and thus be experienced as 'not-home'.

The meaning of 'home' is, however not solely constructed subjectively around an emotional relationship between dweller and a dwelling place. Individuals are exposed to different sources of information and ideas about 'home'. A culture of 'home' exists, in which societal forces are said to produce and reproduce the meaning of 'home' (Després, 1991, p. 96): the social construction of 'home'. Portraying an 'ideal' of 'home' through popular culture formulates a normative view of 'home', which combines with subjective experience in constructing the meaning of specific experiences.

In exploring the housing and social contexts of 'home' over time for individuals, this research seeks to understand and interpret the complexities and nuances of the idea and experience of 'home'. As Després notes, 'home' can be understood as a combination of the following: material reality; as perceived and experienced reality; and as a societal

phenomenon influenced by ideological, political and economic forces, in which 'personal, shared or societal-wide values, attitudes and meanings, and experiences about home are rooted in the inter-play of individual, spatial and societal forces as they emerge in individual actions and practices' (1991, p. 108). The present study explores the interconnection between needs and 'home', to explore how, when an individual sustains an emotional relationship with a dwelling place (shelter), a sense of attachment can be formed, which in turn can develop into a sense of 'home'. Shelter meets the need for physical security and health, and provides some psychological comfort (Després, 1991, p. 100), whereas 'home' fulfils deep-rooted psychological needs for identity, control, privacy, security, intimacy and social status (Somerville, 1997, p. 229).

1.4   Structure of the thesis

The structure of this thesis has been informed by central themes in the existing body of knowledge about needs and 'home', and how they are relevant to participants' experiences of 'home'. Participants' insights into how 'home' evolves in the context of an individual's life are central to the structure of this thesis.

Chapter Two examines what needs are and how different needs interconnect; how needs are fulfilled, and how the idea of 'home' relates to needs.

Chapter Three expands on the objective need for shelter. Exploring subjective views of what turns a dwelling place into 'home', drawing on different disciplines to identify the *common* meanings of 'home' as derived from personal experience and exposure to ideas about 'home'.

Chapter Four digs deeper to explore 'real' homes. Focusing on the pivotal role of 'home' in everyday life, and the intrinsic connection between a dwelling place and the wider contexts of individual lives, in creating individual 'home' realties.

Chapter Five describes the methods I employed, and the approach I took to data interpretation and analysis.

Chapter Six explores the meaning of 'home' for the seventeen participants in this study. The chapter presents a general picture of what 'home' and 'not-home' means to participants, by identifying commonalities across their experiences.

Chapter Seven presents a brief profile of the participants' housing and 'home' experiences, before going on to examine how particular housing situations shaped participants housing trajectories. The nuances of what characterised different housing situations as 'home' or 'not-

home' for different people, and which were the 'best' and 'worst' housing experiences, are then be explored.

Chapter Eight starts with a contextual outline of the participants lives by presenting a social profile of the participants. Commonalities and differences in the experience and impact of three particular contextual changes are then examined. A more complex, nuanced picture of 'home life' is then presented in three case studies which capture the housing and 'home' trajectories of three participants within the social context of their lives. 'Brief life' accounts of the remaining fourteen participants supplement the case studies.

Chapter Nine discusses the key messages from the research, highlighting how the aims and objectives of this study have been met, and the main contributions this research makes to the existing body of knowledge about 'home'. The Chapter reflects on how the participants stories can inform and direct future policy and practice. It ends with suggestions on how future research could help present a more realistic picture of the meaning of 'home'.

Chapter Two: Needs and their social construction

2.0   Introduction

The fulfilment of needs is the basis for human survival. Humans have many different needs, which are governed by physical and psychological processes, social and cultural norms, and operate on different levels. Sociologists and psychologists have taken the lead in exploring the workings of human needs; the key sociologically-orientated writers in the area have been Doyal and Gough (1991) in their *Theory of Human Need* (1991). The main body of the literature on 'needs' is dominated by a model of two levels which Doyal and Gough (1991) identify as *basic needs* and *intermediate needs*, which are both seen as objective in nature. There is a clear distinction between needs and subjective wants, preferences or desires, which Doyal and Gough see as secondary to needs (1991, pp. 39-42). Their work will be used as the basis for this Chapter, supplemented by other writers in the field. Where appropriate, attention will also be given to writers from other disciplinary perspectives who have written about needs from their particular standpoint, for example Maslow (1987), whose 'hierarchy of needs', relating to motivation and organisational theory, covers both objective and subjective needs.

The approach taken in this Chapter is to examine and critique the literature on needs by examining, 1) what needs are and how different needs interconnect, 2) how needs are fulfilled and 3) how the idea of 'home' fits into a framework of needs. The final section will outline the key arguments that support the theory of human needs, the importance of 'home' in relation to needs, and argue for a re-conceptualisation of needs, focusing on their interchangeable significance and importance over time within the context of lifecycle events, i.e. the personalisation or individualisation of needs.

2.1   What are needs?

When referring to human needs we are talking about people's day-to-day survival in the world through the fulfilment of different needs of the mind and body. This section will examine what needs are and how they interconnect with each other.

Basic needs

Both sociologists and psychologists, along with the medical and scientific worlds, agree that basic needs are fundamental, a necessity to our survival and are thus objective in nature.

Basic needs are concerned with the physiological aspects of the human body; the need to survive by maintaining the body through sustenance and nutrition, and sheltering the body from the elements and harm. Shelter, in turn, provides a base from which to function i.e. eat, wash, rest/sleep. The body naturally signals to us our need for sustenance and nutrition and protection from harm, without which our bodies would deteriorate, malfunction and shut down. Thus, humans develop an understanding of why they need food, clothes and shelter (Ignatieff, 1984, p. 98). In turn, basic needs are linked to human requirements and rely upon prior understanding of the things one needs to acquire to fulfil needs and avoid serious harm (Doyal and Gough, 1991, pp. 39-40).

Psychological needs go in tandem with physiological needs. The human mind/psyche is part of the physical being and thus has basic functional needs. Sustenance and nutrition help keep the mind alive in the most basic terms but the mind/psyche has other needs that, if fulfilled, enable it to operate effectively. The mind/psyche needs to be fed in other ways, for example by stimulation and learning, all of which can be achieved directly or indirectly through interaction with other humans, nature, and the world. All have the potential to aid or hinder survival depending on the individual and their social and cultural construction of life. These basic needs are shared by all humans and are continuous to a degree. Here the saying "healthy mind, healthy body" seems pertinent.

In terms of psychological needs, Doyal and Gough (1991, p. 59) see autonomy as a basic need. In its most basic term, autonomy is defined as 'personal freedom' (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1990). In broader terms, autonomy is the intellectual capacity to formulate aims and beliefs, which instil a capacity to make informed choices in life and make choices in the individual interest, and communicate them to others (Doyal and Gough, 1991, pp. 53-63). Autonomy is often seen working in tandem with physiological survival to avoid serious harm and facilitate participation in a form of life. Levels of autonomy can differ and thus affect the amount of choice one has to fulfil other needs. Doyal and Gough (1991, pp.181-184) identify positive cognitive development as the key to autonomy, where learning and cognitive skills should be developed throughout life. Starting as an infant, language is crucial to impose order and an understanding of the world. Development is crucial as a child and through adulthood via constant learning and education. Without opportunities to participate in development of this kind, opportunities to fulfil needs can be limited.

Doyal and Gough (1991, pp. 64-66) also warn of impairments of autonomy; anxiety about the unpredictability of life, feeling helpless, worthless, defeated, losing control of life and being denied of freedom and autonomy. All constrain a person's capacity to live through

choice. Conversely, Doyal and Gough (*ibid.*, pp. 64-65) highlight the dangers of high levels of autonomy which can lead to asocial, individualistic values that promote independence at the expense of reciprocity and interdependence which are relied on for the fulfilment of many other needs. They argue that at the extreme autonomy involves the pursuit of self-interest at the expense of others, which is not an expression of a universalisable human need (*ibid.*, p. 65). Similarly, the concept of prudential values (discussed later in this Chapter) sees autonomy and freedom as key to quality of life, but warns that one person's freedom must not be detrimental to the freedom of others: making any human life go better should not make any other life worse (Phillips, 2006, pp. 73-76). Therefore it could be said that autonomy can, in some cases, work against the fulfilment of needs; this is interdependence *vs.* independence. As Ignatieff (1984, pp. 17-18) suggests, there can be a contradiction between social solidarity and our need for personal freedom, which the socialist vision seeks to reconcile in the belief that, 'human beings can have needs for themselves and needs for the sake of others and satisfy both equally'. Ideally, autonomy should be balanced. Doyal and Gough (1991, p. 68) suggest a critical level of autonomy needs to be achieved, where there must be opportunity to express both freedom of agency and political freedom, which in turn provides opportunities.

There is some criticism of the scope of basic needs in the literature, with Philips (2006, pp. 81-84) suggesting that the basic needs approach is too modest and does not provide a sophisticated theoretical framework for understanding all human aspirations, and tends to neglect differences in personal characteristics. In other words, it only deals with objective needs and does not entertain the idea of subjective needs. The difference and relationship between objective and subjective needs is considered throughout this Chapter. Counter to these criticisms, however, is the acknowledgement that the basic needs approach does provide a firm foundation for specifying acceptable minimum threshold standards for a decently acceptable life (Wiggins, 1998, cited in Phillips, 2006, p. 81), which can be realised through the satisfaction of related needs - intermediate needs.

Intermediate needs

In the literature, there is an explicit link between intermediate and basic needs, in that intermediate needs must first be satisfied if the fundamental basic needs for physical health and autonomy are themselves to be satisfied (Doyal and Gough, 1991). In further explanation, Doyal and Gough (*ibid.*, p. 157) propose that intermediate needs, or 'universal satisfier characteristics', provide a secure foundation on which to erect a list of derived or second order goals if the first order goals of health and autonomy are to be attained. So what are intermediate needs? Numerous studies have produced lists of 'needs' which advocate

similar, but not all the same needs (Braybrooke, 1987, ch.2.2, cited in Doyal and Gough, 1991, p. 157). Doyal and Gough (1991, p. 157) criticise these lists as *ad hoc*. Instead, they offer their own definitive theory of human needs in which they argue that intermediate needs are most important for basic need-satisfaction and are the same for all cultures (*ibid*., 1991, p. 157). In other words, both basic and intermediate needs are universalisal (the same) among humans. They split intermediate needs into two sub groups. The first group relates to inputs that enhance physical health:

> Nutritional food and clean water
> Protective housing
> A non-hazardous work environment
> A non-hazardous physical environment
> Appropriate health care

The second group contributes to an enhancement of emotional autonomy:

> Security in childhood
> Significant primary relationships
> Physical security
> Economic security

(Doyal and Gough, 1991, pp. 191-193)

In addition, Doyal and Gough include; *appropriate education* as a condition for the enhancement of the cognitive component of autonomy, and *safe birth control* and *safe child-rearing* as intermediate needs for women (*ibid.*, pp. 157-158).

Doyal and Gough also refer to intermediate needs as need 'satisfiers'. Their list only contains satisfier characteristics (all eleven as noted above) that universally and positively contribute to physical health and autonomy (*ibid.*, p. 158). It could be suggested that these needs are proposed as the essential ingredients of life. It could also be argued, however, that meeting all the needs listed above simultaneously, in the context of one individual's life, would be hard to achieve, and not necessarily required. Not all needs may require fulfilment or satisfaction simultaneously. The aim should be to fulfil all relevant needs to the optimum. Personal needs are discussed later in this Chapter and in relation to the fulfilment of needs. Assessing the nature of a theory of human needs, Ignatieff (1984, p. 14) sees it as a 'particular kind of language of the human good', where defining 'human nature in terms of needs is to define what we are in terms of what we lack'. He sees 'needs language' as a historical and relative language.

Different needs working together

So far this Chapter has outlined what basic and intermediate needs are. A brief taster of the links between basic and intermediate needs, and how different needs complement each other, whether directly or indirectly, will now be presented. Such links will be illustrated throughout the study. The relationship between basic and intermediate needs is based on Doyal and Gough's (1991, p. 161) premise that a minimum quantity of intermediate need satisfaction is required to produce optimum levels of basic need satisfaction (physical health and autonomy). In the most minimal terms, 'to avoid becoming physically ill people must live in a healthy environment and have access to a range of goods and services of sufficient quantity and quality' (*ibid.*, p. 191). For example, an individual receiving Job Seekers Allowance and housing benefit can afford to live in a one bed-roomed council flat and purchase the 'value range' of food at a supermarket. Someone earning £40,000 a year can afford a mortgage on a three bed-roomed house and to purchase the premium range of food at the supermarket. Both have their basic and intermediate needs of health sustenance, nutrition, and shelter fulfilled, but of a different type, value and quality, which may in turn impact on the fulfilment of other needs, for example personal autonomy. Different needs can complement each other in many ways. Intermediate needs can be satisfiers for one another, for example a warmer environment will reduce the food requirement of humans (Doyal and Gough, 1991, p. 164). Basic needs can complement each other, for example personal freedom to choose food and shelter. Doyal and Gough (*ibid.*, p. 164) point to the need for more research on these relations and their linkages, where individual health and autonomy are final outcomes, from which intermediate inputs are derived.

Some commentators on human life and societies do not talk in terms of different levels of 'need' and instead operate on a more holistic footing. De Swaan, who, alongside Doyal and Gough, is the other main sociologically-oriented perspective on needs, identifies six social conditions for human existence: food, shelter, protection, affection, knowledge and control (2001, p. 3). All but control directly relate to Doyal and Gough's (1991) intermediate needs and contribute to enhancing health (a basic need). Control loosely relates to the basic need of autonomy in which 'people have to learn to control themselves and to refrain from actions that other people – and they themselves – deem unacceptable' (De Swaan, 2001, p. 12). In other words, 'people have to learn to control themselves in order to survive in society' (*ibid.*, p. 12), where control and acceptance are conducive to the formation of productive social arrangements that help to fulfil needs (discussed in more depth later in this Chapter in relation to the fulfilment of needs). It could be suggested that control also relates to wants

and desires; controlling wants and desires to those that are acceptable (discussed later in this section).

Personal needs

Objective (physiological) needs, as outlined above in the distinction between basic and intermediate needs, will now be considered alongside subjective (psychological) needs, illustrating how they connect and co-exist. Doyal and Gough's (1991) *Theory of Human Need* relates to objective needs and does not examine what could be termed subjective, personal needs, which manifest themselves in wants and desires. Ignatieff makes a similar distinction when he states that 'what we need in order to survive, and what we need in order to flourish are two different things' (1984, p. 10).

So where do we look for a theory on the connection between objective and subjective needs. The study of human behaviour and motivation offers an alternative approach to the notion of basic and intermediate needs (e.g. Alderfer, 1972; Maslow, 1987), in which where objective and subjective basic needs co-exist. Maslow's (1987) psychologically-based model of personality develops a 'basic needs hierarchy', with five levels of need with lower level needs having to be satisfied before an individual can seek to satisfy higher needs:

Figure 2.1   Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
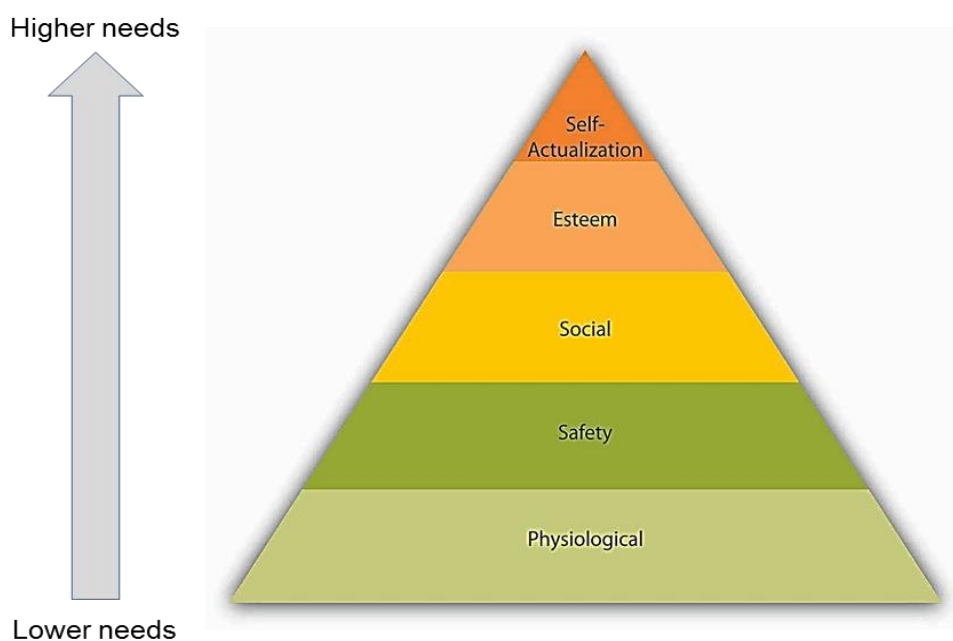
(Maslow, 1987, pp. 56-61)

An explanation of each level of need is as follows:

- *Physiological* needs – the need for food, drink and shelter
- *Safety* needs (material and interpersonal) – protection against danger, threat and deprivation
- *Social* needs – the need for belonging, acceptance, friendship
- *Self esteem* needs (feedback from others and self-confirming activities) – ego, reputation, status
- *'Self-actualisation'* – the need for realising one's own potential for continual self-development

(Maslow, 1987, pp. 15-23)

So, unlike Doyal and Gough (1991), Maslow pronounces all the needs in his hierarchy as basic needs: 'they are part of human nature' (Maslow, 1987, p. 56). Alderfer (1972) offers a related, but alternative model (E.R.G theory) to Maslow, with just three basic needs categories:

- *Existence* needs – these are related to survival and preproduction, for example the need for food, clothing and shelter
- *Relatedness* (or belongingness) needs – these are social needs, which can be satisfied through contact with others, for example the need to be respected
- *Growth* needs – these are needs not for physical growth, but for personal development, for example the need to learn new skills and the need for self respect

(Alderfer, 1972, pp. 6-13)

These two approaches feature many of Doyal and Gough's (1991) basic and intermediate needs which are seen working alongside personal needs, emphasising the need for personal growth and development. Taking Doyal and Gough's theory, personal (subjective) needs may be regarded as wants and desires rather than needs, although it could be suggested that personal growth and development loosely relate to autonomy. Maslow highlights the increasing importance of 'esteem needs' in the work of psychoanalysts and clinical psychologists, and the individual importance of self-actualisation 'being true to your own nature…to become everything that one is capable of becoming' (1987, pp.21-22). It seems that Maslow takes a holistic approach to needs (objective and subjective), bringing together physical (physiological), emotional (psychological) and individual (personal) needs: body, mind and self combined. Alderfer takes a similarly holistic approach where existence, relatedness and growth are primary needs that are active in all living persons: 'innate tendencies an organism possesses' (1972, p. 77). He identifies growth needs as the most individual of needs as 'their specific objectives depend on the uniqueness of each person' (*ibid*., p. 16). His theory is based on 'the subjective states of satisfaction and desire' where

basic needs provide the basis for fulfilling satisfactions and desires (*ibid*., p. 7), which can form an inter-relationship (*ibid*., pp. 13-21). Thus, for Maslow and Alderfer needs are to a large extent shaped by the individual being; highly personalised needs that fit into their pre-determined needs criteria. Maslow's and Alderfer's theories are discussed in more depth in relation to the fulfilment of needs later in this Chapter.

There is little evidence and acknowledgement in the literature of the intricacies of the personal formation of needs. Ignatieff suggests that 'we learn what we need by suffering', and 'we learn how much is enough by learning what it is like to have less than enough' (1984, p. 20). Doyal and Gough (1991, p. 37) point to the impact of childhood on the formation of needs, in 'that our cognitive aptitudes and the bases for our emotionality in childhood shape many other needs, for example supportive and close relationships with others' (1991, p. 37). Childhood impacts on subsequent life, in that motivational structures are created, which thereafter, and not necessarily self consciously, influence everyday activities and thought processes (*ibid.*, pp. 37-38). Humans are constantly influenced by interaction with others whether directly or indirectly, as Doyal and Gough (1991, pp. 50-51) state, 'our lives are dominated by what we learn from others'. They suggest that throughout life cognitive abilities leave humans with the problem of deciding what we need, irrespective of what we feel we want (*ibid.*, p. 38). Choices have to be made between needs and wants. The choice of 'reasons and actions remains our own and is not determined by our biology' (*ibid*., p. 39). Looking at needs in a broad sense, Ignatieff suggests that individuals have different needs, with history playing a significant part: 'if human nature is historical, individuals have different histories and therefore different needs' (1984, p. 135). As will become clear in the data analysis Chapters, childhood experience and individual histories loom large in the lives of the people who are the subjects of the present research.

Intermediate needs can often be taken for granted as they fulfil the natural survival needs of the human body. However, basic and intermediate needs may not always be of primary importance to an individual for their day-to-day survival. Other needs may be seen as greater: personal needs.   As Doyal and Gough state, 'people have strong feelings about what they need and these feelings can vary enormously between cultures and over time' (1991, p. 49). In the short term, it is not always of great detriment if basic needs are not constantly met.   As De Swaan (2001, p. 5) notes, 'in some regions people cannot go a single day without a roof over their heads, while in others people scarcely need such protection at all' (2001, p. 5). People can survive without the constant fulfilment of their basic needs; minds and bodies adapt to their circumstances and learn to survive on a different level, for

example on less food and water, but there remains a basic or minimal level of need for survival, to keep the body ticking over.

Drug addicts provide a stark example of how needs can be personally prioritised. For example, many drug users do not meet their basic physical need for sustenance and shelter; instead they prioritise what they perceive as their greater physical and psychological need (mind and body) for drugs, even though it will cause them harm. To drug addicts, drugs are not a desire or a want they are a basic physical need that keeps their addicted body functioning. Drugs become the body's food, without which it is a struggle to function and survive. In a similar vein, individuals who suffer from anorexia choose not to fulfil their basic need for sustenance. However, as Doyal and Gough (1991, p. 42) point out, in the end, a person 'cannot consistently not need what is required in order to avoid serious harm – whatever they may want'. In other words, a person cannot avoid what they need to survive i.e. sustenance, nutrition, and shelter. Over time, humans' minds and bodies are sculpted into unique forms that dictate needs and wants on a very personal level. There can be a trade-off between different needs; some are interchangeable and it is not always deemed necessary to fulfil others, or they are only fulfilled to the basic minimum. Needs are contextual, and personal.

Personal wants and desires

It has already been suggested that needs differ according to individual life circumstances, motivations and preferences. Thus, basic and intermediate needs can become highly personalised and what some people might class as needs, others would not. Here it is important to look at the related realms of 'wants' and 'desires' and distinguish them from needs, and recognise how they inter-relate. In contrast to basic needs, Doyal and Gough (1991, p. 39) do not link 'wants' to human requirements. They suggest needs differ from wants in terms of their scope: universality differentiates needs from preferences or wants. Wants are derived from an individual's preferences and cultural environment and therefore, unlike needs, vary from person to person (*ibid*., p. 39). In other words, needs are the same for all humans, whereas wants are individual. Similarly, Ignatieff makes the distinction between the needs that humans have as natural being's and as social being's (1984, p. 28). Doyal and Gough describe how a person can need what they want, and want or not want what they need, suggesting that subjective feelings are not a reliable determination of human needs, for example there can be a strong desire for things that do us harm and no desire for things that are required to avoid harm (1991, p. 49). In stark contrast, Alderfer's Existence Relatedness and Growth (E.R.G.) model, directly relates basic needs to subjective desires: basic needs

provide the platform to fulfil desires, as discussed above. In essence, the literature suggests that personal (subjective) needs are formed on the basis of emotion: needs, wants and desires derived from the emotional being. In Doyal and Gough's *Theory of Human Need* (1991), the only distinct emotional element to needs is the need for emotional autonomy (outlined earlier). In contrast to personally derived desires and wants that are subject to change (subjective), emotional autonomy is based on fixed needs (objective).

It is also worth examining here the relationship between desires and values in connection to needs.   Much debate about desires and values has been in relation to quality of life (see Phillips, 2006, and discussion later in this Chapter). Desires are categorised into 'actual desires' which are individual and subjective and 'informed desires', what a person would desire if they had full access to all relevant knowledge and information (Phillips, 2006, p. 7). Informed desires could be said to provide a balance between subjective and objective desires where they appeal to what really would increase or decrease quality of life (*ibid*., pp. 70-71). Much like the relationship between needs and wants described by Doyal and Gough (1991, p. 49), 'an informed desire can be the exact opposite of an actual desire if a person desires what is bad for them, because informed desires relate to *real* rather than *believed* benefit' (Phillips, 2006, p. 71).

Common consensus in the literature is that *prudential values* represent informed desires and provide the basis for ascertaining what informed desires might look like (Phillips, 2006, p. 7). Phillips sums up the essence of prudential values as 'what makes people's lives valuable to themselves, how good human life can be and how it can be made better' (*ibid*., p. 7) and 'values which make any human life go better and are predicated on a notion of the good life based on our essential humanity' *(ibid.,* p. 70).

Wittgenstein saw certain basic values as essential to humans being able to make sense of each other (*ibid*., p. 7), and Qizilbash suggests that 'a shared realm of human values is necessary for our mutual intelligibility' (1997, p. 263). The essential inter-relationship of humans and their understanding of each other are explored in relation to the fulfilment of needs later in this Chapter. Levels of value emerge and are illustrated in Qizilbash's list of prudential values:

1	minimum levels of nutrition, health, sanitation shelter, rest and security;
2	certain basic intellectual and physical capacities and literacy;
3	certain levels of self-respect and aspiration;
4	enjoyment
5	autonomy or self-determination ('positive freedom');
6	liberty ('negative freedom')

7	understanding;
8	significant relations with others and some participation in social life;
9	accomplishment

(Qizilbash, 1998, p. 67)

Shared values are viewed as 'core' prudential values which make all human life go well, and, much like all basic needs approaches discussed above, the subjective avoidance of pain, number one in Qizilbach's list, is a core value. Subjective enjoyment (number four in Qizilbach's list), however, is also seen as a core value which is not identified as a need by Doyal and Gough, Maslow, or Alderfer, but would undoubtedly be experienced to a degree through the fulfilment of core basic needs, for example close relationships. All other 'non-core' values in Qizilbach's list share some commonalities with Doyal and Gough's basic and intermediate needs, but overall, the prudential values approach has most in common with the holistic approaches of Maslow and Alderfer, who incorporate both objective and subjective elements. This close relationship to the theory of needs suggests an alternative, holistic approach to exploring human survival through quality of life, and shared values (instead of shared needs) which form desires (that require fulfilment). For the remainder of this study, however, the focus will be on needs. As will become clear, the concept of needs offers a useful framework within which to explore the intricacies of the experience of 'home' and homelessness, and the meaning(s) of 'home'. Later Chapters will explore 'home' as a need, and its role as a base to fulfil other needs. Values will also be touched on again in relation the importance of having a 'home', i.e. the value placed on having a 'home'.

2.2   Fulfilling needs

What needs are has been outlined and discussed above in terms of basic and intermediate needs, and related wants, desires and values. Humans have needs to differing degrees, but how do they fulfil them? Personal recognition of need fulfilment is complemented by setting and measuring basic or minimum levels of need. The literature emphasises the fulfilment of needs through social relationships at different levels: interpersonally with family and friends, associations in the community or at work, for example, or at a collective level where the needs of a wider group are fulfilled by one or more people or at a societal level. Again, as needs can be personal so too can the fulfilment of needs. This section will focus on the different ways in which basic and intermediate needs, and related wants and desires, are fulfilled.

Human needs cannot be fulfilled in isolation, there is always a connection with other humans, even for the recluse; at least once an individual's knowledge or life experience he or she will have been influenced by another human being, and inevitably some goods will have been produced, influenced or made by someone else. From these interactions a sense of common and human identity can form alongside individual differences; the natural identity of need, where basic needs are common necessities (Ignatieff, 1984, p. 28). A common identity of survival in turn fosters a sense of human solidarity to fulfil human necessities (basic needs). Even though humans have the same basic needs, solidarity to fulfil these needs can differ according to the nature of natural and social obligations, for example to family, friends, work colleagues, strangers, community and society. Some obligations are defined as a 'natural' human duty which society accepts, for example the duties a parent has to his or her own children. The family unit is the main social arrangement most people benefit from and can rely on to fulfil their needs, albeit to differing degrees, when they are growing up as a child and into adulthood.

Young and Willmott (1962) brought to life familial arrangements in their classic and seminal sociological work on Family and Kinship in East London in the 1950s. They found family members relying on each other to fulfil many needs. For example, as a daughter and wife many women relied on their mother to organise the family's social life, and drew on their mother's knowledge when experiencing their own child birth and rearing their own children. Many residents relied on their family for childcare and as a source of money or food when they were short. Familial contacts were often relied upon to secure accommodation. Family was the first port of call in times of need which was most frequently the wives mother, as one participant put it, 'strangers are all right but you prefer your own every time' (Young and Willmott, 1962). Family members living so near to each other, for example two to three streets away, helped maintain and strengthen familial relationships. Young and Willmott's study seems to suggest that because family lived so close to each other it was almost natural for familial relationships to revolve around the fulfilment of each other's needs. Even though society has changed enormously since the 1950s, this picture continues to be true where it is true. The absence of such ties in conditions of high spatial mobility, or their replacement by other social relational ties, is discussed later in this Chapter. Echoing the sentiment, De Swaan describes the importance of social arrangements, where people are connected by mutual dependencies; interdependence, needing each other, which forms a network of

dependencies where it is necessary that we all produce something in order to gain money to buy other's products (2001, pp. 1-6).

A person becoming homeless illustrates the reliance or dependence that can form on social arrangements to meet needs. For example, a person loses their job and subsequently becomes homeless from their private rented tenancy; they can't afford alternative accommodation, and are not eligible for a hostel bed. They may rely on a friend to meet their needs for shelter and food in order to avoid having no shelter at all i.e. sleeping rough. Emotional support may also be sought and provided. Thus, the homeless individual forms a relationship of dependence. They become reliant on someone else to fulfil their physical (and emotional) needs. Here the phrase 'hour of need' seems pertinent. Who do people have to turn to in their hour of need? Who can they rely on to fulfil their needs, whether directly or indirectly? Some people rely heavily on family to help fulfil their needs, as Young and Willmott's East End in the 1950s. Others can't and rely on friends or the state (as discussed later), or an inter-play between both.

Relationships can be generated at school, at work, in recreational activities, in membership of clubs societies, or elsewhere. De Swaan (2001, p 24) highlights the influence of indirect networks, for example politicians maintaining contact with the electorate through their many different acquaintances, which may translate into an association of relationships that come together to form a chain of information that aids the fulfilment of needs. Relationships need to be maintained to regulate the fulfilment of needs, and there is often no certain guarantee that relationships will bear fruit indefinitely; relationships change over time as do needs. These relationships can be described as strong or weak. Looking at social relationships and needs in reverse, Doyal and Gough highlight how fulfilling basic needs, and thus avoiding harm, provides a platform for successful social participation (1991, pp. 50-51). In other words, harm can restrict participation and thus the fulfilment of needs via social participation.

As outlined in the homelessness example above, humans require flexibility in the fulfilment of their needs: no matter how much they may dislike change, 'something' is usually better than 'nothing'. Relationships often require some form of reciprocity to fulfil the individual, and in some cases, collective needs of all parties. Few people do something for nothing, even if simple recognition is all that is needed. De Swaan (2001, pp. 86-89) refers to the sociological perspective of reciprocal obligations where individuals co-operate with each other if they think their efforts will be reciprocated in some way. Judgments are made, co-operation agreed, and expectations set. As Sprott notes, interaction is basic to the

existence of groups, where standards of conduct are an essential feature of group interaction and they inform expectations (1970, p.p. 10-12). Reciprocity is said to work better if positive relationships are formed through frequent meeting which provides an arena for trust to be built (De Swaan, 2001, pp. 86-89), much as in the families in East London discussed earlier. De Swaan (*ibid.*, pp. 6 and 19) refers to this as 'mutual assistance'. Of course, if one individual does not meet their obligations then the receiver may not feel obliged to meet their obligations either. Key to reciprocity is a level of trust, where high levels of trust might provide a basis for negotiation. Reciprocity relates to De Swaan's notion of expectations, discussed in the next paragraph. As discussed, obligations to others come into play. Ignatieff (1984, p. 27) sees human obligations as a pairing of the idea of need with the idea of duty, and this is what distinguishes need from desire; need is essential or necessary whereas desires are not. Obligations will be discussed in more depth later in this Chapter in relation to collectivity.

De Swaan (2001, pp. 27-33) expands his notion of networks of relationships and interdependence by looking at how relationships form networks of dependency and expectations, where expectations are related to a person's position in society, and thus create a semblance of order. For example, there are expectations of a mother's role. In essence each party should know more or less what to expect of the other. If this is accurate then people who give to people who can give little in return, for example the homeless, will expect to receive little and give on that basis. Giving does not have to be equal, and expectations do not have to be equal, but expectations need to be at least compatible. However, well-meaning giving and receiving can lead to things being taken for granted, which makes reduced giving harder to adjust to, especially when it concerns basic needs. De Swaan refers to this as disrupted expectations, for example in times of war, or when a company closes (2001, pp. 31-32).

Again, taking homelessness as an example can illustrate extreme disruption in expectations. When a middle aged man becomes homeless due to defaulting on his mortgage payments, and only has the option to move into a state-funded hostel room, his personal autonomy is affected. He has to live by someone else's rules, for example with respect to behaviour, visitors, curfew and room maintenance, and has to share facilities such as a shower, toilet and living room with strangers. New levels and kinds of dependency emerge: on the state for shelter and income (social security benefits), on staff for emotional support i.e. when family support is lacking, and fellow residents for the interactional ease of daily life. New expectations are set, new relationships and networks formed, and values may be

reconfigured, for example placing more value on the basic necessities of life i.e. food and shelter. The homeless person has to adapt to a new situation in which all their needs may not be met, or met to a lesser degree, and new needs may emerge, for example mental health needs due to the distress of the situation. We are tied together in mutual dependency which is networks or co-operation; as De Swaan puts it, 'we are part of networks made up of chains of dependence' (2001, pp. 33-34).

It is obvious that power relations come into play when people have expectations of each other. As noted above, a homeless person's power is reduced considerably when they move into a hostel. In ensuring they retain their place in the hostel, and thus have their basic needs fulfilled, they must observe the rules of the hostel and meet the expectations of the staff. In a situation of low power and high dependency, their autonomy is diminished. De Swaan argues that knowledge can provide a position of power over others, manipulation can occur and people can be played off against each other (2001, pp. 35-40). Helping another individual fulfil their needs puts you in a position of power; individuals are gatekeepers to others needs. As Ignatieff says, need 'justifies entitlement only if the powerful understand themselves to be obliged by it' (1984, p. 27), and 'the commonest torment of moral life is the conflict between duty and desire' (*ibid.*, pp. 96-97). In other words, when will a person prioritise others' needs; after, alongside or above their own needs, wants and desires? A hierarchy of power may form which people can move up and down. Power can be asserted for personal or collective good, and to the detriment of oneself and others.

Social division of needs

In relation to the fulfilment of needs through relationships of dependency and expectation, the notions of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' (poor) come into play. For example, people who are authorised to do so can decide whether an individual is deserving of assistance to fulfil their needs, or not, and to what extent and the level of quality they deserve. With such power and authority relations in play Ignatieff sees trust as central, because needs must be taken on trust and if 'the powerful do not trust the reasons of the poor, these reasons will never be enough' (1984, p. 34). The poor have to show themselves as deserving of the necessities of life (basic needs). Needs must be justified. As Ignatieff (1984, p53) warns, 'woe betide any man who depends on the abstract humanity of another for his food and protection'. The level of state assistance afforded to homeless people illustrates the starkness of this concept, where resource constraints justify a rationing system. For homeless people, rationing of assistance in Britain is via housing legislation that stipulates the 'intentionality' of their homelessness, their levels of need (priority need), and the state's duties towards the homeless individual. If

a homeless person is deemed to have made them self homeless, and is not in priority need - for example does not have dependent children, a physical or mental illness or is not fleeing violence - they are classed as 'less deserving' and are only eligible for basic assistance.

De Swaan puts needs into the context of social stratification and a hierarchy of power and authority in which social layers strata, classes, differ in terms of power, property, prestige, and rigidity (2001, pp. 47-49). Where an individual is determined to fit in to the social stratification, the system can, to an extent, influence the fulfilment of their needs. Societal stratifications dictating who is more deserving also occur according to age. De Swaan suggests that 'young people are generally held in less esteem, have less property and occupy weaker positions of power than those who are more advanced in years' (*ibid.*, pp. 51-52). In England, for example, people under the age of twenty-five receive lower levels of state benefits. It could be said that younger people are always at a disadvantage as they have less 'life experience'. When a person is born can also play a key role in individuals' abilities to fulfil different needs, for example in times of war or prosperity. Gender differences, while rooted in the biology of sex differences, are also socially constructed and stratified, and influence how needs are satisfied (*ibid.,* pp. 50-51). Gender roles are largely shaped by, and engrained in society, not always accepted, but lived with or tolerated. Legislation dictating equal rights has given people the same basic rights according to age and gender, for example, and provides people with the means to assert their rights and instil equality. The role rights play in fulfilling needs is discussed in more depth later in this Chapter.

Changing relationships

Needs are often fulfilled through relationships of dependency which are integrated into everyday life, and often taken for granted. Networks or relationships have changed over recent years, with many societies shifting from traditional to modern social arrangements, in which communities are absorbed by industrialisation, capitalism, large organisations and state intervention. These aspects of societal organisation may lead have led to greater social isolation and loneliness. For example, people no longer live in small, closely-connected areas such as Young and Willmott (1962) found in the East End of London in the 1950's, in which residents were close to each other geographically and socially. In recent decades urban areas have expanded. People are dispersed over wider areas, which hinders the formation of close networks and the maintenance of relationships. De Swaan argues that social linkages are reducing as we see each other less, and thus rely on each other less (2001, pp. 24-26). Reliance has switched from the community to the outside world. Doyal and Gough highlight this change as a threat to personal autonomy as economic and social change increases, i.e. an

extension of market relations and a reduction in communal ties has led to deterioration in mental health, which impacts on social participation and thus the means to fulfil needs (1991, p. 254).

Whilst societies expand, direct individual relationships and networks, for example with family and friends, seem to diminish, and more generic, impersonal associations form, for example with the state, agencies, consumer products and social media. So, where we once relied on different kinds of relationships/social arrangements (close and direct) with other people to fulfil our needs, those relationships are now diminishing. What are the alternatives for fulfilling our needs? Capitalism has created a marketplace of surplus. In turn, a market has developed for all intermediate needs, in which access and quality can be variable according to an individual's social and economic circumstances. Consumerism and purchasing power (material consumption) means that many people can literally buy needs fulfilment, with some people apparently believing they can literally consume their way to happiness. Relationships of dependency are formed with companies rather than individuals, for example a company can provide the next 'fix' of the latest 'in fashion' trainers or clothing. Expectations are that the more we pay the higher quality product we receive, and companies expect a minimum price to be paid for different quality products, for example value and premium food products. So there are levels of quality in the fulfilment of needs, dictated by access to resources and individual preferences.

Companies often lead the way in determining what we can have to fulfil our needs. People are provided with generic products that don't necessarily cater for their specific needs but 'will do', for example in housing and food. In this way the need for freedom and autonomy is less likely to be fulfilled; choice becomes restricted and limited, we are persuaded to purchase what we think we need. Needs, wants and desires adapt to what is available in the market place, and as Maslow (1987) suggests, when one need is satisfied another need is sought, and in some cases bought. One is never satisfied there is always a craving for more, enslaved to a spiral of needs (Ignatieff, 1984, p. 122), and 'the luxuries of the few gradually become the necessities of all' (*ibid.*, p. 93). Thus, emotional needs are limitless. For example, a new, premium version of a product may be released on to the market to entice people to 'up-grade'. The new product becomes more desirable than the older version even though the old version still fulfils the need equally as well as the new version. Thus, emotional (subjective) needs may override objective needs. In other words, the fulfilment of desires and wants become more important than the fulfilment of the initial need.

In the eighteenth century Rousseau suggested legislating against inequality and luxury in an attempt to try and stop the upward spiral of need that was the root of human envy and strife (Ignatieff, 1984, p. 22). Capitalism prevailed, however, and at the root of capitalism is the promotion of individual interests which hinders general human needs and collective action (Doyal and Gough, 1991, pp. 291-292). The pursuit of private interest goes against the common good and a society of 'have and have nots' emerges, in which the distribution of resources, wealth and power can be in the hands of a few at the expense of the needs of the many. Individual needs prevail at the expense of others needs, which can create inequitable fulfilment of needs. Ignatieff suggests that *individual* difference matters more than (common) identity as *human beings*, such that 'what is common to us matters much less than what differentiates us'; thus 'equality is not prized' (1984, p. 29). People become estranged from society: difference *vs*. human identity, private *vs*. public participation. When there are times of plenty people are busy thinking of their own needs and not others, but what happens when times become hard, and some of those with plenty become those with little or nothing? Who will help them fulfil their needs if they haven't helped others in the past and have no reciprocal relationships or social arrangements to turn to? For example, when an individual can no longer afford a private care home, who can they turn to, to fulfil their social care needs? The state may be the only option. Ignatieff describes this as 'the loneliness of the modern self in its hour of need' (1984, p. 102).

Collectivity

So what is the role of wider social relationships in fulfilling needs? The idea of collectivity is based on collective needs, the collective good and collective action; what individuals in a society can do for one another in an organised fashion. Ideally, people in society help each other to fulfil their basic needs; for example once an individual's basic needs have been met they can help others fulfil their needs. De Swaan describes collective action as a collaborative effort that is often adopted when the job is too big for one person and a better result is achieved if people work together rather than separately, and everyone can enjoy the results (2001, pp. 91-93). A critical mass of people (and opinion) need to come together to initiate collective action and form a common policy. Co-operation, interdependence and mutual expectations are necessary if the collective is to operate effectively. A sense of togetherness and solidarity can form into a positive force and lead to further integration with other groups.

Looking at the widest sense of a collective: human society in general, and particular societies, we can see how needs are identified, agreed and fulfilled on a large scale. Many societies construct an acceptable level of need satisfaction which is often culturally specific.

For example, minimum and optimum levels of health and autonomy are set which create a commitment to reaching a minimum level of responsibility for those in society. Ignatieff refers to this as a 'minimum degree of agreement…as to the necessary preconditions for human flourishing' (1984, p. 12). This fulfils the moral issue of meeting needs: 'since people share the same needs, they can agree to the minimum preconditions of moral behaviour, in particular their obligation to relieve the needs of others in distress' (*ibid.,* p. 93). Who, and what information, influences the setting of these levels of need is debatable and can, to an extent, be heavily influenced by economic and political ideals and not necessarily be based on a democratically agreed consensus. There is the danger of someone thinking they know 'what another human being needs better than they do themselves', when presumption can ignore democratic preferences and freedom (*ibid.,* p. 11). Levels of acceptable basic needs can be based on culturally specific central values, for example the setting of a poverty line. Commonality of a mutual understanding of needs for all groups develops and in many cases is universally accepted within the cultural context, and, in some cases at a worldwide level. Within these levels, groups who have specific needs, for example women needing help with child birth and rearing, have to be catered for.

Setting minimum levels of need can inform policy but does not guarantee that these needs will be met. Reaching set levels will depend on access to need satisfiers. Again, economic and political constraints come into play. As Doyal and Gough put it, this is 'the expense of positive rights rather than negative rights' (1991, p. 137. They suggest a basic level of satisfaction – *minimum optimorum* - should be set for each intermediate need (inputs) which has to be reached if health and autonomy (outputs) are to be optimised (*ibid*., pp. 162-163). In other words, minimum inputs for optimum outputs. Any additional inputs beyond the basic level would not enhance basic needs satisfaction, and could be seen as a waste or detrimental. For example, eating food provides sustenance and nutrition to aid survival and avoidance of harm, and thus maintain physical health. Eating more than the body requires, however, can hinder rather than enhance health. In Doyal and Gough's view, going beyond the optimum level only fulfils and encourages desires and wants (*ibid.*, p. 162). Thus, physical (objective) needs are limited, whereas emotional (subjective) needs are limitless (as outlined earlier). For example, improvements to housing, such as luxury fittings, that go beyond the basic requirements of clean water, adequate sanitation, safety, warmth and adequate space would meet subjective desires and enhance the satisfaction of wants but are irrelevant to need-based welfare (*ibid.*, p. 162). In essence, the underlying message put forward by Doyal and Gough is that excess, and in some cases greed, does not pay; having *enough*, not *more than enough*, optimises the fulfilment of basic and intermediate needs.

With this in mind, we can ask ourselves a couple of pertinent questions: do I really *need* it, and/or do I really *need* more?

Putting the meeting of agreed levels of need into practice often appears in a long standing form of collective action: state intervention and the wider (re)distribution of resources to fulfil needs. For example, in England the welfare state is funded by compulsory taxes, which convert into state benefit payments (income) for those unable to work, thus providing monetary resources to fulfil the basic needs (at the very least) that many would have no means to fulfil otherwise. Those who have more than enough and those with less than enough are bound by ties of obligation (Ignatieff, 1984, p. 27). Here individual obligations to the collective, and collective obligations to individuals, are fulfilled indirectly through the state. Taxes fund many services that fulfil the needs of the general population, for example Health Care, policing, roads, social services, fire service and education, which in turn can provide a preferable environment for all to live in. It could be suggested that the tax route and the state taking collective responsibility satisfies people's consciences, allowing them to feel they are contributing to society, and doing something for other people without having to do it directly themselves by discharging their duties to another agency. As Ignatieff suggests, the welfare state creates 'moral relations between strangers', in which 'their [stranger's] needs and their entitlements establish a silent relation between us' (*ibid.*, pp. 9-10).

Another point of view is that you have to earn your entitlement to have your needs met, which is mainly achieved by supporting yourself through earning money (employment) to pay your own way in the world. As Phillips states, this was a view professed by the New Right in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s who were 'against what they saw as the tyranny imposed on individual citizens by societies taxing them in order to meet the needs of other citizens worse off than themselves' (2006, pp. 80-81). From a liberal standpoint, there is 'a line drawn between the needs which can be a matter of public entitlement and those which must be left to the private self to satisfy' (Ignatieff, 1984, p. 135). Taking obligations and entitlements into account, the state often provides a generic response to needs. For example, the state in England views all unemployed people who are 'fit' to work i.e. have no health issues, as the same. Thus entitlement to the fulfilment of basic needs i.e. how much the law says you need to live on each week, is the same for all, with minimal consideration of individual social and economic circumstances. Charities play a key role in fulfilling the needs of those whose diverse, often complex needs, are not catered for sufficiently by the

state's generic response, for example people with mental health problems and a drug addiction.

Within these direct (collaborative relationships) and indirect (state) collective mechanisms, 'rights' to needs satisfaction are often developed, and in some instances may become a legal right. Human, civil and political rights, for example try to ensure that weaker members of society share in need satisfaction through providing opportunities for participation. Many rights relate to autonomy, in providing freedom, choice, opportunity and a means to be heard. Doyal and Gough suggest that democracy is a prerequisite for optimising need satisfaction (1991, p. 228). Much like setting levels of need, rights are often developed and maintained according to a state's economic, political and social situation, and sometimes in accordance with the global situation. For example, the universally used international hybrid needs measure – The United Nations Human Development Index – sees human development as central to the goal of development, and is primarily aimed at developing countries (Phillips, 2006, p. 81).

Some societies, however, are wary of the economic and social costs of providing a right to needs. This was illustrated by Enoch Powell, the right-wing English politician who famously said, in his 'Still to Decide' speech in 1972, 'the translation of a want or a need into a right is one of the most widespread and dangerous of modern heresies' (George and Wilding, 1976, p. 27). As Ignatieff suggests, the conservative counter-attack on the welfare state is an attack on the idea that needs make rights, and thus challenges the notion of society as a moral community (1984, p. 13). Much as levels of need do not guarantee entitlement, neither do rights. However, Ignatieff believes that having a language of needs puts people in a better position to understand the difference between granting people their rights and giving people what they need (*ibid.,* pp. 13-14).

Inevitably, the distribution of resources is governed by rules; for example, means testing for social security benefits determines who is deserving and who is not. Rules can also form the basis of moral entitlement. Again, power relations and authority come into play here. The state controls those who rely on it: the state's rules have to be followed, otherwise the means to fulfil needs i.e. social security benefits and state housing, will not be applied. Although Doyal and Gough argue that welfare should not be used to restrain autonomy and individual choice (1991, p. 107), reliance solely on state benefits means a recipients' income is restricted to what the state thinks is the appropriate minimum, in order to fulfil their obligations and duties to those who cannot provide for themselves.

Such arguments have come to the fore in recent years, in times of austerity, where non-taxpayers, i.e. people who rely solely on state benefits, are pitched against those who fund state benefits (taxpayers). In England, for example, restrictions have been placed on state benefits. A benefit cap was introduced in November 2016 which limits the amount a working age person can get from welfare benefits: when all your benefits are calculated, your housing benefit or universal credit is reduced so your total benefits don't go above the benefit cap limit.

Personal fulfilment of needs

The fulfilment of needs through relationships with others has been discussed above. So what responsibility do individuals themselves take in fulfilling their own needs? There is little evidence about, or discussion of personal/individual motivation to fulfil needs in the literature. Maslow's (1987) basic need hierarchy, discussed earlier in this Chapter, provides the most individualised theory of needs, in which needs are examined from a human behaviour and motivation perspective, focusing on the needs an individual *seeks* to satisfy. In other words, the needs an individual *chooses* to satisfy. As touched on earlier, in Maslow's model, needs form a hierarchy in which lower-level needs have to be satisfied first. Only when these needs have been satisfied can the individual seek to satisfy higher needs, and so on (see Figure 2.1). In other words, as needs become fulfilled they become unimportant and the focus is put on fulfilling higher needs.   Similarly, Ignatieff notes that 'a life spent in the pursuit of need is an upward spiral' propelled by 'the plausibility of each moment's yearning for the next' (1984, pp. 75-76). For example, hungry, cold individuals will focus on fulfilling their need for food and warmth, with no concern for their higher-order needs; but when well fed and warm, they will seek safety and then the comfort of being with others.   Maslow's model suggests that needs influence an individual's behaviour which is driven by multiple motives; as he puts it 'the organism is dominated, and its behaviour is organised only by unsatisfied needs' where 'gratification becomes as important a concept as deprivation in motivation theory' (1987, pp. 17-18).

Maslow included certain prerequisites for the fulfilment of his basic needs, which have several conditions, many of which relate to freedom: 'freedom to do what one wishes so long as no harm is done to others; freedom to speak; freedom to express oneself; freedom to investigate and seek information; freedom to defend oneself; justice; fairness; honesty; and orderliness' (1987, pp. 22-23). Unlike Doyal and Gough, who believe autonomy is a basic need (1991), Maslow does not see freedom as a need (1987). Threats to freedoms, however, are 'reacted to as if there were direct danger to basic needs themselves…basic needs are

defended because without them the basic satisfactions are quite impossible, or at least severely endangered' *(Maslow, pp. 22-23).* In other words, personal freedom is required to facilitate the fulfilment of basic needs. This is much like the link Doyal and Gough (1991) make between basic and intermediate needs: basic needs (first order needs) cannot be fulfilled without the fulfilment of intermediate needs (second order needs).

Offering an alternative to Maslow, Alderfer's E.R.G. theory (discussed earlier in this Chapter), recognises that the satisfaction of needs depends on objective and subjective elements: 'the way the world actually is' (objective) and 'how reality is perceived' (subjective) (1972, p.7). For example, relatedness needs can be satisfied through 'mutually sharing thoughts and feelings', 'acceptance, confirmation, understanding and influence are elements of the relatedness process', and 'satisfaction of growth needs depends on a person finding opportunities to be what he is most fully and become what he can' (*ibid*., pp.10-12). Alderfer's three categories of needs (existence, relatedness and growth) focus on satisfaction of and desire for each. They differ in how strong they are: all people possess some degree of each need, but differ in the strength of their needs (*ibid*., pp.11-14). Unlike Maslow, Alderfer does not see needs as a strict hierarchy, but instead recognises satisfaction progression, for example when 'a person has more energy available for the more personal and less certain aspects of living (relatedness and growth) if he has obtained gratification in more concrete areas (existence), (*ibid*., pp.16-17). Inter-relationships between lower-level need satisfaction and high-level desires occur (*ibid.*, pp. 12-13). For example, when a person is aware that a need has been satisfied, their desires change, and the more a person is satisfied the more they desire, and the more they desire, the more satisfied they become (*ibid.*, pp. 20-21). In other words, there is an endless desire for the satisfaction of different needs. Can anyone ever be truly satisfied? These relationships form the basis of multiple determination of satisfaction and desire, in which 'any desire can have several types of satisfaction affecting its strength…and any satisfaction also affects more than one type of desire' (*ibid*., p. 13). For example, the less relatedness needs are satisfied the more existence needs will be desired, and the more existence needs are satisfied the more relatedness needs will be desired (*ibid*., p. 13).

There has been some criticism of Maslow's (1987) model of strict movement up a hierarchy of needs. As outlined above, Alderfer gives less emphasis to a strict hierarchical ordering of need-satisfying and instead suggests that needs may operate at different levels simultaneously, and there is no automatic progression from one level to the next (1972, pp. 6-29). Doyal and Gough acknowledge that needs are hierarchical in nature, often with a common goal, for example the need for warmth is fulfilled through the need for clothing, but

also counter the claims of Maslow's straight forward flow up the hierarchy (1991, p. 35-40). They believe that there is no strict temporal sequencing of motivations, for example a mountain climber may be more concerned with self-actualisation than safety, and argue for a divorce of needs, as universalisable goals, from motivations or drives (*ibid.*, pp. 35-40). Similarly, Alderfer (1972, pp. 16-17) makes the point that there may be a compensating substitution of lower level needs where higher-level needs cannot be satisfied. For example, a person wants relationships with significant others when their growth needs are not being met in order to provide an alternative form of stimulation (*ibid.*, pp. 16-17). People have different motivations or drives in fulfilling what they perceive to be their needs, and these lie at the root of their personal needs journey.

In Maslow's defence, he does acknowledge that the hierarchy is not always rigid; needs and their fulfilment are open to individual interpretation and preference (1987, pp. 26-27). He notes exceptions, for example when a person does not agree with changes at work and gives up their job rather than lose self-respect, but then can't afford food so is forced to take their job back at the price of losing their self-respect (*ibid.*, pp. 26-27). The hierarchical order has been reinstated: being able to afford food has become more important than self-respect. For some, self-esteem is more important than love. Maslow also states that the hierarchical nature of needs does not mean that lower needs have to be fully satisfied before higher needs can be gratified; needs can be partially satisfied, and it is routine for people to be 'partially satisfied in all their basic needs and partially unsatisfied in all their basic needs at the same time' (*ibid*., pp. 27-28). This resembles Alderfer's suggestion that needs may operate at different levels simultaneously (1972, pp. 6-29). Thus, needs may be both personal in both their perception and fulfilment, as referred to earlier. However, at the heart of Maslow's hierarchical concept remains the belief that a lower need is stronger than a higher need, for example 'the safety need is stronger than the love need' (Maslow, 1987, pp. 56-57).

Moving beyond personal motivations to fulfil needs, Doyal and Gough suggest that individual characteristics of a person which can both impair and enhance the fulfilment of their needs (1991, p. 76-90). They emphasise the impact of personal physical health and autonomy on the satisfaction of needs, and highlight the World Health Organisation's positive definition of health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being' (*ibid*., p. 172). This definition is hard to measure, is aspirational and must be interpreted according to individual and/or societal circumstances. The health of a person is very individual and is determined by physiological make-up and how life is lived. Thus impairments to physical health and autonomy can be both uncontrollable and controlled. In addition to the cognitive

impairments to autonomy outlined earlier, Doyal and Gough, also highlight mental illness, and restricted opportunities as impairments to personal autonomy, and disability and disease as impairments to physical health (*ibid.*, p. 172). Such impairments can lead to restricted opportunities to participate in social life, a lack of ability to perform 'normal' everyday activities, and thus reduced opportunities to fulfil needs.

Furthermore, the basic need of survival (physical health), and survival chances are greatly influenced by social and economic characteristics, although these characteristics are alterable. Deprivation and stress can threaten autonomy, as when deprivation can lead to exclusion from socially significant activities and social roles, such as paid employment which enhances individual autonomy. Earned income opens up access to other intermediate needs, provides regular activity, social experience, collective purpose, status and identity, and reduces mental health problems (Doyal and Gough, 1991, pp. 185-186). Thus, it is obvious that for most people unemployment can be harmful. Against this, however, employment can cause stress and thus increase mental health problems. Maslow makes an important point about how people can tolerate or adjust to being deprived of the fulfilment of their needs: 'those individuals in whom a certain need has always been satisfied are best equipped to tolerate deprivation of that need in the future…and those who have been deprived in the past will react differently to current satisfactions from the one who has never been deprived' (1987, pp. 18). He also notes that 'people who have been made secure and strong in the earliest years tend to remain secure and strong thereafter in the face of whatever threatens' (*ibid.,* pp. 27). Thus, deprivation is both objective, for example setting a poverty line, and subjective i.e. relative to the individual.

Measuring the fulfilment of need

Once an 'acceptable' level of need has been set by a society it should be measured to see how successful it has been in meeting need. In the literature this is referred to as 'needs satisfaction'. In using this term, however, the literature does not provide a clear view on whether satisfaction is based upon objectivity or subjectivity, or a combination of the two: is satisfaction achieved when pre-determined criteria are met (objective welfare) or when an individual states that they are satisfied (subjective happiness)? Who determines satisfaction? Basic needs are universal but satisfiers are often relative (Doyal and Gough, 1991, p. 155), much like relative poverty. This means that needs can be met in different ways and by different satisfiers. How the fulfilment of basic needs is relative was explored in more depth earlier in the discussion of social relationships, dependency and expectations. Doyal and Gough (1991, pp. 151-166) identify a number of social indicators and other direct measures of

human welfare or needs satisfaction, including well-being, quality of life and GDP, but warn against the danger of focusing on what is easily measurable. They use a measure of need-satisfaction in terms of (i) basic needs and (ii) intermediate needs, and do not attempt to measure the consumption of satisfiers in a particular social context (*ibid.*, p. 159). They go on to argue that applying a social context to needs would be complex and require the determination of satisfiers that constitute necessities at a particular place and time (*ibid.*). This determination could be achieved through the application of distinct research methodologies to deliver complementary statistical and experiential knowledge, focusing on intermediate needs, which must be satisfied if the basic needs for physical health and autonomy are themselves to be satisfied (*ibid.*). Thus, reiterating their singular focus on objective needs (*ibid.*).

It is worth briefly considering here the scope and merits of two measures of human welfare or needs satisfaction which are widely used to inform social policy and related debates: 'quality of life' and 'well-being'. In the context of this study the two measures will be considered from a sociologically-informed perspective. The two measures provide a holistic approach to measuring the fulfilment of needs in that, much as Maslow (1987) and Alderfer (1972) do, they combine objective and subjective elements. Objectivists focus on whether people are healthy, well fed, appropriately housed, economically secure and well educated, and are thus concerned with meeting needs (Phillips, 2006, p. 3). In contrast, for subjectivists, pleasure (the experience of happiness) is central to quality of life where pleasure and pain are the foundations of feelings of happiness (*ibid.*, p. 5). Satisfaction is also a major element in well-being; satisfaction with life. Therefore, the criteria for quality of life fits into two categories: objective needs and subjective happiness.

Thus, unlike Doyal and Gough's (1991) objective approach to needs, approaches that focus on quality of life and well-being measures take a subjective stance. This approach, to an extent, allows people to define what they themselves think are the elements that contribute to, and enhance their quality of life and well-being (Phillips, 2006, p. 5). This is viewed as a democratic alternative, allowing people to judge their own lives instead of focusing on judgements made by 'experts' (*ibid.*, p. 18). Measurement instruments and scales are often used to assess well-being and score both objective and subjective quality of life, according to pre-determined criteria. A person specific measure or score is produced. Phillips summaries what have been found to be the most important elements of quality of life to people: 1) relationships with family and friends, 2) their own health, 3) the health of their family and friend, and 4) their finances and standard of living (2006, p. 5). As opposed to needs, quality

of life is not just about the well-being of 'self', but also the well-being of those one has significant relationships with, family and friends.

Objective and subjective measures, however, do often complement each other. For example, quality of life and well-being measures are widely used in medicine as an assessment tool for patients to provide information about other (subjective) needs that may impact physical needs. At the national level, since April 2011, the Annual Population Survey has included four questions to help monitor personal well-being in the UK, which cover levels of life satisfaction, feeling worthwhile, feelings of happiness, and anxiety. Between the years ending March 2015 and 2016, there was no improvement in ratings of happiness, anxiety and feeling that things in life are worthwhile, although reported personal well-being has improved across each of the measures over the five year period between the years ending March 2012 and 2016 (ONS, 2016).

2.3   Needs and 'home'

This research focuses on the histories of 'home' among people with experience of homelessness. 'Home' most commonly comes in the form of housing or shelter, and as outlined earlier in this Chapter, is widely accepted as a need. Doyal and Gough describe protective housing as an 'intermediate need' (1991, pp. 191-193), Maslow describes shelter as a 'physiological need' (1987, pp. 15-23), and Alderfer describes shelter as an 'existence need' (1972, pp. 6-13). These authors conceptualise shelter or housing as a need fundamental to human existence, providing a physical base to protect from harm (health) in which basic functions can be performed, i.e. eating, sleeping and sanitation, and life can be lived. When an individual sustains a relationship with shelter or housing, a sense of attachment can be formed, which in turn can develop into a sense of 'home': shelter, housing or dwelling can become 'home'.

The literature on needs does not explicitly identify or explore 'home' as a need, or 'home' as an environment that can fulfil different needs, whereas the literature on 'home' does. Instead it identifies shelter as a need and does not explore the link between shelter and 'home'. The 'home' literature, however, does make this connection and 'home' is seen as a catalyst to fulfilling a variety of needs, both physiological and psychological. For example, when talking about the development of identity through 'home', Somerville describes 'home' as fulfilling deep rooted psychological needs for identity, control, privacy, security, intimacy and social status (1997, p. 229). Deprés argues that Maslow's theory of personality identifies home as fulfilling a hierarchy of human needs necessary to psychological well-being. The

basic need for shelter meets the need for physical security and health, and provides psychological comfort in the shape of quietness, light, cleanliness, thermal conditions, and eased movements. 'Home' can provide an arena for social relationships with family and friends and fulfil the human need for social intercourse. The need for privacy can be found at 'home', where intrusions can be controlled and thus solitude and refuge can be enjoyed. Finally, 'home' can fulfil the psychological need for social status where the characteristics, location and tenure of the property communicate the household's social position in terms of economic and professional status (Després, 1991, pp. 100-101).

For most people, therefore, 'home' is one of the main environments, if not *the* main environment, in which needs may be, and are fulfilled, whether directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. The fulfilment of needs is a by-product of having a 'home'. It could be suggested that shelter or 'home' is a need that requires fulfilment in order for other needs to also be fulfilled, so without shelter or 'home' these other needs would be fulfilled to a lesser degree, if at all. However, as illustrated earlier, in the homelessness example, the provision of shelter or 'home' may hinder the fulfilment of other needs. Having to live by someone else's rules, for example parents or staff at a hostel, can reduce autonomy and hinder the development of significant primary relationships. Thus, given that needs are relative, different housing and 'home' situations may influence both an individual's actual needs and whether they are fulfilled by the dwelling environment in question.

Or is the relationship between 'home' and needs less tangible than that? Does attachment and an emotional relationship with a dwelling place turn it into a 'home'? Does the creation of 'home' then open up the possibility of 'home' fulfilling other needs, for example social relationships, a feeling of security? Or turning the question around, does the fulfilment of other needs first, such as economic security and significant primary relationships, provide the basis for 'home' to be created? Put more simply, does 'home' lead to the fulfilment of needs, or does the fulfilment of needs lead to the creation of 'home'. Which comes first? Or is this a matter that will differ from situation to situation? The tangible connections between 'home' and needs are examined in Chapters Three and Four through detailed consideration of the existing literature on 'home'.

2.4   Overview

There is a general acceptance of survival and the avoidance of harm (i.e. physical health) as basic needs. Personal autonomy is also seen as a basic need, not least for developing an understanding of one's needs and how to fulfil them personally through intermediate needs.

The fulfilment of basic and intermediate needs is largely achieved via dependency on individual and collective social arrangements, with an increasing reliance on the latter. These relationships act as 'enablers', as society's way of enabling the individual to fulfil their needs. These relationships can be direct or indirect, are open to change at any time, and can develop into power relations in which others in our relationships are gatekeepers controlling the fulfilment of needs. The fulfilment of needs is also subject to individual circumstances, and wants and desires, which influence the importance a person places on needs, and thus how and to what level or extent different needs are fulfilled. The importance of fulfilling certain needs can also be different in different societies, in accordance with cultural, social, economic and political circumstances. Although some societies set optimum levels of need, measuring their fulfilment is a challenge. Ideals often do not become a reality. Needs are thus both generic (objective) and individualised (subjective), to differing degrees.

I would argue that the perception and fulfilment of needs has become highly individualised, in that a dominant capitalist and consumerist world blurs the lines between needs, wants and desires (the objective and the subjective). This is not explored in any depth in the literature, but will be discussed here in subsequent Chapters. Instead, much of the literature focuses on the overriding importance of objective needs. Doyal and Gough highlight the impact of capitalism on the individualisation of needs, which they believe hinders the ability of people to perceive human needs, and thus the needs of the collective (1991, p. 291). In other words, an autonomy which pursues individual needs, wants and desires at the expense of others hardly constitutes a universalisable human need (*ibid.*, p. 65). The notion of working collectively to fulfil needs remains an ideal for achieving equality that doesn't resonate with an ever increasing individualised society such as England. Even if needs are fulfilled collectively, it is often through an indirect collective such as the state, which is not a collective that individuals necessarily perceive themselves as actively participating in. At the core of human needs, however, interaction and participation with others remain, even if within indirect relationships.

I would also argue that there is a gap in the literature in relation to the interchangeable significance and importance over time (with respect to lifecycle events) of the perception of different needs and their fulfilment. As highlighted above, Doyal and Gough recognise that people's individual feelings about what they need vary between cultures and over time (*ibid.*, p. 49). They also recognise the relevance of social context in determining what satisfiers constitute necessities at a particular place and time, but this is viewed as a complex path and is not pursued in the literature (*ibid.*, p. 159). Do we actually know, in reality, what

influences the perception and the fulfilment of needs of different groups, and how needs are viewed at different points in the life cycle? There is a scarcity of empirical research examining individual needs and their fulfilment through the life cycle, either through longitudinal or retrospective study.

Shelter, dwelling, housing and 'home' are often associated terms. The next Chapter will explore the extent to which shelter and 'home' can fulfil certain needs (physiological and psychological), and how 'home' goes beyond shelter in having an enhanced emotional and personal meaning which can fulfil needs for intimacy and comfort, for example. A number of key areas of interest will be examined, including how 'home' and its meaning has evolved; how a normative view of 'home' has been socially constructed; and, lastly, common meanings of 'home'.   In Chapters Six, Seven and Eight I will add to the existing literature by exploring the relationship between needs and 'home' among the seventeen participants in this research. I will argue that 'home' and needs are to some extent similar, to some extent unique and temporally defined. As Schein (1980, pp. 39-44) describes, human nature is complex, with human needs and motivations varying according to individual circumstances, life experience, expectations and age.

Chapter Three: Ideal 'homes'

3.0   Introduction

As outlined in the previous Chapter on needs, a house, shelter or a dwelling place is a need which is viewed and experienced as a place where an individual or people live. It most commonly takes the form of a built structure that can be permanent or temporary, for example a house, apartment, caravan, boat or tent.   Its primary function is to protect inhabitants from the elements, and provide an environment in which to carry out every day practical tasks that fulfil basic and intermediate needs: cooking and eating, sanitation of the body, washing clothes, sleeping and social participation. Thus, a dwelling place has a function of fulfilling other needs, some of which can transform that dwelling place into 'home', where practical and emotional elements come under the same roof.   As Blunt and Dowling note, one of the important elements of a 'home' is that it is a house or shelter: a structure in which we are housed (2006, p. 6), a place, a site in which we live (*ibid*., p. 2), where 'home' is a series of feelings and attachments connected to a physical structure that provides shelter (*ibid*., p. 10). This Chapter will expand on the objective need for shelter by exploring subjective views of what turns a dwelling place into 'home', drawing on different disciplines to identify the core essence of the *meaning* of 'home'.

3.1   The evolution of 'home'

In defining meaning it is essential to look at the origins of 'home' and see how the evolution of 'home' over time has shaped meaning. The starting point for understanding 'home' is at the basic level of definition:

> A dwelling place, house, abode; the fixed residence of a family or household; the seat of domestic life and interests; one's own house; the dwelling in which one habitually lives, or which one regards as one's proper abode.

(Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd edition)

The word and term 'home' has been used for hundreds of years, evolving through a diverse range of meanings (see Moore, 2000). The domestication of the word 'home' in the 17th and 18th centuries in England saw the meaning of 'home' switch from the native village, birthplace or country to the house (Moore, 2000, pp. 208-209). Urbanisation paved the way for house becoming 'home' by separating it from the world of work and turning it into a strong hold of family living and leisure (Janeway, 1971). In the 19th Century 'home' came to be commonly thought of as a family dwelling and house. The development of meaning

influenced psychological debates on 'home', resulting in a focus on the domestic hearth. Gradually, 'home' evolved into a privatised space, becoming a place of domesticity and comfort for some, for example the bourgeoisie, and a symbol of identity of the middle class (Moore, 2000, p. 209). For others, namely the rural and urban working class, home still had many functions – a place of paid and domestic work and family life; not a retreat. This historical perspective teases out the nuances of 'home' according to different life circumstances. Over time, for all classes in society, 'home' came to be established as being a person's dwelling, shelter or house space, a base for familial relationships and domesticity: 'home is the setting within which the basic unit of social organisation – the household - is most routinely constituted' (Saunders and Williams, 1988, p. 83). Here we find the origins of the general definition of 'home' commonly used today (as outlined above). From the 1980s onwards sociology and psychology, have moved away from narrow, abstract definitions of 'home' towards in-depth understandings of *meaning* that are based on people's experiences and ideas of 'home'.

3.2   The meaning of 'home'

The literature on 'home' seeks to provide insight into the true meaning and nature of 'home' as experienced by people from different walks of life. An approach is taken that attempts to construct the 'social' home, in which home is about *feelings* and *emotions* (chiefly positive) attached to a (dwelling) place. As Sixsmith (1986, p. 290) states, 'home appears as a profound centre of meaning and a central emotional and sometimes physical reference point in a person's life'. One of Mallet's (2000, p. 751) homeless participants illustrates this point well; 'home is where you're emotionally and physically at home'. Definition, however, doesn't tell us about the reality of 'home'.

In developing an understanding of 'home' based around meaning, Somerville (1997) identifies different approaches taken by different schools of thought. Some commentators focus on specific factors which relate to the characteristics of an individual: class, gender, tenure and age (Somerville, 1997, p. 228). Others focus on broader aspects of 'home': territoriality, psychological needs, attachments and connectedness (*ibid.*, p. 228). Much of the literature focuses on the *interpretation* of 'home', invoking personal and emotional, and thus individual elements of the value or significance of 'home', where people are identified as having a complex and diverse lived experience of 'home' (Mallet, 2004, p. 64). Thus, it can be argued that individuals have to experience 'home' in order to be able to construct an idea of what 'home' is or means to them. Tomas and Dittmar (1995, p. 499) highlight general

theorising on the meaning of 'home' which states that 'home' is an experience of housing, so meaning will differ because housing experiences differ. In short, the experiential memory of 'home' encapsulated in housing histories is crucial to understanding the meaning of 'home' (Mallett, 2004, p. 70). Empirical studies asking subjects to reflect on their *lived* experience of 'home' are central to understanding the meaning of 'home'; as Somerville suggests, 'what is important is to analyse what 'home' means to different people' (1989, p. 115). Such an approach explores what makes a dwelling place 'home'. Somerville (1997, pp. 227-228) summarises recurrent meanings across sociological studies which chiefly focus on the dwellers emotional experience of 'home' rather than the physical 'home', where 'home' is characterised as:

- the centre of family life
- a place of retreat, safety and relaxation
- freedom and independence
- self-expression and social status
- a place of privacy, continuity and permanence
- a financial asset
- a support for work and leisure activities

Evidence from empirical studies will be explored in detail later in the Chapter.

The psychological approach to 'home' focuses on wider relationships between place and 'home', where the essence of 'home' is borne out of a relationship between an individual and their dwelling space (Moore, 2000, p. 209). A person's concept of 'home' is best understood as a relationship to their dwelling environment (Hayward, 1977, p. 11), in which an individual experiences 'home' via the emotions connecting themselves and place; thus making sense of 'home' is an emotional process (Gurney, 1997, p. 384). As Dovey (1985, p. 34) reiterates, 'home is best conceived as a kind of relationship between people and their environment' in which 'home' is an 'emotionally based and meaningful relationship between dwellers and their dwelling places'. 'Home is: a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meanings, and the relations between the two' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, pp. 2-3). For psychologists, interaction with 'home' can create an emotional relationship with a dwelling place, which defines the very nature and essence of 'home', as distinguished from a house (Moore, 2000, p. 210). Research interest has long focused on 'home' as an idea, in terms of experiences, feelings and meanings of 'home' (Blunt and Dowling (2006, p. 9) where time and again empirical evidence reiterates the basis of 'home' in emotions (as evidenced later) where 'home' is both a physical and emotional space.

'Home' can thus be described as a spatial and a social unit of interaction; a 'socio-spatial' system that represents the fusion of the physical unit or house and the social unit or

household (Saunders and Williams, 1988, p. 82). House and household are components of 'home', but on their own they do not capture the complex socio-spatial relations and emotions that define 'home' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 3). Physical and social worlds combine to form 'home', as Saunders and Williams illustrate: 'the home is the most basic and simple of modern socio-spatial systems. Functionally (i.e. in terms of both its social and spatial organisation) it is indivisible' (1988, p. 83). This is how 'home' is arrived at; a process of transformation between the physical and social, making a dwelling place (physical) home (social).

It is necessary to understand the processes by which a dwelling place becomes 'home' the interaction between dweller and their dwelling place in a direct experiential sense in order to understand the psychological significance of 'home' for an individual i.e. their emotional attachment to place. How and why do built forms – houses or dwellings – become identified as 'homes'? (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 88). As Hayward notes, 'home is not simply an environment where a person's observable life goes on…rather, home is a label applied voluntarily and selectively to one or more environments to which a person feels some attachment' (1975, p. 3), where 'home' is both an environmental and psychological concept (*ibid.,* p. 8). Sixsmith (1986, p. 283) stresses the need for a thorough understanding of the processes operating in person-environment interactions, so that the relative strengths and weaknesses of each model or theory can be assessed. Thus, there needs to be an understanding of what the 'label' 'home' means and when it is applied (Hayward, 1975, p. 3). Hayward (1975, pp. 4-8) compiled one of the first psychologically-based lists of meanings of 'home' which clearly depicts the co-dimensional physical and emotional 'home':

- a physical structure
- territory
- locus in space
- self and self identity
- a social and cultural unit

Hayward went on to identify nine dimensions of meaning regarding concepts of home (1977, p. 10). 'Home' as:

- intimate other
- social network
- self-identity
- a place of privacy and refuge
- continuity
- a personalised place
- a base of activity
- childhood home
- physical structure

The same basic notions that are wrapped up in the idea of 'home' have consistently been identified by research: privacy, security, family, intimacy, comfort, and control (Moore, 2000, p. 210). Further recurrent descriptions of 'home' relate to house, family, haven, self, gender and journeying (Mallet, 2004, p. 62); these are much like the terms found in sociological research. In her examination of empirical literature in the fields of psychology, sociology and phenomenology, Després (1991, pp. 97-99) identified studies that looked at behavioural interpretations of 'home', in an attempt to define the meaning of 'home', from which ten common categories of meaning could be derived, similar to those described above. Care should be taken, however, when surveying meanings across empirical studies from different disciplines, different sample groups, and different methodological and theoretical approaches. In generalising across individual experiences and ideas of 'home' there is an inherent danger of building a broad, generic meaning of 'home'. Lists of meanings may become widely accepted and used in different disciplines and contexts, often without question, and adopted as an authoritative set of meanings. Different disciplines consistently depict 'home' as a positive place, a place that provides personal space to live and experience life from, in which an individual can be their self, make their own choices, and participate in activities and social relationships. A house, however, is not necessarily, nor automatically a 'home' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 3). 'Home' can also be a negative experience, in which the dweller may have a less positive relationship with a dwelling place, and may be experienced as 'not-home'. The different sides of 'home' are examined in the next Chapter.

3.3   The normative view of home

Meaning is not, however, solely constructed around an emotional relationship (subjective experience) between dweller and dwelling place. Individuals are exposed to different sources of information and ideas about 'home', for example via the media, social and cultural norms, public policy, familial and social relationships, which can conjure up a generalised view of 'home', as illustrated above in the definition and meaning of 'home'. Individuals consciously and subconsciously digest information through unique filters of personality and circumstance, expectations and needs, where 'the unconscious often chooses houses, buildings, and secret rooms as symbols' (Copper Marcus, 2006, p. 38). A culture of 'home' is built where societal forces are said to produce and reproduce the meaning of 'home' (Després, 1991, p. 96). As Blunt and Dowling (2006, pp. 100-101) argue 'public discourse - in the media, in popular culture, in public policy – presents a dominant or ideal version of house-as-home, which typically portrays belonging and intimacy amongst members of a heterosexual family, living in a detached, owner-occupied dwelling, in a suburban location'. Thus, definition may come

from one segment in society and be imposed on others which may not mesh with individual realities of 'home' (*ibid*., p. 128), where 'there may be people for whom a general understanding of home will not apply, nor match their own personal experience or desire for home' (Rivlin and Moore, 2001, p. 328).

It is suggested that ownership makes 'real and possible the control, security, the status, the family life that people seek through their houses' (Rakoff, 1977, p. 94). There is also suggestion that owner-occupation brings greater property rights and thus a greater sense of belonging and security, and investment of identity in, 'home', compared to those who rent (Saunders, 1989, p. 178). This is depicted in everyday expressions, where for owner occupiers it is usual to say 'I own my home' whereas for renters the usual expression is to 'rent a house' (Watson and Austerberry, 1986, p. 9). Williams (1987, p.157) challenges this 'ideal' of 'home' and argues that 'home is where the heart is', and it is not tenure-specific. However, clear differences have been found in the meaning of 'home' between tenants and owners. In Saunders' sample the essential ingredients of 'home' for tenants were love, family and children, with a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood also being important. In contrast, owners were more likely to equate 'home' with personal possessions and to see the 'home' as a place where one can relax or enjoy 'home comforts'. Saunders argues that tenant's emphasised people (social) and owner occupiers emphasised things (physical) (1989, pp. 185-187). So ideals of 'home' may, in fact, differ according to tenure.

The 'ideal' of 'home' in popular culture offers a normative view of 'home', which could be said to challenge the role of subjective experience in constructing meaning. Somerville argues that an idea or meaning of 'home' can be constructed without the experience of 'home', where 'home is not just a matter of feelings and lived experience but also of cognition and intellectual construction; people may have a sense of home even though they have no experience or memory if it….we cannot know what 'home' really is outside of these ideological constructs' (1992, p. 530). When street homelessness, i.e. rooflessness, has become a long-term experience, a clear articulation of 'home' as residence can be difficult as the individual may only have access to limited experiences by which the concept of 'home' is usually understood (May, 2000, p. 739). The influence of a general notion of 'home' (on homeless people) is illustrated by homeless young people in London and Dublin, many of whom had limited or no experience of 'home', for most this was due to a lack of social and personal qualities in the places they lived in rather than the physical absence of a family 'home' (Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 132). So when they described their future 'home', many had stereotypical notions of 'home' shaped by cultural associations, using popular or

everyday expressions such as freedom, independence and control (*ibid*., pp. 131-132). Henderson *et al*. (2007, p. 126) similarly found that the idealised creation of a future 'home' took on considerable significance for young people who had not experienced living with their parents as 'homely'. This suggests an example of the normative role of 'home' (Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 131) i.e. nostalgic or romantic notions of 'home' which are often most vivid (Mallett, 2004, p. 69), in which 'home' is an idea and an imaginary that is imbued with feelings (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 2). This can create potentially unrealistic expectations of what 'home' is, with people waiting to experience or feel what 'home' has been proscribed to be.

Thus people may strive to achieve the 'ideal home', an imposed notion of 'home' or elements of 'home', in which 'home is represented as an ideal of unity and order, and many individuals are motivated to seek these qualities in order to achieve an optimal relation to home' (Tognoli, 1987, p. 660). The ideal of 'home' may raise conflict in individuals where their own homes are too disordered and tensions may arise (*ibid.,* p. 660). In other words, the reality of 'home' can be in conflict with the ideal of 'home'. For others, when the ideal is realised it may not be as 'ideal' as one had thought, i.e. the dream was better than the reality. It could be suggested that 'home' can be realised without all elements of the perceived ideal 'home'. Mallett (2004, p. 69) states that critics of the ideal 'home' reject exclusively positive descriptions and assessments of 'home' as 'naïve expressions of false consciousness that do not reflect people's diverse experience and understanding of home'. The notion of the *real* 'home' is argued to be more realistic (*ibid*., p. 69). Some scholars, however, believe the concept of 'home' is as much about 'ideal' as 'real' (Moore, 2000, p. 212). Somerville (1992, p. 530) notes that the concepts of 'home' as ideal and 'home' as reality are integral to the social construction of 'home'.

For many people, their own individual meaning of 'home' is built around their individual experiences of 'home', their life context and the socially constructed version of 'home' they absorb. 'Home' is both an imposed ideal and a potent cultural and individual ideal (Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 128). 'Home' can be understood as a combination of material, perceived and experienced realities; a societal entity influenced by ideological, political and economic forces, in which 'personal, shared or societal-wide values, attitudes and meanings, and experiences about 'home' are rooted in the inter-play of individual, spatial and societal forces as they emerge in individual actions and practices' (Després, 1991, p. 108).

3.4   The common 'home'

As noted earlier, exploring the reality of life lived in a dwelling place adds depth to meaning, where, even in the absence of *specific* experience, *general* life experience can influence people's ideas and meaning of 'home'. In the 1980s scholars began to question the literature and the lack of substantive empirical evidence to illustrate claims about 'home' (see Tognoli, 1987, for example). As Saunders and Williams acknowledge, 'we know a lot about what different political and ideological interests say and believe about the home, but we know surprisingly little about how millions of ordinary people…live the reality of the home' (1988, p. 91).   They go on to highlight the surprising ignorance of the role that 'home' plays in people's lives, with an over reliance on 'ideologically-charged theoretical assertions at the expense of empirical evidence' (*op. cit.*).

Subsequent empirical enquiries have sought to build up a picture of 'home' by exploring differences in meaning and experience among ordinary people. The majority of empirical studies take a qualitative approach, conducting in-depth face-to-face interviews with a relatively small sample (ten to twenty) of a specific group of people (e.g. Horwitz and Tognoli, 1982; Sixsmith, 1986; Peterson, 2000; Smith, 1994; Peled and Muzicant, 2008; Walsh *et al*., 2009). Other than a focus on gender, and on people who are living in formal homeless accommodation, there is a lack of empirical enquiry comparing different population groups and contexts, for example age, the employed and unemployed, families with and without children, care leavers, ex-offenders, formal homelessness and informal/hidden homelessness. Some of these variant circumstances are picked up in studies of a specific group but they are rarely the primary sampling criteria or focus of analysis. Equally, there is a focus on positive experiences of 'home'. Less favourable experiences may be given secondary consideration, if they are questioned at all. Meanings of 'home', however, are highly personal and can be hard to verbalise and thus not easily studied (Hayward, 1975, p. 4). Even when experience of 'home' may be deemed 'typical' it is also uniquely individual (Sixsmith and Sixsmith, 1990, p. 20). This following section will draw on empirical studies, and reviews of such, to build up a picture of the common characteristics of 'home'.

Familiarity, routine and continuity

As will be explored below, empirical evidence shows that a dwelling place characterised by familiarity, routine, ritual and continuity is often experienced as 'home'. Over 'weeks, months or years, the home becomes a familiar environment' (Després, 1991, p. 98); a familiar space where particular activities and relationships are lived (Mallett, 2004, p. 63); the central

place of human existence, a pivotal point around which human activity revolves, the security of a place (home) to return to (Tognoli, 1987, pp. 657-658); a central point of reference in the world, the locus of a person's daily geographical orientation in the world (Hayward, 1975, p. 6); and the locus of daily activities (Hayward, 1977, p.10). A dwelling place is the arena of everyday survival activities and domestic practices such as eating, cooking, hygiene tasks, socialising, relationships, and paid employment. Behaviour becomes familiar and often routinised and repetitive; for example certain activities have to be carried out in the same way and at the same time every day, often in an unconscious way, and sometimes in an obsessive way. Such behaviour can generate a feeling of psychological security. As Somerville (1997, p. 235) suggests 'aspects of the world become familiar because of their regularity of appearance and because they feature in a discursive order which also interpolate the subjects themselves'. Thus, life can be shaped by and/or around everyday activities carried out within a dwelling place. For some commentators, it is the (domestic) activities carried out within the 'home' that are the essential building blocks of 'home': 'home is grounded less in a place and more in the activity that occurs in the place…home is not simply a person, a thing or place, but rather it relates to the activity performed by, with or in person's, things and places' (Jackson, 1995, p. 148). In this way, 'homes are among the most central physical settings of human life' (Altman, 1993, p. 29).

Somerville suggests that social relationships, including kinship relations, are often pivotal in generating familiarity, where the 'stability of the network membership is correlated with a degree of mutual familiarity among its members' that relies on the 'frequency and regularity of intra-network transactions through whole stages of the life cycle', and are key to the determination of familiarity (1997, p. 236). As one of Henderson *et al.'s* young participants noted, 'I suppose it's because you're familiar with everything around you, and the people around you, and the people just do their thing every day and its grand. You know, you can slide in there and nobody'll change anything, you know' (2007, p. 129). A dwelling place is often experienced as a central environment of family and social relations. Thus, continuity comes into play, much like routine, which overlaps the physical and emotional 'home'. Established and maintained activities, cultural practices and social relationships along with the presence of personal possessions can all provide continuity within a dwelling place. An individual often knows where they are in their own dwelling place, and knows what to expect. Participants in Sixsmith's (1986, p. 290) study of the meaning of 'home' illustrate this point well; 'it's comfortable [home], I'm relaxed, I feel relaxed in it because, I suppose, I'm familiar with it all and, I know what to expect', and 'you feel as if you're part of the place and it's part of you – you aren't a stranger or anything'. In other words, there is comfort in

familiarity and continuity which can create a sense of 'home'. As Tognoli (1987, pp. 659-660) suggests, the experience of continuity, whether it be of activities or relationships, differentiates homes from houses. The physical dwelling itself, in terms of tenure, can also provide continuity. For example, having a secure tenancy in the rental market usually provides more continuity than an assured shorthold six month tenancy does, whereas home ownership can provide ultimate continuity.

Familiarity, routine and continuity can also offer stability, in which the permanence of 'home' can be 'a place of continuing stability from which one can go into the world and return to in the knowledge of its being there for us' (Sixsmith, 1986, p. 294); 'after wandering it is the place where one experiences the return to the unity of oneself' (Perla, 1985, pp.70-71). Thus, psychological security can be felt in terms of knowing you always have a place to go back to, to retreat to, your own place. For an individual to be able to create a feeling of familiarity and continuity within a dwelling place is not always easy; economic resources and legal rights i.e. the means to support and manage a household, are essential (Somerville, 1997, p. 236). Without a minimum level of means/resources homelessness can occur, in which established routines are often disrupted and replaced by new ones. Without permanent accommodation continuity is precarious (*ibid*., p. 236): 'home' is fractured, the feeling and sense of 'home' diminishes and becomes but a memory or yearning.

Belonging

Empirical studies and secondary commentary have consistently identified a sense of belonging as a dominant characteristic of 'home'. Belonging is defined as 'the fact of appertaining, relationship, especially a person's membership in, and acceptance by a group or society' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012). In other words, feeling as if you are part of something, feeling you are in the right place; that you fit in. Thus, belonging is an emotional feeling that one belongs here. A sense of belonging within a dwelling place creates a 'home' environment that becomes part of self; an emotional attachment to a dwelling place. Sixsmith (1986, p. 287) identified 'belonging' as one of twenty categories of 'home', where comfort, relaxation and familiarity contribute to a sense of belonging to 'home'. Sixsmith (*ibid.*, p. 290) sees this as a total equation of self and 'home', epitomising the 'home' as a way of being in the world: you have your place in the world.

Research has found that realising a sense of belonging within 'home' can be achieved in different ways, depending on life circumstances. For example, Saunders (1989, p. 185) found council tenants to be twice as likely as owner-occupiers to describe 'home' as 'a sense of

belonging to a neighbourhood'; for example, neighbours receiving and giving help and support.   In explanation, Saunders (*ibid.*, p. 187) found that council tenants sometimes found it hard to establish a sense of belonging in a house they didn't own, and sought a sense of security in other ways, for example family and neighbours figure more highly when they think of 'home'. In contrast, owners were more likely than tenants to express a sense of self and belonging through their houses, which is attributable to the difference between ownership relations rather than any feature of the housing itself. In a sample of homeless women Walsh *et al.* (2009, p. 309) found that family constituted the primary sense of belonging that fulfils an important requirement of 'home'. Amongst runaway girls in Israel, a sense of belonging was found amongst people of the streets because they were like family: providing support, security, and attention (Peled and Muzincant, 2008, p.443). As May suggests, social networks can contribute to a wider sense of belonging (1999, p. 740).

The literature suggests that having a 'home' can help achieve a sense of belonging on a number of levels. A sense of belonging is not just associated with a sense of 'self' belonging, but also with a wider sense of belonging in society, where 'to have a home of one's own is to have a place in society – it is a central process in the *rite de passage* to adulthood' (Peterson, 2000, p. 26). Having one's own dwelling place or 'home' can form part of a route to becoming part of 'normal' society, being accepted, fitting in, and thus achieving a wider sense of belonging (Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 123).   In contrast, for marginalised or disadvantaged groups, the absence of 'home' reflects a position of relative exclusion, where homelessness signifies being 'cast out' of the paradise of belonging to society (McNaughton, 2008, p.9). Kellett and Moore (2003, pp. 123-127) found that, among homeless young people in London and Dublin and informal dwellers in Columbia, 'home' could be instrumental in redefining a place in society by providing a route back into the social and cultural ordinariness of life, and in turn allow the establishment of a sense of belonging and acceptance. In Peterson's (2000, pp. 25-40) study of the meaning of home for punitively (marginalised) homeless people in Sweden, participants expressed a desire to fit in, to feel part of the society they were living in so as not to stand out as an identifiable outsider, isolated and disconnected from the conventional of familial norms of society.

As alluded to earlier, in the end it simply comes down to having access to adequate economic, social and cultural resources for inclusion in the place and space of home, in the mundane security of everyday 'normal' life (Peterson, 2000, p. 41). Although help and support can be accessed, for example from third sector homeless and community

organisations, such resources are often out of the reach of marginalised groups such as the homeless.

Family and social relationships

The social dimensions of 'home' have been touched on throughout this Chapter; the presence of relationships within a dwelling place can contribute towards a dwelling place being 'home' (Sixsmith, 1986, p. 291). Some commentators suggest that social relationships within a dwelling place are pivotal in creating a sense of 'home'; where 'home is a crucial setting through which basic patterns of social relations are constituted and reproduced' (Saunders, 1989, p. 178). The type and quality of relationships, and the emotional environment they produce, can be significant aspects of the social dimension of 'home' (Sixsmith, 1986, pp. 291-292). As Hayward (1977, p. 10) found, the most important meaning of 'home' was related to a person's relations with others within the 'home'.

In the literature, relationships within the 'home' tend to focus on family relations. Out of the domestic life and relations of family within their dwelling environment, permanent relationships of caring, sharing and solidarity of feeling and action can be created and maintained (Somerville, 1997, p. 237). In the ideal of 'home', prominence is given to the relations within the nuclear family as the cornerstone of social life (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 104). So, in other words, family living under the same roof provides an environment that can nurture emotional closeness and supportive relationships. In this process the 'empty shell of a house is slowly reconstructed into a 'home' by the constant patterns of social interaction of those living in the house: the family' (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998, p. 31). The literature suggests that the experience one has of 'home' as a child, and the significant relationships one has or doesn't have are pivotal to the individual meaning of home and to later life experience. As Rivlin and Moore (2001, p. 330) note, 'psychological supports to home begin at birth and result from the caring relationships that surround a child. This foundation offers a person grounds for developing a sense of home, the meanings of home, and some idea of what its ingredients encompass'. There are, however, no studies carried out with children, or longitudinal studies following 'home' experiences from childhood into adulthood. There have been a few studies of young people's (16-25 years old) transitions into adulthood which touch on housing experiences (see Ford *et al.*, 2002; Thomson *et al.*, 2002; and Henderson *et al.*, 2007), and they will be discussed in more depth in the next Chapter. Instead, reflective perspectives of the childhood 'home' experience have been gleaned from historical narratives (see Horwitz and Tognoli, 1982; Hill, 1991; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Gurney, 1997; Wardhaugh, 1999; May, 2000; and Kellett and Moore, 2003).

It is this aspect of the relationship between family members living together in a continuous environment that makes a dwelling place 'home', i.e. family relationships within the 'home 'are maintained and can be relied upon as a source of love and support. Living with other people in a dwelling place, and thus with each other's everyday actions, opinions and moods creates an atmosphere of social understanding where dwellers' opinions, actions and moods are accepted; if not always welcomed (Sixsmith, 1986, p. 291). A number of studies have examined the role of relationships within the 'home' environment.

Saunders (1989, p. 180), for example found that 'home' life was associated with family, children, love and affection. One respondent noted: 'to feel at home – you never call it your house, it's your home…it's the house you build together. A house isn't just bricks and mortar it's the love that's in it' (*ibid*., p. 180).   Similarly, Smith found that internal social relationships were an integral aspect of over half of his twenty-three participant's current homes, with one respondent commenting, 'my daughter and husband, and my love for them…if they weren't there it wouldn't be home' (1994, pp. 36-37). Dupuis and Thorns' (1998, p. 32) found that of their fifty-three participants (middle aged or older), all but ten per cent associated 'home' with bringing up children and being surrounded by family. Henderson *et al*. (2007, pp. 125-126) found that for young people (sixteen to twenty-five years old), family was coterminous with 'home', invariably connected to the family of origin, and an associated physical space; where family produced a sense of safety, security and contentment. Those who drew attention to the nurturing and emotional aspect of 'home' by virtue of its absence had all experienced a 'broken home' (*ibid.*). And, Gurney (1997, p. 383) found that 'emotional discourses stressing family, intimacy, and love are the most significant rationalisations drawn upon in making sense of home'. For some commentators, without the family the 'home' is only a house (Gilman, 1980; Leonard, 1980, cited in Mallett, 2004, p. 74); where the link between home and family is so strong that the terms are almost interchangeable (Crow, 1989; Oakley, 1974; Bernardes, 1987, cited in Mallett, 2004, p 73). The house is family and the family is 'home' (Jackson, 1995, p.121).

It should be noted that what 'family' means is different for different people, for example, family can be experienced as a nuclear, extended or step family, or a co-habiting couple, which has implications for the dynamic of family relationships that are developed and thus the meaning of 'home'. Saunders and Williams (1988, p. 82) argue that the traditional household unit based on kinship relations is no longer automatically associated with family. Long gone are the East London communities of the 1950s studied by Young and Willmott (1962), which were bonded together by strong, interdependent kinships relationships, where

family members lived on neighbouring streets and worked together, supporting each other on a daily basis. Such relationships were seen to cement the meaning of 'home' (Sixsmith (1986, p. 281). Saunders and Williams argue that it is 'the household rather than the family which represents the core domestic unit of contemporary society' (1988, p. 82). As Mallet (2004, p. 74) suggests, in today's world the nuclear family may have limited relevance to the meaning of 'home' for many people. She goes on to point out that the significance of the relationship between 'home' and family can change over the life course or in different spatial contexts, where at some points in life it may be pivotal, for example as a child; but at others it may be largely irrelevant, for example as a student living on university campus (*ibid.*, p. 74). Somerville (1989, p. 155) however, still sees family as integral to 'home': 'the family, rather than the household helps to explain why the home should become so important, because the family, like the home, has strongly emotive connotations which are lacking in the case of the household'.

Thus, it is important to consider how other social relationships (not kinship relationships), can become important in creating a sense of 'home'. In today's highly mobile, self-sufficient and individualised world, social relationships with friends can often be more pivotal in an individual's life than relationships with immediate family. 'Home' can be the centre of a spatial network; a place in an individual's social network based on relationships within and outside the 'home' (Smith, 1994, p. 33). 'Home' can be a 'social microcosm' where 'the way we live in our homes reflects, expresses and forms the social relationships among household members, kin, neighbourhoods and even more distant partners' (Saegert, 1985, pp. 292-293). A dwelling place is a space to share with others; where relationships can be nurtured; a place to entertain family and/or friends, and to raise children (Després, 1991, p. 98), the crucial 'setting through which basic forms of social relations and social institutions are constituted and reproduced' (Saunders and Williams, 1988, p. 82). A dwelling place can be the hub of inter-personal relationships, bringing people together in different social situations and according to specific social roles under the control of the 'home' 'owner' (Smith, 1994, p. 33). For many people all over the world a dwelling place is the main stage upon which their relationships play out, relationships that shape the life of the dweller. As many commentators have noted, the 'home' is generally regarded as the setting for the enhancement and support of a range of interpersonal relationships (Sixsmith, 1986, p. 291; Tognoli, 1987, p. 663), and strong relationships are associated with warm inviting homes (Gurney, 1997, p. 380).

Privacy is a very personal matter, defined as 'the state or condition of being alone, undisturbed or free from public attention, as a matter of choice or right; seclusion; freedom from interference or intrusion' (Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd edition). The internal world of a dwelling place is often the perfect environment for realising both personal and physical privacy. Even when living with other individuals domestic privacy allows for the psychological establishment of personal space (Duncan, 1981; and Franklin, 1986:31, cited in Somerville, 1997, p. 232). Jencks (1994, pp. 3-4) defines 'home' as a place which affords its occupant(s) a minimum degree of privacy. Privacy within a dwelling place provides freedom from surveillance and external role expectations (Mallett, 2004, p. 71), and allows the dweller to pause, suspending immediate exposure to the outside world (Perla, 1985, pp. 70-71). A sense of privacy can also be realised through control over a dwelling place/space; setting personal limits of privacy i.e. how much of the outside world you let in and shut out, and how much the outside world sees of you. 'Home' is a place where time and space can be controlled and structured (Mallett, 2004, p.p. 65-66), 'home is located in space, but is not necessarily a fixed space…home starts by bringing some space under control' (Douglas, 1991, p. 289). As Després (1991, p. 99) reiterates 'within the territory of home, dwellers are allowed to exert control over the space and the behaviours which take place within it'. Thus 'home' can be a place which allows for freedom of action (*ibid.*, p. 98); 'the most basic and potent of environments classed as primary territories where users expect near total control of this environment in order to perform the important social and personal behaviours which define their residence as a home for them' (Smith, 1994, p. 34), as a number of empirical studies illustrate.

Sixsmith and Sixsmith (1990, p. 21), for example found a sense of independence and being able to do what you want within a dwelling place to be a key element of 'home' experience. As did Hayward (1977, p. 10), who found 'home' to be a place to be alone and not be bothered, where you can do what you want. Among Peterson's (2000, p. 35) sample of homeless women, 'home' meant a locked door, control over their immediate environment; a place of choice where they can do as they like, and it is their rules that prevail. As one woman illustrated 'a home is a flat where you go in and shut the door, where you can prepare meals, where you take care of everything yourself. Someplace that is mine. Where I decide who can come in and who stays out.' (*ibid.*, p. 35). Similarly, Kellett and Moore's (2003, p. 131) sample of London hostel residents suggested that 'when you've got your own home you've got your own keys. You've got freedom. A little kingdom…I want my own home. I

want to shut my front door. It's my kingdom. Do anything.' For homeless people 'home' is about taking back control of their lives and their living environment, as one homeless woman illustrates: 'I have had my freedom constrained…when I am free after all these years, I want to shut and lock my door' (Peterson, 2000, p. 34).

Thus, 'home is the prime site for personal autonomy, it's yours, you have a certain amount of control over it, it's surroundings you like rather than ones that are imposed, you behave differently as you have the freedom to do what you want' (Putman, 1990, pp. 7-8). As Peterson observed, 'home' acts as a protective skin from which to develop individual autonomy (2000, pp. 35-38). Similarly, Walsh *et al*. found that among their sample of previously, current, or potentially homeless women, 'home' was a sanctuary that functioned as a foundation for fulfilling potential (2009, p. 308). For the women, privacy supported personal growth, emphasising a need for autonomy and self-determination as necessary to psychosocial well-being; where individual decisions and choices could be made (*ibid*., p. 308). Thus, 'home' privacy, can provide a space in which to express one's self, where I 'can be my natural self' (Smith, 1994, pp.36-37). Where 'I can relax control over myself and just be myself. If you can't be yourself at home, where can you?' (Sixsmith, 1986, p. 290). It should be noted, however, that privacy, autonomy, freedom and control within a dwelling place can be constrained by a number of factors which are actually out of the dweller's control, for example, other household members, tenancy rules, gendered relations, age, and socio-economic dependence within the household. Thus a compromise may have to be reached in which a certain *level* of privacy, autonomy, freedom and control may be achieved.

As noted above, the simple act of locking the front door can mean the dweller has much more control over their internal dwelling environment compared to external or public environments, which can render 'home' a place of refuge, haven. The popular saying 'an Englishman's home is his castle' seems pertinent here; 'home' as a fortress, acting as a defence from injury and violence (Mallett, 2004, p. 65). 'Home' can be a physical base from which to protect ourselves from the uncertainties of daily life (Marris, 1996 cited in Peterson, 2000, p. 32), get away from outside pressures, find a place of peace and rest (Hayward (1977, p. 10), refresh one's self, and to gain a sense of calm or escape from social pressures (Manzo, 2003, p. 54). 'Home' can act as a haven from the threats of the outside world and attempts to control us (Darke, 1994, pp. 23-25), providing a rigid separation of inside and outside, often with safety and security to be found inside, and fear and danger remaining outside (Wardaugh, 1999, p. 96). The circumstances of unemployed people illustrate this point well, for whom 'home' acts as a retreat from the outside world that marginalises and stigmatises

them (Sixsmith and Sixsmith, 1990, p.23). Similarly, previously, currently and potentially homeless people found 'home' was a refuge from the outside world which often stigmatises those with experience of homelessness (Walsh *et al.*, 2009, p. 308).

For many years now, the 'home' environment has undergone a process of privatisation. Consumption and expenditure has increasingly become centred on the 'home' (Saunders and Williams, 1988, p. 89), which has in turn increased the desire for privacy. As far back as the 1950s Young and Willmott (1962) found slum clearance to be a catalyst for 'home-centredness'. Residents of Bethnal Green, London were moved out to a newly constructed outer London council estate where they were surrounded by strangers instead of kin, meaning life no longer centred on people outside the house, but on the house; a dramatic change from a people-centred to a house-centred existence (*ibid*., p. 154). Planners of such estates saw housing in impersonal and objective ways, while neighbourhood residents were thinking about housing in very personal and subjective ways (Hayward, 1977, p. 7). Residents on the new estate began to value their privacy and material aspects of housing more than community. As one resident commented: 'You lose contact with parents and relations once you move out here…you seem to centre yourself more on the home…everybody lives in a little world of their own' (Young and Willmott, 1962, p. 145). The advent of television also meant that the social life of the family became increasingly centred in the 'home'. Drawing on Households Surveys from the 1980s, Saunders and Williams (1988, p. 88) identified a similar process of *privatism,* whereby people withdraw from communal/collective life and centre or orientate their activities around the 'home'. For many people today, living life in the privacy of their own 'home' is more valuable to them than community life, much like as individual needs are often prioritised over collective needs; where 'home-centredness' can lead to increased social exclusivity (*ibid.*, p. 88).

Personalisation

As noted above, dwelling place can become 'home' when the dweller feels they can exercise personal freedom, control and autonomy over themselves and their dwelling environment. A sense of freedom, control and autonomy can give the dweller the opportunity to readily express themselves. As Sebba and Churchman (1986) and Pennartz (1986) found, the freedom of the 'home' permits an extensive and significant range of self-expression; so that 'a dwelling offers a person a rare chance to create expressions of himself' (Hayward (1975, p. 8). The dweller feels they have the freedom to express themselves and personalise their dwelling environment as they see fit, even if it is just their own bedroom in the parental home or a shared house, for example.

Smith (1994, p. 44) found that having the ability and freedom to adapt ones dwelling environment to one's taste, especially by displaying personal items, were essential aspects of a 'home'. Over a third of Smith's sample described their present 'home' in terms of 'personalisation/favourite possessions', with comments such as: 'it's comfortable because of my efforts…painting, papering carpeting, landscaping' and '(home is) a part of me…I like it when parts of my personality are shown in the environment' (*ibid.*, p. 37). Among Horwitz and Tognoli's (1982, p. 339) participants, the construction of their 'first home' made them realise that they hadn't had a 'home' before, or since they left their parental house, as two of their participants illustrate: 'Most of my previous places were shells that were built by someone else, or were furnished as best I could. This is the first place that will be mine', and 'This is really the first place that I've shaped'. Similarly, Franck found that both urban and non-urban groups began to consider their new residence as 'home' when they had done some personalisation of their living space (cited in Hayward, 1975, p. 8).

Even though some groups in society have little choice in where they move to, and may have few personal possessions or furnishings, an attempt is often made to carve out a sense of 'home'. Miller (1988) found that initially alienating dwellings became 'home' as they were personalised through material transformation. Lee (2005, p. 613) found black South African's living in mass produced housing, which was part of a process of collective social control, grew and transformed their houses, and created 'home' out of the concrete and brick shells that they had received. As Ginsberg (1999, p. 31) states, 'We make our homes. We build the intimate shell of our lives by the organisation and furnishing of the space in which we live. We need time to make our dwelling into a home…our residence is where we live, our home is how we live'. Becker (1977, pp. 51-53) notes that the placing of objects with special meaning or specific aesthetic properties within or around the home, arranging the furniture, and maintaining the home, are all territorial behaviours often referred to as personalisation. As one of Dowling and Mee's (2000, p. 286) participants noted, that 'the work of home making involved personalisation of space; the walls were covered with pictures and ornaments which marked the space as 'our home'. Meaningful objects can also allow for continuity; where having things that have been used before, things from childhood, seen in a different light in a different dwelling place can be material reminders of positive experiences in past dwelling places (Cooper Marcus, 2006, p. 35).

The literature argues that personalisation of a dwelling place is an expressions of self, where 'the desire to act upon and modify the dwelling and to express one's ideas and values is interpreted as a subconscious expression of the self' (Després, 1991, p. 100). On a conscious

level, personal expression of values can be represented through books on the dweller's shelf, or the degree to which the house is open or closed to visitors; much as clothes or the kind of car we drive are a conscious expression of our values (Cooper Marcus, 2006, p. 7). Personalisation is a way in which individuals express themselves and their identity (Smith, 1994, p. 33): 'You're bringing a part of yourself into the place – in your things. You feel like you're accepted in it 'cos you can be yourself in it, you created it' (Sixsmith, 1986, p. 290), and 'Your home is the things you put in it. You put part of yourself in to your housing, don't you?' (Saunders, 1989, p. 180). Doyle suggests that in building a 'home', the dweller contributes part of themselves to the structure, appearance and feel of the place (1992, p. 795). They are captured symbolically in the house and home; a flow between people and things (*ibid.*). Whether intentionally or not, the dweller's personality is represented both physically (their choice of contents) and emotionally (personal tastes and values), the 'immersion of self in a locality' (Mallett, 2004, p. 79). As Cooper Marcus (2006, pp. 8-9) suggests, 'home is a symbol of one's self' where 'the house interior and its contents act as a mirror of our inner psychological self'. A person-home connection can develop where boundaries between person and home become enmeshed and 'home' becomes an expression of its occupants (Tognoli, 1987, p. 661). In Winston Churchill's words, 'We shape our buildings and then our buildings shape us' (Doyle, 1992, p 799), in a two-way relationship; dwelling place and dweller shaping each other and creating 'home'.

Thus it is reasonable to suggest that with such an investment of self in 'home', personalisation could be viewed as the essential ingredient of 'home'. As Cooper Marcus' (2006, p. 8) stories of 'home' illustrate, throughout our lives we are striving toward a state of wholeness and the places we live in have a powerful effect on our journey toward wholeness. For individuals whose personal freedom, autonomy and control may be restricted, such as the homeless, personalisation might be the ultimate goal to strive for in creating a sense of 'home' in a dwelling place. Living in formal homeless accommodation means limitations (i.e. rules) are placed on inhabitants' autonomy and freedom to use the space independently (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 129). The nature of homelessness often means homeless individuals have very few personal possessions. Hill (1991, p. 306) found women living in a homeless shelter were unable to transport many of their possessions, or lost them during their transition from being 'housed' to being 'homeless. And the temporary nature of homeless accommodation provides little opportunity or inclination for personalisation of space or self-expression. Again, Hill (*ibid.*, p. 306) found homeless women avoiding attachment to things that could easily be withdrawn, doing little to personalise living quarters, resigned to the fact that their tenure was short-lived. Even when a homeless individual is resettled they usually have little

choice over their accommodation or furnishings, having to rely on charitable donations. Essentially, shelter is the most important function of a dwelling at this point, and without access to money; 'it is difficult to stamp one's preferred identity on to one's surroundings through the possession and conspicuous consumption of goods' (Saunders and Williams, 1988, p, 85). When, and if the battle for emotional security and economic prosperity starts to be won, questions of self-expression and self-realisation, for example decorating, start to become more of a priority (Dickens, 1989, p. 235). Thus, a hierarchy of 'home', like a hierarchy of needs, can emerge.

3.5   Overview

It should be noted that common descriptions of 'home' in the literature place little emphasis on the physical environment, or physical features of 'home', whereby physical characteristics are not the most important aspects nor the most essential (Hayward, 1975, p. 5). 'Home' is, of course, a physical space, but it is more a state of being (Wardaugh, 1999, p. 95). Thus it could be suggested that once the physical structure of 'home' has been established, establishment and maintenance of the emotional 'home' becomes a priority, as illustrated by the expression 'at home', which sums up the characteristics of 'home' well, where to be at 'home' is to be 'at one's ease; in one's element. Hence, unconstrained, unembarrassed; familiar or conversant *with*, well versed in.' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Edition).

Although the common characteristics/elements of 'home' outlined above have been found to characterise 'home' for the people who participated in the research studies described, the presence of one, a few, or all of the characteristics within an individual's dwelling place does not automatically make it 'home'. Features of 'home' may inter-connect, stand alone or operate on different levels. Each element of 'home' can often nurture additional elements of 'home'; privacy can be integral to the establishment of other aspects of 'home', for example intimacy and personal fulfilment (Hayward, 1975, p. 8), so that 'home' becomes an intimate space that provides a context for close, caring relationships (Mallett, 2004, p. 71). For some people you can't have one without the other; a sense of 'home' will not be as strong if fewer elements of 'home' are realised. However, the literature lacks an inquiry into the importance of different features of 'home', i.e. what are the most important features of 'home', where different features may be more or less important at different stages of the life cycle.

Thus, 'home' is a complex, multi-dimensional experience, embracing ideas about family, social network, self-identity, privacy, continuity, personalisation, behaviour, childhood home and physical structure (Hayward (1977, p. 7). As stated above, 'home' is

individual and personal, and 'the meanings and associations evoked by the word [home] vary from one person to the next' (Peled and Muzicant, 2008, p. 434). There is no universal answer to what 'home' is (Hayward, 1975, p. 3). 'Home' is shaped by individual life circumstances, where individuals make up their own recipe for home, which may be made up of a variety of experiences. At the same time, different studies have identified similar characteristics/elements of 'home', meaning each person's experience of 'home' can be both unique and commonplace (Wardaugh, 1999, p. 92). 'Home' is constructed within personal and social worlds which will be examined in the next Chapter in relation to the context of 'home' realities.

Chapter Four: Real 'homes'

4.0   Introduction

The previous Chapter presented an ideal picture of how the meaning of 'home' has evolved and become commonly viewed, in which meaning can be derived from both personal experience and exposure to ideas about 'home'. This Chapter digs deeper and explores 'real' homes, focusing on the pivotal role of 'home' in everyday life, and the intrinsic connection between a dwelling place and life context in creating individual 'home' realties. As the literature suggests, meanings of 'home' are dependent on social, geographical and historical context (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 109). 'Home' is essentially 'an insider's experience, and is always unique. Although the basic terms may remain the same, the manifestations are situation specific' (Dovey, 1985, p.51).

4.1   The role of 'home'

It can be seen clearly from the common characteristics of 'home' outlined in the previous Chapter that many elements of 'home' mirror distinct human needs (as discussed in Chapter 2). When certain needs are fulfilled in, or by a dwelling place, it may therefore be experienced as 'home'. Thus, it can be suggested that the primary role and function of a dwelling place as 'home' is as the main environment in which basic and intermediate, objective and subjective needs are fulfilled, in which fulfilling human needs is intrinsic to individual well-being (Annison, 2000, p. 259). 'Home' is a major contributor to the dweller having their needs either met or unmet (*ibid*., p. 259), the central place of human existence (Tognoli, 1987, p. 657), a spatial context in which the daily routines of human existence are performed (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998, p. 24). As Hayward (1975, pp. 3-8) notes, 'the idea of home embraces the satisfaction of a wide variety of personal concerns, aspirations, motivations, and values as well as personal well-being and lifestyle issues', in which 'the family depends on the home environment for both physical and psychological needs'.

As noted in Chapter Two, the literature on 'human needs' does not explicitly identify and explore 'home' as an environment that can fulfil human needs, but the literature on 'home' does. It generally fails, however, to explore how 'home' and needs interconnect, i.e. how one affects the other or which comes first (much like the way that research study respondents do not directly relate their descriptions of 'home' to needs). Instead, the focus is on how 'home' provides an environment that can fulfil a variety of needs, both physiological and psychological, as illustrated by a number of scholars in the fields of psychology and

sociology (see Tognoli, 1987; Dickens, 1989; Smith, 1994; Sommerville, 1997, Moore, 2000; Annison, 2000; Walsh *et al*., 2009). 'Home' fulfils the fundamental physiological need for shelter, which meets the need for physical security and health (Deprés, p. 100). At the same time, 'home' provides an arena for the fulfilment of intermediate needs: social and emotional intercourse, for example where personal relationships with family and friends can be nurtured, the need for privacy, safety, security and freedom can be realised, intrusions controlled and solitude and refuge enjoyed (*ibid.*). Somerville (1997, p. 229) describes 'home' as fulfilling deep rooted psychological needs for identity, control, privacy, security, intimacy and social status. Thus the role of 'home' can be to provide the dweller with a tangible place to be in the world in terms of the need to belong (belongingness), to be part of, and connected to something.

Manzo suggests that people make conscious choices of where to live, based on their needs and their self-concept (2003, p. 54). They select and use places that help them meet the goals of their everyday life, forming bonds to places which they have chosen to meet their needs or desires (*ibid.* pp. 54-57). 'Home' emerges as the product of the adjustment and optimisation of goals through the satisfaction of certain needs (Tognoli, 1987, p. 657), and as the dweller's life and needs change, so can the meaning and significance of 'home'. Kellett and Moore note that diverse groups strive in different ways for 'home' as part of personal, social and cultural goals (2003, p. 127). Much as needs have to be constantly satisfied, a greater sense of 'home' may be strived for because conditions which may have initially been viewed as satisfactory no longer provide pleasure; boredom and a need for further stimulation may arise (Tognoli, 1987, p. 657). As noted in the previous Chapter, this suggests that a hierarchy of 'home', like a hierarchy of needs, may emerge.

Shelter (a dwelling place) *is* the foundation of 'home', but the strict hierarchy of needs that flow afterwards, from low to high level needs, as suggested by Maslow (1954), may, in reality, not flow in this prescribed order. People have individual needs which will make some needs more important than others. So the role of 'home' may be both similar and yet different from one person to the next. For some people certain needs are not fulfilled by a dwelling place, and it may therefore be experienced as 'not-home'.

4.2 'Not-home'

Much of the literature on 'home' focuses on positive experiences and aspects of 'home', albeit in ideal terms (Moore, 2007, p. 149). However, the dominant ideology of 'home' as a sanctuary and safe haven fails to adequately appreciate that the reality of 'home' may be

something quite different (Somerville, 1989, p. 117). Some people don't experience a 'normal' 'home' life, and so may not experience a dwelling place as a haven or refuge to which they can return and express their personal freedom and autonomy. The literature suggests that without the presence of such features, as described in the previous Chapter, a sense of 'home' will not be achieved in a dwelling place. As Tognoli (1987, p. 677) notes, 'when residents experience deficiencies in rootedness, place attachment, continuity, privacy, identity and family relations in conjunction with home, negative states result such as alienation, dislocation, vulnerability, discontinuity, disunity and insecurity', and the restoration of some equilibrium is necessary for feeling at 'home' in one's dwelling place.

There is a shortage of studies that explicitly explore the negative or less positive aspects of 'home'. Empirical studies that take an historical perspective can help counter the risk of a one-sided positive view, as they give respondents an opportunity to reflect on, and immerse themselves in their experiences, allowing freedom to recount all memories and ideas of 'home', whether they are positive or negative. 'Not-home' has been a central line of enquiry in a relatively small number of studies (see Sixsmith, 1986; Smith, 1994; and Moore and Canter, 1993; Moore *et al*. 1995).

So what is the relationship between 'home' and 'not-home'? Are they opposites? If so, this implies that 'not-home' is more of a negative experience; as 'home' is generally portrayed in a positive light. In Smith's (1994) study of the essential qualities of 'home' she asked twenty-three respondents direct questions about 'not-home'. The main qualities of 'not-home' were found to be primarily based around (negative) emotional feelings towards place dealing with; undesirable internal relationships; the lack of freedom or privacy; negative atmosphere; and dissatisfaction with the physical features of the domestic environment (*ibid.*, pp. 40-41). These feelings were the direct opposite to descriptions of the essential qualities of 'home' - continuity, privacy, self-expression, social relationships, warmth and physical structure (*ibid*., pp. 43-45). Smith (*ibid*, p. 41) also identified a connection between personal problems or distress and 'not-home', for example a change in employment triggered a loss of personal control, subsequent domestic violence and loneliness which affected the bond between self and house. There was a clear association of unpleasant events with a particular residence which diminished its atmosphere as 'home' (*ibid*., p. 41).

Mixed feelings: 'home' or 'not-home'?

As already noted, positive family relations are one of the corner-stones of 'home'. Much of the literature identifies the absence of 'normal' family relationships within a dwelling place as

a key feature of 'not-home'. As Wardaugh (1999, pp. 96-97) notes, 'those who are abused and violated within the family are likely to feel homeless at home'. Violation of personal relationships within the 'home' environment can fracture the emotional and physical boundaries of personal privacy; if a parent physically abuses their child for example, 'home' for that child is a place of fear, violence and abuse (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 115). And leaving such a situation may lead to becoming 'houseless' (*ibid*., p. 127) rather than 'homeless'. Ailing relationships can be associated with cold, unwelcoming homes (Gurney, 1997, p. 380), and 'home may not be a refuge, but a place of violence' (Ahrentzen, 1992, p. 113).

A number of empirical studies illustrate the complexity of familial relationships within a dwelling place that can create mixed feelings toward that dwelling place. For one of Sixsimth's (1986, p. 291) respondents, her dwelling place was 'not-home' when her father was present as he created an atmosphere of friction; when he was absent the place became a loving 'home'. Similarly, the ideal 'home' for runaway girls in Israel was a place where a feeling of 'home' could be nurtured through relationships with significant figures within it (Peled and Muzicent, 2008, p. 439). Their real 'home', however, was quite the reverse, often described as a prison, a place of restrictions and prohibitions where family relationships were devoid of love and warmth (*ibid.* p. 440). Even so, the girls' feelings towards 'home' were often mixed; they couldn't do with it, but they also couldn't do without it, wanting to believe in the possibility of change (*ibid*., p. 444). As Blunt and Dowling (2006, p. 116) note, 'home' is as complicated a place for children as it is for adults, potentially homely and unhomely simultaneously.

Tomas and Dittmar (1995) found similar feelings among female users of a day centre for homeless people. The women had histories of residential instability arising from abusive and disruptive episodes that began in childhood and continued into the present. Many of the women who remained in their childhood 'home' until adulthood did not experience it as a secure, stable, or protective environment. Instead 'home' was changeable and unstable, often resulting in the loss of social relationships with family or friends (*ibid*., p. 507), where a broken 'home' can mean a broken life (Jackson, 1995, p. 85). Research with battered women shows that the relationship to their residence is particularly complex, compromised by both negative and positive meanings (Manzo, 2003, p. 51). 'A house environment may be oppressive and alienating as easily as it may be supportive and comfortable' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 10), 'a place of violence and abuse as well as comfort and security' (*ibid*., p. 125). As Moore (2000, p. 213) suggests, 'home' can disappoint, aggravate, neglect,

confine and contradict as much as it can inspire and comfort;a space for strife, as well as joy (Manzo, 2003, p. 51).   Thus, there may be a complex and confused relationship between 'home' and 'not-home', and the two can co-exist as 'home-realities' evolve.

The positives of 'not-home'

Some of the literature suggests that 'not-home' does not automatically correlate with negative aspects of 'home', and is instead simply related to the absence of a feeling of 'home'. Horwitz and Tognoli (1982, p. 337) for example, identified three phases of residential experience, the first being transitional times and places - the experience of living in places which were 'not-home'. They also found no consistent physical or social dimensions to 'home' or 'not-home', with both being determined by inner feelings and the presence of an environment which was perceived to correspond to that feeling (*ibid*., pp. 339-340).   A transition was identified between 'not-home' and 'home', during which individuals developed an emerging sense of their own concept of 'home', and at a certain point they were motivated to create a 'home' of their own (*ibid*., p. 340). 'Home' was deeply related to an individual's sense of personal growth and changes, as a living process or a construction, rather than a fixed concept of place (*ibid*., p. 339). This implies that individuals had to be ready to create their own 'home', and only when they were (emotionally) ready could they move from a sense of 'not-home' to a sense 'of home'. Thus 'not-home' may be seen positively, as a transitional place that may accommodate a transitional life style. This sentiment was expressed by hostel residents in London, who considered their current place (the homeless hostel) as part of an instrumental strategy out of homelessness and a route towards a 'home' in the future (Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 131). Adopting such an outlook enabled residents to accept their current dwelling's limitations (*ibid*., p. 131). This suggests that 'home' can be a desire and a goal, and 'not-home' can be a stepping stone to 'home'.

4.3   Homelessness

As already explained in Chapter One, this thesis is not actually a study of homelessness in itself, but, rather, a study of what 'home' - and 'not-home' - means to people who have experienced homelessness. However, precisely since the experience of homelessness formed a central part of the sampling criteria for this study, as mentioned in Chapter One and detailed in the succeeding methodology Chapter, it is necessary to consider how homelessness fits into the 'home' debate and the 'home' literature. Perhaps the first thing to say here is that the sociologically-oriented literature on homelessness, even the very best of that literature (e.g. Hall 2003, 2006; Hutson and Liddiard 1994; Liddiard and Hutson 1991; Smith and Hall 2017;

Watson, 1999), does not often deal with these issues explicitly. Many contributors to the literature tend to take for granted the meaning of 'home' in a general societal sense, and also, more specifically, what 'home' means for homeless people. There is, therefore, a conceptual black hole at the heart of the study of homelessness, and homelessness policy, that this thesis begins to fill.

Interestingly, the literature on 'home' does not link 'not-home' and homelessness either, or raise questions about a possible connection. This is particularly interesting given that connections are made between 'home' and 'not-home', and 'home' and homelessness. This suggests that the literature sees 'not-home' and homelessness as different, and distinct housing circumstances. Homelessness has been a social problem/issue for hundreds of years and its definition and experience have changed as society and social policy have evolved. Its meanings are not fixed but continually contested, formed and reformed in the context of; political, cultural and economic change and conflict, the demands of policy making and policy delivery (Burrows, Pleace and Quilgars 1997; Hutson and Liddiard 1994; Liddiard and Hutson 1991; Watson, 1999). There is, however, a degree of consensus that the root causes of homelessness in Britain lie in social, economic and housing market structures, rather than the personal inadequacies of those who are without housing (Anderson, 1994, p. 11).

In other words, homelessness is a product of structural forces rather than a product of individual choice (Marsh and Kennett, 1999, p. 4), borne out in rising levels of homelessness over recent decades in the industrialised countries of the West. Many countries have witnessed the end of full employment, erosion of the welfare safety net, the marketization and 'residualisation' of the welfare state (*ibid*., p. 1), and contraction of the housing market. In an increasingly hostile and complex social and economic environment, the social resources which households can draw upon in the face of risk and insecurity are reduced (*ibid*., p. 6). As a result, the homeless population is now more heterogeneous, including young people, those in retirement and women (and children). The stereotypical perception of the homeless as mainly single white middle aged men no longer holds (*ibid*., p. 2). The essence of homelessness, however, has remained the same: the lack of shelter that provides protection from the elements and the facilities to fulfil the basic functions of cooking and hygiene.

Definition

The standard definition of homelessness derives from the adjective homeless:

> Having no home or permanent abode; *spec.* (of a person) having no home, shelter or place of refuge owing to poverty or destitution.

Under the 1996 Housing Act a person is homeless if:

> There is no accommodation that they are entitled to occupy; or
> They have accommodation but it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy this accommodation

(Source: http://www.crisis.org.uk/policywatch/pages/legal_definition_of_homelessness.html)

Even with agreement on the basic meaning of homelessness, a general consensus on the definition of homelessness continues to be elusive. A complex intersection of different forms of homelessness and fluid housing circumstances makes a single definition difficult to apply universally (McNaughton, 2008, p. 6). As Watson and Austerberry (1986, p. 8) noted decades ago, 'there is remarkably little consensus among policy makers, researchers, local authorities and voluntary housing organisations as to a definition of homelessness'. For some, homelessness derives primarily from a lack of housing (*ibid*., p. 18), as a result of structural factors such as high demand for housing, unemployment, rising rents and house prices (Ravenhill, 2012, p. 5). In this scenario, the solution is accommodation above all else (Watson and Austerberry, 1986, p. 18). For others, however, homelessness should be considered in terms of the individual and the way they fit into society (Ravenhill, 2012, p. 5); 'homelessness is a condition of detachment from society characterised by the absence or attenuation of the affiliative bonds that link settled persons to a network of interconnected social structures' (Caplow *et al.,* 1968, p. 494). Thus 'homelessness carries implications of belonging nowhere rather than having nowhere to sleep' (UNCHS/Habitat, 2000, p. 16).

Many scholars offer their own definition of homelessness, recognising that 'homelessness is not only a housing problem, but a wider personal, social, cultural, economic and political issue' (Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 125). Definitions are shaped by what is culturally and politically accepted as appropriate housing (Watson and Austerberry, 1986, pp. 10-11). As such, some definitions of homelessness have sought to encompass different contexts or circumstances of being 'homeless'. A fourfold definition has been developed by the European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA):

- rooflessness (i.e. sleeping rough);
- houselessness (i.e. living in institutions or short-term & 'guest' accommodation);
- insecure accommodation; and
- inferior or substandard housing.

(Daly, 1994, p. 2)

Robson and Poustie (1996) propose a range of housing situations that may be defined as homelessness, and categories of people who may be defined as homeless:

- *'rooflessness'*, in which only those without shelter of any kind should be considered homeless – for instance, people who are sleeping rough, newly arrived immigrants and victims of fire and floods;
- *'houselessness'* is a wider term which includes those who are living in emergency and temporary accommodation provided for homeless people, such as night shelters, hostels and refuges. It also covers people who reside in long-term institutions, for example psychiatric hospitals, simply because there is no suitable accommodation for them in the community. Another group in this category comprises households staying in B&B hotels and other places that are unsuitable as long-stay accommodation;
- *people who have insecure or impermanent tenures*, such as those staying with friends or relatives on a temporary basis, tenants under notice to quit and squatters;
- *people who live in 'intolerable' housing circumstances* may also be considered homeless; this refers not only to severely overcrowded or substandard accommodation, but also to situations where there are threats to personal safety or psychological wellbeing; and
- *households that are involuntarily sharing accommodation on a long-term basis,* who, because they cannot secure separate housing, may also be considered 'concealed households' and therefore homeless.

Similarly, Springer (2000, pp. 480-482) argues for a global definition – without using the term 'homelessness' - offering a two-level definition focusing on 'houselessness':

- 'houseless', who are those literally without access to shelter (i.e. rough sleeping) combined with those finding institutional places to sleep (i.e. in shelters, hostels); and
- those in 'inadequate' shelter, which includes 'concealed houselessness' (taking shelter with relatives or friends), those 'at risk of houselessness' (threat of eviction, release from an institution), and those living in 'substandard housing'.

Thus, homelessness varies by the level of permanence or security in a particular setting (Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 126). Fitzpatrick *et al.* (2000, p. 8) note that 'broader definitions of homelessness draw on the 'meaning of home' literature, which emphasises that 'home' (and therefore homelessness) is not a purely housing-based concept, but has significant emotional, social and psychological dimensions'. It has been argued, however, that in referring to all housing needs as a form of homelessness, the unique danger and distress of actual homelessness becomes lost; being poorly housed is one thing, having nowhere at all to live is something else (Pleace *et al.*, 1997, p 8). Somerville (1992, p. 530) notes that definitions of homelessness focus on a lack of control and privacy and poor living conditions but neglect the emotional aspects of homelessness; an issue of human misery is reduced to a problem that is technical and legal. That being said, homelessness is invariably presented negatively (Moore, 2007, p. 149). With homelessness encompassing such a broad range of housing circumstances, a consensus on definition will surely remain elusive. As

Brandon (1974, p. 5) wrote: 'how can the research begin to define it…writers have used it in almost every conceivable way – from meaning complete shelterlessness to simply having serious accommodation difficulties, from having no fixed abode to living in a hostel or lodging house'.

Two distinct categories of homelessness emerge out of the breadth of insecure housing situations identified as 'homelessness'. Firstly, 'formal' homelessness is where a local authority accepts they have a statutory homelessness duty towards an individual because they have been assessed as eligible for assistance with regard to (1) their housing circumstances, and (2) the category of person they are defined as: unintentionally homeless, within a specified priority need group (classed as vulnerable), and with a local connection. The local authority is statutorily obligated to provide the individual with formal support, i.e. temporary 'formal homeless accommodation' such as a hostel or supported housing. Those who qualify for assistance are 'statutorily homeless people' (Pleace *et al*., 1997, p. 4) and are officially recorded as homeless. Those who don't qualify for assistance in this way are deemed 'non-statutory homeless', largely single people without children, who are not in 'priority need' and not 'vulnerable' (*ibid*., p. 4).   It has been argued that such gatekeeping is necessary because local authorities cannot fulfil their responsibilities to all those who apply for housing as homeless (Watson and Austerberry, 1986, p. 13); they have limited housing stock and it would be too costly.

Secondly, 'informal' or 'hidden' homelessness is where people are living in informal or insecure housing situations: squats, rough sleeping, or in other unsatisfactory or insecure sharing arrangements, such as sleeping on a friends or family member's sofa. Rough sleepers are the popular conception of homelessness (Pleace *et al.*, 1997, p. 5). People living in these housing circumstances are often described as 'hidden' homeless households, because they are more difficult to locate and enumerate than, say, people in hostels (Anderson, 1994, p. 2). As Reeve and Batty (2011, p. 11) note, 'people staying temporarily with friends or relatives, squatting or sleeping rough are classed as hidden on the basis that their accommodation does not form part of the formal system of housing support and provision'. These are the housing situations in which the 'non-statutory' homeless may find themselves. The 'hidden' homeless are not recorded in official homeless statistics, although since a count of rough sleepers was carried out as part of the 1991 Census (Fitzpatrick *et al*., 2000, p. 15) some local authorities still conduct a count.   The 1991 Census also collected data on 'concealed households', although this did not include single people or persons living in communal establishments, including hostels for homeless people.

Watson and Austerberry (1986, pp. 14-15) identify the housing situations of homeless people who are not eligible for, or who do not choose to go down the statutorily homeless route, as 'concealed homelessness': sleeping on friend's floors, living in insecure or tied accommodation, or adopting alternative housing solutions. Again, there is an argument that not all housing need should be defined as homelessness; Pleace *et al.* (1997, p. 8) argue that 'what is referred to as hidden homelessness is not homelessness at all, but instead encompasses moderate to severe housing need'. Watson and Austerberry (1986, p. 9) argue that homelessness is a section of a continuum, with sleeping rough at one end and outright home ownership at the other; 'in between lies an extensive grey area, ranging from hostels, hotels, temporary accommodation, sleeping on friends' floors, licences, to insecure private rented accommodation, mortgaged accommodation and so on'. They also note the danger of talking about homeless people as a homogenous group, as if they are all the same, because the characteristics and circumstances of different homeless populations (formal homelessness and informal/hidden homelessness) will inevitably be different (*ibid.*, pp.14-17).

With these different homeless situations in mind, it is pertinent here to outline current thinking around the causes of homelessness. The homeless charity Shelter, categorises the causes of homelessness as:

Personal causes

- *individual factors* including lack of qualifications, lack of social support, debts - especially mortgage or rent arrears, poor physical and mental health, relationship breakdown, and getting involved in crime at an early age
- *family background* including family breakdown and disputes, sexual and physical abuse in childhood or adolescence, having parents with drug or alcohol problems, and previous experience of family homelessness
- *an institutional background* including having been in care, the armed forces, or in prison

Structural causes

- unemployment
- poverty
- a lack of affordable housing
- housing policies
- the structure and administration of housing benefit
- wider policy developments, such as the closure of long-stay psychiatric hospitals

(Shelter, 2018)

The three main reasons for having lost a last settled 'home', given by applicants for homelessness support from local councils, are:

- parents, friends or relatives unwilling or unable to continue to accommodate them
- relationship breakdown, including domestic violence
- loss of an assured shorthold tenancy

(DCLG, 2008)

Shelter argue that these reasons are only the catalysts that trigger people into seeking assistance, and not the underlying issues that have caused the crisis to build up in the first place, where for many people, there's no single event that results in sudden homelessness (Shelter, 2018). Instead, homelessness is due to a number of unresolved problems building up over time (*ibid.*).

Homelessness and 'home'

What then is the relationship between 'home' and homelessness? Wardhaugh (1999, p. 93) proposes that the concept of 'home' could not exist without homelessness; conformity cannot exist without deviance. Homelessness 'serves to define and delineate home' (*ibid*., p. 93) and 'behind the research definition of homeless as a housing issue lies a definition of what home means' (Tomas and Dittmar, 1995, p. 495). Without homelessness we would not be concerned with what 'home' means (Dovey, 1985, p. 48), and through the absence of 'home', 'home' itself acquires meaning (Moore, 2000, p. 211). As Moore (2007, p.147) argues, 'there is value in exploring the absence of something in order to better understand its presence'. And 'it is not possible to understand the full experience and meaning of homelessness without examining the relative meanings and experiences of home' (Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 126). Somerville (1992, p. 530) argues that homelessness is ideologically constructed as the absence of 'home' and is therefore a derivative of the ideological construction of 'home'.

Interest in the connections between concepts of 'home' and homelessness has resulted in many empirical studies being conducted with homeless people. Samples usually include those living in formal homeless accommodation, with very few including people currently residing in informal/hidden homeless situations such as 'sofa surfing' and rough sleeping, although participants may have had this experience in the past. Such findings, therefore, only speak of a section of the homeless population. May (2000, p. 744) acknowledges that his sample was limited to people currently using a night shelter and hostel accommodation, and so could not necessarily be compared with the biographies of other single homeless people, for example, those staying in bed and breakfast accommodation, with friends or relatives, or otherwise part of a much more extensive hidden homeless population. Studies of homeless men and/or women often include questions about 'home' (see Peterson, 2000; Garside *et al.*,1990; Hill, 1991; Moore and Canter, 1993; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Wardaugh, 1999;

May, 2000; Kellett and Moore, 2003; Peled and Muzicant, 2008; Walsh *et al*., 2009). The primary focus of these empirical studies, however, has often been general questioning about what 'home' means to homeless people with little emphasis on different homeless contexts, homeless histories, or how 'home' and homelessness inter-connect. There are, however, a few exceptions, as described below.

Watson and Austerberry's (1986) research with homeless women revealed similar oppositions between 'home' and homelessness as between 'home and 'not-home'. They found that 'home' was perceived to be built around decent material conditions and standards, emotional and physical well-being, loving and caring social relations, control and privacy, and simple living/sleeping material conditions, and homelessness was the limitation or lack of these things (*ibid.*, pp. 93-102). Similarly, when young homeless adults living in temporary accommodation in London, were asked whether the hostel felt like 'home', dominant themes focused on the presence and absence of control and independence, family, friends and residents and physical comfort and security (Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 130). Brandon (1973, p. 8) also noted that 'when I go home – I am returning to a recognisable building with furniture, food and warmth, with friends and family nearby. Being without a home conveys a sense of material as well as emotional deficit'. Thus homelessness represents the absence of elements of 'home' (Moore, 2007, pp. 146-147); 'home' and homelessness are understood as binary opposites (Wardaugh, 1999, p. 94), much like 'home' and 'not-home' were described as opposites earlier.

Interestingly, Watson and Austerberry (1986) found contradictions among their sample of homeless women, with respect to how they defined their housing circumstances. For example, thirty per cent of women who did not consider their present (homeless) accommodation to be their 'home', did not define themselves as homeless either, whereas three per cent of women who considered their present (homeless) accommodation to be their 'home' also thought of themselves as homeless (*ibid*., p. 92). As Moore (2007, p. 150) suggests, 'it is also possible to be homeless and at home at the same time, as home has more to do with a state of mind and emotional engagement than it has to do with a fixed place'. Thus, contrary to claims noted above, it can be suggested that homelessness is not necessarily simply the absence of 'home', but may include overlapping feelings and constructions of being at 'home' and 'not at home' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 126). As discussed earlier, Wardaugh (1999, p.91) found that women experiencing abuse, violence and the suppression of self within the supposed safe haven of domestic home were 'homeless-at-home'. As with 'home', there can also be many factors that determine the individual meaning of

homelessness. May (2000, p. 738) suggests that even though understandings of 'home' and homelessness are relational they also tend to be mobilised according to individual experience and the normative constructions of either concept in broader circulation.

'Home' in homeless situations

The literature suggests that homeless people often have a desire for 'home' and may look for, or experience qualities of 'home', in their homeless situation. Often there is an 'attempt to carve a sense of home in the transitory spaces of the street…wedded to the desire for some kind of fixity in the constantly shifting landscapes that form the backdrop to homelessness in the contemporary city' (Mair, 1986; Mitchell, 1997, cited in May, 2000, p. 739). Similarly, Valentine (2001, p. 101) argues that 'homeless people create relationships, social networks and appropriate spaces which take on many of the meanings of home (e.g. abode, identity, roots), which the homed attribute to conventional forms of housing'. Experiencing qualities of 'home' in homeless settings has been found in a number of empirical studies. In-depth interviews carried out with fifty young (18-25 years old) homeless adults living in temporary hostel accommodation in London illustrate how feelings of 'home' – control, independence, social relationships, comfort, homely - existed in temporary hostel accommodation:

> 'I feel this place is home. It's comfortable. You can make a cup of tea when you like, you can go for walks when you like. They don't stop you going out and you can watch TV when you want. Go to bed when you like, you have to get up at a certain time though.' (female)

> 'This is the first place that feels like home to me. It's a community house, like a family.' (female)

(Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 130)

Similarly, Hill (1991, pp. 304-308) found that homeless women living in a shelter in the USA became dependent on the shelter to provide the basic essentials of 'home' (food, clothing and shelter etc.), and particularly emotional dependence. Relationships formed in the shelter dominated the women's perceptions of the shelter as 'home', suggesting a 'relapse' into childlike emotional dependence in those who had had poor early family relationships; staff acted in a parental role and residents acted in a child-like role (*ibid.*, pp. 304-305).   A further study by Moore and Canter (1993) of 530 homeless people in London, asked respondents to evaluate where they were staying in terms of aspects of 'home'. Physical aspects such as getting a good night's sleep, feeling safe, being comfortable and being the only way they could afford to live were highly evaluated (*ibid.*, p. 99). There were clear differences according to homeless setting: squatters valued the social life and feeling that they could do

what they wanted, hostel residents valued comfort and security, while those living on the street valued their independence (*ibid*., p. 99). Hostels were imagined as places in which feelings of independence would be destroyed (*ibid*., p. 99). Watson and Austerberry (1986, p. 103) found that some homeless women considered their present accommodation to be 'home' because they considered anywhere they currently slept, as 'home'.

Garside *et al*. (1990, p. 106-122) found that homeless histories could have a bearing on whether qualities of 'home' were found in homeless situations.   Their survey of hostel residents found that residents with a prolonged history of rough sleeping and hostel use were more likely to describe hostels as providing some sense of 'home' compared to residents whose homelessness experience was relatively recent and short. One hostel resident described 'home' as 'peace, that is what it means to me. I work so hard really and this is my home where I have a rest and peace – I am so happy here' (*ibid*., p. 119). This evidence counters Saunders' and William's (1988, p. 85) suggestion that autonomy can only be found when you have your own 'home'. Residents of homeless accommodation can gradually become familiar with their living environment and get used to their surroundings, it becomes normal life, although it is not necessarily a preferable dwelling place. This can have implications on a resident's desire, ability and inclination to move on, after all, homeless accommodation is temporary, not permanent shelter, just a 'borrowed' 'home' (Peterson, 2000, p. 35). As one homeless woman stated 'the hostel is an institution, and all the hostels I've been in are institutions, and that's why I don't want my own flat, because I've been institutionalised for so long, three years, and [I've] always depended on people really' (Wardaugh, 1999, p. 105).

The reality of homelessness, however, usually means a feeling of 'home' is largely absent. Wolch and Rowe (1993) found their respondents struggling to establish a sense of 'home' which was intimately connected to the mobility that characterised their daily existence. They struggled to establish some kind of community of self between their current experiences and their lives before they became homeless, where the traditional coordinates of work and home, which provide the frame for social interaction, had to be radically adapted in a context where neither is permanent (through time) or fixed (in space) (*ibid.*). May (2000, p. 741) argues that our understanding of how much or why homeless people move, of their experiences of movement, or the impact such movement has upon their experience of homelessness and any subsequent understandings of home is severely limited. The links between homelessness and housing mobility, and possible influences on the experience of 'home' are explored in detail in succeeding findings Chapters.

Such evidence supports arguments which suggest that 'home' and homelessness are similar in that their meanings are complex and multi-dimensional (Somerville, 1992, p. 537). As illustrated above, the relationship between 'home' and homelessness is obviously more complex than a simple presence and absence of home, where 'home' is the answer to the problem of homelessness (Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 126). 'Home' and homelessness exist in a dynamic, dialectical relationship, and are not, as some suggest, fixed oppositional terms (Wardaugh, 1999, p. 93); homelessness is a continuum, as noted above. Moore (2007, p.143) asserts that the concepts of 'home' and homelessness are instead integrated and overlapping, where homelessness and 'home' can co-exist much like 'home' and 'not-home' have been found to co-exist, as noted earlier. As Wardaugh (1999, p. 93) argues, 'tension between the binary opposites of safety and risk, security and fear, privacy and invasion may exist within the home for many, in contrast to simplified and idealised notions of domestic space'. 'Distinctions between 'home' and homelessness may break down in particular circumstances, in that individuals do not passively respond to apparently objective reality, but negotiate their own identities' (*ibid.*, pp. 94-93). Thus the search for a general trend has been at the expense of acknowledging negative and contradictory tensions within the concepts of 'home' and homelessness (Manzo, 2003, pp.49-51 and Moore, 2000, p.212). Further to the contradictions outlined above, Moore identifies four strands of tension within 'home' and homelessness:

> 1. Stay-Movement: e.g. a person can have strong place attachment while being highly mobile
>
> 2. Subjective-Objective: e.g. home and homelessness are both about individual experience and are thus both are subjective.
>
> 3. Real-Ideal: e.g. imposed ideals, home is not always positive and homelessness is not always negative; people challenge imposed social norms.
>
> 4. Inclusion-Exclusion: e.g. the homeless are excluded from society while home promotes exclusion through privacy.

(Moore, 2007, pp. 147-150)

Thus polarities are blurred by individual context; so if a better understanding of homelessness is to be developed, the range of 'homeless' circumstances and the context-bound relativity of the concept have to be acknowledged (McNaughton, 2008, p. 8).

4.4   Temporal Context

As noted earlier, context shapes how a changing mix of influences may determine whether a dwelling space is deemed to be 'home' or not, at any given point in time. A dwelling place could be viewed as 'home' one day, and 'not-home' the next. A dwelling place could be a

continuous 'home' with its meaning differing over time according to changing contexts. Dynamic processes and transactions transform a neutral dwelling place into a 'home' in the context of everyday life (Deprés, 1991, p. 101), where 'home is lived; what home means and how it is materially manifest are continually created and recreated through everyday practices' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 23). As Mallett (2004, p. 84) states, 'how home is and has been defined at any given time depends upon specification of locus and intent and the broader historical and social context'. Thus, the relationship between 'home' and memory is complex and fluid, and must take account of the significance of 'home' experiences and memories at various stages of the life cycle (Csikszentmyhalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981, cited in Mallett, 2004, p70): 'home' is 'a virtual place, a repository for memories of the lived spaces…it locates lived time and space' (*ibid.*, 2004, p. 63). This points to 'home' being a continuous process, where 'home does not come with a roof, it is a more complex process that builds over time, which is a myriad of personal, social, cultural and physical qualities' (Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 131).

Thus, the relationship between a dwelling place and the dweller is an evolving one best described as ongoing rather than static or fixed (Tognoli, 1987, p. 656). As Cooper Marcus (2006, p. 2) notes, 'as we change and grow throughout our lives, our psychological development is punctuated not only by meaningful emotional relationships with people, but also by close, affective ties with a number of physical environments, beginning in childhood'. 'Home' manifests itself as 'an emotionally based and meaningful relationship between dwellers and their dwelling places' which is 'a relationship that is created and evolved over time' (Dovey, 1985, pp. 34 and 54). Similarly, Horwitz and Tognoli (1982, pp. 339 and 335) note that 'a person's concept of home is better understood as a *relationship* to such an environment, rather than the environment itself', where 'home has varying environmental and psychological dimensions across people's lives'. This relationship has been described as dwelling and journeying; a dynamic interplay between people and their physical surroundings, conveying a sense of personal development and change over time (Manzo, 2003, p.52). Life and 'home' evolve and shape each other, where, over time, the resident is 'someone who is affected by, and who changes, those places described as housing and home' (Tognoli, 1986, p. 656).

The origins of 'home' in childhood

The evolution of 'home' is characterised by staying, leaving and journeying (Mallett, 2004, p. 77) where 'home-searching is a basic trait of human nature' (Tucker, 1994, p. 186). A childhood dwelling place is where the experience of 'home' usually starts. A connection can

form between childhood experiences and the environmental attitudes and preferences later expressed in adult life (Cooper Marcus, 2006, p. 41). Our senses can, without warning, connect us to memories of times gone by and places long ago, and in particular to memories of childhood (*ibid*., p. 17). As Dovey (1985, p. 37) notes, 'home has strong roots in the experiences of childhood, where the visual images of home are formed'. So 'throughout our lives the house in which we are born remains physically inscribed in us' (Jackson, 1995, p.86). Cooper Marcus (2006, p. 39) suggests that our childhood 'home' often recurs in dreams as we work through unresolved emotional issues from that time. 'Memories of childhood 'home' tap into rich associations that place memory provides' (Tognoli, 1987, p. 659), in which 'we hold on to childhood memories of certain places as a kind of psychic anchor, reminding us of where we came from, of what we once were', where it is 'in the environments of childhood that the person we are today began to take shape' (Copper Marcus, 2006, p. 18).

As noted earlier, childhood housing experiences can be negative. In such circumstances, moving into, or between different housing situations may be a choice or not; for example, moving from the parental home to a social care setting, or living with extended family, or in homeless accommodation, all of which will inform individual meanings, and future experiences, of 'home'. So the pathway taken out of the parental/childhood home, whether chosen or imposed, can often play a crucial part in how young people and/or their past, present and future homes are identified and defined (Jones, 1995 and Wardaugh, 1999, cited in Mallett, 2004, p. 78), as discussed next.

Transitions into adulthood

It is useful at this point to consider literature concerning 'young people's transitions into adulthood', particularly concerning solo living[1] or independent living, where housing can play a key role during this crucial period. Leaving 'home' is widely recognised as a key stage of transitioning into adulthood, a first step to economic and residential independence. As Horwitz and Tognoli (1982, p. 340) note, 'the capacity to create a setting in which one can be at-home is clearly an important aspect of adult development'. In recent decades, however, changing social pressures and processes have rendered this transition lengthy, complex and subject to contingent effects, structural, and historical changes (Henderson *et al*., 2007, p. 129). Garthwaite (2012, pp. 75-78) argues that young people can face a multitude of barriers in their complex journeys into adulthood, such as rising youth unemployment and fragmented

---

[1] Solo living refers to an individual living alone in a household without a cohabiting partner, dependent child or other adults (Garthwaite, 2012, p. 74)

housing markets, making them at particular risk of facing relative poverty and social exclusion during the transition to independent living, which can become fractured and challenging. The transition to independent living is often a continuing process, not a one-off event; young people move between different housing situations, including social housing, parental homes, private renting, hostel's and staying with friends (ECOTEC, 2008, pp. 7-8). It is a process that involves shifts from dependence to independence and back again (Biehal and Wade, 1999, p. 90). Thus a 'youth housing market' is 'characterised by shared housing, precarious housing, temporary housing and frequent mobility' (Ford *et al*., 2002, p. 2456), where 'leaving home is often just the start of a housing career which involves a gradual transition into more permanent households and more secure independent housing' (Jones, 1995, p. 2).

In their study of the housing transitions of 16-25 year olds, Ford *et al*. (2002)[2] found clear evidence of housing mobility. Among those living independently, the majority (three quarters) had experienced two or more moves, whilst a third had moved four or more times since their first move, nearly 17 per cent had been homeless, with the majority having spent a night on the streets (*ibid*., p. 2460). This evidence suggests that young people's 'independent housing experiences are characterised by a relatively high level of fragmentation, mobility and flux, whether by constraint or choice' (*ibid*., p. 2462). Similarly, Biehal and Wade (1999, pp. 84-85) found that some care leavers experienced repeated moves for negative reasons. Ford *et al.* (2002, p. 2462) also found that 'the odds of having experienced homelessness increase with age; increase as the age the young person first left home decreases; increase for those young people who were living with a step-parent at age fourteen; increase for those young people who were in care/foster care at age fourteen; and increase among frequent movers'. Youth homelessness has also been found to be characterised by movement between different homeless situations. Maycock *et al*. (2008, p. 58) found a large proportion of their sample of young homeless people reporting up to eight changes in their living situation at Phase 2 of interviewing (a year after Phase 1), commuting between temporary living situations including hostels, friends or family, and prison.

Heath (2008, p. 4) suggests that young people experience very different pathways to adulthood depending on factors such as gender, ethnicity and social class. For some young people, for example those leaving the parental 'home' early or leaving a social care setting, the transition process may be artificially compressed or accelerated, unplanned or crisis-

---

[2] Ford *et al*. (2002) based on findings from a study of the housing transitions of 932 young people (16-25 years old) across five local authorities in England in late 1999 to early 2000, ESRC award L134251013 (refer to end of award report, Ford (2005) Young people, housing and transitions to adult life: understanding the dynamics)

driven, and problems may present when there is a clear loss of structure (ECOTEC, 2008, p. 17). As Thomson *et al.* (2002, p. 338) note, 'the turbulence resulting from a chaotic family and economic life can not only hinder progress, but may even prove dangerous in itself, forcing young people into premature independence'. Similarly, Ford *et al.* (2002, p. 2460) found that 'independent housing can be the means to solve other issues, rather than something sought for its own sake', with 'considerable variation in the extent to which young people plan for and control their entry to housing'. For some young people independent living is not a choice, for example when there is no option to return 'home' (i.e. to the parental home) (Garthwaite, 2012, p. 80). It has also been found that young people have more 'accelerated transitions' into adulthood if they do not pursue higher education (Bynner and Pan, 2002). Whereas opportunities to increase economic prospects and experience independent living arrangements are opened up for young people in higher education (Heath and Cleaver, 2003).

For young people the path to setting up a 'home' will not always be straight forward. At this critical point of transition many young people may feel ill-prepared or unready for independent living and lack support from others, which can make it even more difficult to achieve a successful housing experience (Garthwaite, 2012, p. 82). As Jones (1995, p. 3) found, 'young people leaving home without family support faced a very high risk of homelessness'. Other studies stress the importance of families, family relationships and support for young people; their absence can have dire consequences in terms of life experiences, including homelessness and exclusion (Jones and Wallace, 1992; Morrow and Richards, 1996; Gillies *et al.*, 2001). Biehal and Wade (1999, p. 90) found that although many of the care leavers in their study were in contact with their parents, very few had positive relationships with them or received a great deal of support from them, so they were obliged to rely on professional support.

So the existence of a support network, for example family and/or more formal sources, such as a tenancy support worker, is vital in aiding the transition to independent living (ECOTEC, 2008, p. 6) and adult life (Jones, 1995, p. 4). Among their sample of young people, Henderson *et al.* (2007, p. 130) found two models of adulthood between which young people moved: independence and autonomy, and interdependence and care. Formal sources of support are particularly important when economic, practical and emotional support is not available from family (Jones, 1995, p. 4). Giddens (1992) argues that traditional supports for transitions to adulthood and for adulthood itself are eroding, leaving individuals responsible for creating their own biographies and projects of self. After the global financial crisis of

2008 and ensuing austerity, state funding for such support has been spiralling further towards basic and limited provision.

The transition into adulthood and independent living can involve ongoing changes in terms of housing, employment, education, finances, emotional well-being and social relationships. Taking on adult responsibilities, adapting and learning to be self-reliant can be a severe test, particularly at a young age when some young people may lack the emotional skills to live independently (ECOTEC, 2008, p. 18). Housing pathways may be complex, and largely a function of structural factors (Ford *et al.*, 2002, p. 2457), which often restrict housing options and hinder economic independence. The Conservative Party's introduction of the Single Room Rent (SRR) in 1996 limits housing benefit to the average local rent for shared accommodation for single under twenty-fives. In practice this means that many young people have no choice but to live in shared accommodation and make up any shortfall in rent themselves. Thus, affordable housing choices for young people are often very limited. For under twenty-fives, social security benefits, such as Jobseeker's Allowance are only available at a reduced rate, and under-twenty-fives cannot claim working tax credits. Ford *et al.* identified five housing 'pathways' depending on the degree of planning and control exercised by a young person, the extent and nature of any constraints (income, access to benefits, local housing market), and the degree of family support available to them:

- *Chaotic pathway*: following ejection from the family home; defined by an absence of planning, substantial constraints (both economic and in relation to housing eligibility) and an absence of family support. These factors lead to a series of temporary, unstable housing episodes, typically in the private rented sector. A return to the parental home is not feasible. Episodes of homelessness are common as are frequent moves. The spatial reach is either local or national.
- *Unplanned pathway:* following an expected move out of the parental home; defined by an absence of planning, substantial constraints, but some availability of family support. Moves in the social housing sector follow household growth or a search for a better location. Moves in the private rented sector are in response to poor conditions and/or harassment. There is an overall trajectory to better housing. The spatial reach is very local.
- *Constrained pathway*: following a voluntary exit from the parental home for work-related reasons or to establish independence; defined by clear planning within the context of substantial constraints and family support in terms of money and goods. Private rented housing is sought owing to no eligibility for social housing and inadequate financial resources to support owner occupation. The spatial reach is either local or regional.
- *Planned (non-student) pathway*: following an anticipated exit from the parental home which can be delayed; defined by substantial planning, fewer and more manageable constraints and the presence of family support. The first move is typically related to family formation and the availability of economic resources from employment. A temporary first step into the private rented sector is a precursor to owner occupation. In some instances the first step may be to social housing with

subsequent moves within the sector to better accommodation and neighbourhood. The spatial reach can be local or regional, or even national.

• *Student pathway*: following a planned move to higher education; defined by manageable constraints through the provision of higher education institution accommodation and the private rented sector housing market, where there is some mobility and considerable family support. There are serial returns to the parental home and cultural expectations of shared and/or communal living and an identifiable lifestyle. The spatial reach extends nationally and even globally.

(Ford *et al.*, 2002, pp. 2463-2465)

They found movement between pathways, often motivated and facilitated by a significant change in economic circumstances and/or the process of family formation, during which time young people increased their ability to plan and manage more effectively the constraints they confronted (*ibid.*, p. 2466). Thomson *et al.* (2002) suggest that young people's experiences in their transitions into adulthood can have lasting consequences as they progress throughout the life course. This means that 'the meaning of home is continually in flux as young people experience, construct and revise housing pathways in response to changing realities of their home circumstances and the turning tides of life' (Henderson *et al.*, 2007, p. 125). As Henderson *et al.* (2007, p. 131) found, the meaning of 'home' changes as young people's lives and experiences change as they transition through to adulthood, where 'the salience of past experiences and memory runs through young people's understanding of home, and lies at the heart of their lives' (*ibid.*, p. 125). Memories, history, and emotion, (personal, familial and community), all come to play a significant role in the meaning of a 'home' (*ibid.*, p. 128).

The relationship between 'home' experiences

So powerful memories of 'home', whether consciously or subconsciously acknowledged, are carried through life and may be imprinted on new homes (Cooper Marcus, 2006, p. 41). In which 'from childhood to old age, our relationship to the physical environment of home goes through subtle shifts and changes, mirroring shifts of attention from outer accomplishment to inner concerns' (*ibid.*, p. 12). Thus, people's housing histories can exert a strong influence on their motivations, ideas and images about 'home' (Tomas and Dittmar, 1985, p. 498). As Dovey (1985, p. 37) asserts, 'the home environment is one thoroughly imbued with the familiarity of past experience'. 'Home brings together memory and longing, the ideational, the affective and the physical, the spatial and the temporal, the local and the global, the positively evaluated and the negatively' (Rapport and Dawson, 1998, p.8). 'Home' is thus a place which can connect a person with their past, present and future (Annison, 2000, p. 257). Hill (1991, p. 307) found that homeless women made connections between past 'home' experiences and fantasies about future homes. Women with positive earlier 'home' lives

tended to focus on furnishings, wall decorations, layouts and external facades similar to previous residences where their lives were happier (*ibid*., p. 307). For women whose prior 'home' lives were entirely or predominantly negative, fantasises were focused on acquiring a 'home' that provided a secure environment from the dangers of the past (*ibid*., p. 307).

'Home' evolves over time and people change over time, hence 'what *thing* (anything) means to them may also change over time' (Doyle, 1992, p. 794), such that 'individuals are constantly in a state of movement, shifting their attitudes, emotional responses, and behaviours in order to optimise personal satisfaction or happiness and a sense of congruence between self and places of residence' (Tognoli, 1987, p. 546). Sixsmith (1986, p. 293) found that as people progress through their lives, their changing objectives and desires construct a changing flow of cognitions within which place is experienced. Her participants expressed their meanings of 'home' as a function of how adequately the place fitted in with their changing objectives and desires, as one participant illustrated 'at home, it's a place that you're living and fits you, and it fits what you're doing with your life at the time' (*ibid*., p. 293). Similarly, one of Henderson *et al.'s* (2007, p. 126) participants noted that the meaning of 'home' changes ''Cos you want different things in different times in your life'. Thus the ways in which a place allows or facilitates changing aims over time may have direct implications for the experience of that place as 'home' *(ibid*., p. 293); people look for different things in their homes at different points in their lives (Saunders, 1989, p. 191). Similarly, Horwitz and Tognoli (1982, pp. 335-340) found that homes fitted differently in people's lives at different times, as connections with residential environments shifted in relation to current needs for independence and well-being, altering the physical and psychological significance of being 'home'.

Few empirical studies of 'home' have examined individual context alongside meaning; there is a broad tendency to focus on emotive and experiential elements without placing them in their appropriate contexts (Moore, 2000, p.207), thus failing to offer in-depth understanding. Subtleties and contexts of the concept of 'home' are not drawn out, with broader physical and cultural surroundings often being ignored (*ibid*., p. 207).   Moore (2000, pp. 207-208) believes the concept of 'home' should be examined in terms of its parts as well as holistically, and lists of meanings should encourage a focus on the relationships between items. 'Home' is a holistic entity comprising of inter-related qualities of people, environment and time (Altman and Rogoff, 1986 and Werner *et al*., 1988 cited in Moore, 2000, p. 213), in which layers of meaning fuse together and individual histories of 'home' evolve. As Blunt and Dowling (2006, p. 1) note 'your sense of home might be closely shaped by your

memories of childhood, alongside your present experiences and your dreams for the future'. Moore (2000, p. 208) suggests that it is a lack of understanding of these layers and how they work together that makes 'home' so difficult to define.

4.5   Life Context

It can be suggested that layers of meaning are constructed from intricate threads of social context that knit together to build individual 'home' realities, where the experience of 'home' is specific and 'cannot be disassociated from the wider experiences and life events of the individual' (Sixsmith and Sixsmith, 1990, p. 20). 'Home' is rooted in the experiences of everyday life over a long period of time (Dovey, 1985, p. 54). As Deprés (1991, p. 101) suggests, 'home is a process that can only be experienced a long time and people's particular life events influence their experience of home'. In other words, what happens in a dwelling place and what people do in a dwelling place affects how they feel about it. Brown and Perkins (1992, p. 282) argue that 'place attachments are not static; they change in accordance with changes in people, activities or processes, and places involved in the attachments. They are nurtured through continuing series of events that reaffirm human relations with their environment'. Similarly, Sixsmith and Sixsmith (1990, p. 20) note that 'people and places form a phenomenological unity which is in constant reconstruction as people's life circumstances change and the physical fabric of the places changes'.

Life takes individuals to their own version of 'home', an individual state of evolution throughout life. Thus changes in life circumstances can break down established associations with 'home' so that new ones have to be built as the person adapts to a new lifestyle or circumstances (Sixsmith and Sixsmith, 1990, pp. 20-23). As Sixsmith and Sixsmith (*ibid.*, p. 24) say, 'although people have common cultural backgrounds and social circumstances, the events of life are only significant insofar as they provide the context within which choices are made and personal meanings are appropriated'. Similarly, Hayward (1975, p. 3) notes that 'as we try and understand relationships between people and environments, we should strive to identify the context of meanings in which people think of the world and their relationship to it. We can then place individual meanings of home in perspective.'

Gender

Gender is a key influence in life: male and female roles are distinct in terms of reproduction, while day-to-day roles in 'home' and work environments can be overlapping or blurred. As noted earlier, from the 1970s onwards there was a great deal of academic interest in, and subsequent research into, the meaning 'home'. Many empirical studies used gender as the

key theme in differentiating experiences and meanings. Gurney (1997, p. 374), for example, found gender to be an important factor in accounting for the way in which women and men felt about and explained 'home'. Married couples were often the core sample, focusing on individual experiences of 'home' in a shared dwelling place (Saunders, 1989; Gurney, 1997). Even though many women took on men's working roles during the Second World War, once the war ended men took back their jobs. From 1945 into the 1960s women had little choice in their lives: the 'normal' pattern was to marry, have children and become a full-time housewife (Darke, 1994, p. 26) whilst the husband's role was one of provider and head of the household (Horwitz and Tognoli, 1982, p. 340). This meant that many women had subordinate economic and social status (Watson and Austerberry,1986, p 4;: they were often totally dependent on their husband for housing and financial security (*ibid*., p 21). And if the husband's behaviour was a problem, the wife's duty was to make the marriage work, often for the sake of the children (Darke, 1994, p. 26). Divorce was strongly disapproved of and coming from a broken 'home' was even more pitied than having a mother who went out to work (*ibid.*, p. 27).

So it follows that male and female experiences of the 'home' differed radically (Wardaugh, 1999, p. 97). As Watson (1999, p. 84) notes, 'given the traditionally dominant association of women with family, with the domestic and the private arenas, home is likely to have particularly strong gendered connotations'. There was often a stereotypical positive portrayal of the dutiful 'house-proud' housewife (Darke, 1994, p. 20). For women 'home' was 'happiness with your husband going out to work, and you're at home, doing the shopping and cooking, and you can come home, sit down, watch the tele and have a cup of tea'; or as a 'place where I can choose the décor, and where who comes in is my choice only. It's essential to women. You don't really feel a woman without a nest. It's the expansion of your personality. It's such a joy to arrange things' (Watson, 1999, p. 85). A woman's life was focused around her domestic role which inevitably had implications for her relation to the 'home' (Watson and Austerberry, 1986, p.19); there was arguably a distinctive relationship between women and their homes (Darke, 1994, p. 11). As Neale (1997, p. 40) suggests 'historically, women have tended to spend more time than men in the home, and this, combined with domestic labour, has meant that women have been more likely than men to feel that their personal identity is inextricably linked to it'.

Thus, many studies have been particularly interested in the experience of 'home' for women, often challenging traditional notions of 'home'. I did not find a study that focused solely on men's experiences of 'home'. Historically a feminist perspective has often sought

to highlight the perceived lack of choice for women in their 'home' environment, portraying 'home' 'as a realm of autonomy for men but a sphere of drudgery and subordination for women' (Saunders, 1989, pp. 178), a site of oppression, exploitation and male domination (Comer, 1974; Barrett, 1980) such that 'for many women, the home is the site of the exercise of male power through physical violence, rape and mental cruelty' (Darke, 1994, p. 25). Thus, 'home' may not be a secure environment which allows for freedom to relax and be oneself, or a haven from the outside world (*ibid.*, p. 26). 'Home' is a domain over which men have control but to which they contribute little labour, domestic labour is the responsibility of women, yet they have little autonomy within this there sphere (Wardhaugh, 1999, p. 101). As Mallett (2004, p. 75) reiterates, for men 'home' is a space in which they have ultimate authority, a haven from the pressure of the outside world, a site of leisure and recreation, and a source of status.

Women's roles in private and public spheres have changed considerably however. Since the late 1960s, as women's participation in the labour market has risen sharply, as has the rate of return to paid work following the birth of a child. Since the 1970s there have been several pieces of new legislation that impacted on the employment rate for women: 1970 Equal Pay Act; 1975 Sex Discrimination Act; 1975 Employment Protection Act; 2008 lone parent income support changes; and 2010 increase in state pension age for women (ONS, 2013b., p. 2). The (moral) pressure to be a full-time mother and housewife has gradually been replaced by economic pressure to remain in paid work after having a child, intensified by a housing system which offers fewer and fewer affordable housing options (Darke, 1994, p. 27). In the period April to June 2013 around 6 per cent of women aged 16 to 64 were in work, an increase from fifty-three per cent in 1971, while for men the percentage fell to seventy-six per cent in 2013 from ninety-two per cent in 1971 (ONS, 2013b., p. 1). The employment rate for women with children is lower than for women without children (*ibid.*, p. 9). Two incomes are often relied upon to make ends meet; as Ehrenreich (1992, pp. 143-144) notes, 'capitalists have figured out that two-paycheque couples buy more than husband-plus-housewife units, and that a society of singles potentially buys more than a society in which households are shared by three or more people'.

Thus, many women today have an additional role as provider, often alongside their traditional domestic role. This has been dubbed the 'double burden' by some commentators (Mallett, 2004, p. 76). At the same time, men have begun to share in domestic tasks and childcare, although women are still often responsible for the lion's share, which has to be fitted around any paid work. Women contribute much more time and energy to housework

than men (Darke, 1994, p. 17). Saunders and Williams (1988) suggest an inside/outside division in domestic labour: men tend to do work on the car, garden and exterior home maintenance (tasks high on information and low on energy), and women take care of the (internal) 'housework' such as cooking, cleaning and washing (tasks low on information and high on energy). For many people, the stark divide of male and female roles that characterised the traditional 'home' environment has become somewhat blurred, and in some cases, irrevocably altered.

As women's roles in private and public spheres have been changing, so has the make-up of households. Paid employment offers greater financial independence for women, broadening horizons and choices; for example choosing to live on one's own, cohabiting with a partner rather than marriage, and not putting up with a negative relationship. In 2015 in the UK women accounted for ninety per cent of lone parents with dependent children (ONS, 2015, p. 8); there were 3.1 million opposite-sex-cohabiting-couple families (*ibid*., p. 7); and of the 7.7 million one person households (twenty-nine per cent of all households), fifty-four per cent contained one woman and forty-six per cent contained one man (*ibid*., p. 15). So, today, the 'home' environment that men and women inhabit is often quite different from the traditional 'home' outlined above; a more diverse experience for both men and women, which inevitably impacts on meanings, although 'home' is still often central to many women's lives (Darke, 1994, p. 11). Absent in the literature, however, is exploration, of what 'home' means for men and women living in these different 'home' environments, in which the meaning of the 'home', however constituted, is never gender-neutral (Madigan *et al*., 1990).

Experience and meaning is shaped by much more than individual roles in a dwelling place. Traditional distinctions between male and female experiences of 'home' do not represent the *actual* experience of 'home'. Meanings can be blurred, simultaneously similar and distinct. For many women their experience and meaning of 'home' is one of contrasting emotions: a mixture of affection towards the 'home' as a nurturing environment; a strong source of identity, pride and satisfaction in 'house-work'; and resentment and/or frustration at the demands of the 'home' (Darke, 1994, pp. 11-12). Gurney found that the meaning of 'home' for women was 'ambivalent and complex' in comparison to male respondents (1997, p. 375) with men and women experiencing 'home' in vastly different ways, offering different accounts of the meaning of 'home' (*ibid*., p. 382). Of Gurney's (*ibid.,* p37) sample of fifty-two people (male and female couples, owner occupiers), forty-nine thought that men and women did feel differently about 'home'. He found that women, more than men, had hidden and contradictory meanings of 'home': men were more likely to offer negative and

instrumental meanings of 'home' at the beginning of their accounts, rather than positive meanings of emotions and haven, whereas the situation was reversed for women; emotional and positive accounts came first, negative and instrumental ones – including comments concerning domestic labour – came later (*ibid.*, p. 374). Gurney (*ibid.*, p. 383), however, also found similarities in that both men and women portrayed 'home' in an emotional sphere. In earlier work, Gurney (1990; 1991) found that for women, 'home' was inseparable from significant life events that had taken place there, such as childbirth and relationship breakdown.

In contrast to the argument that the experience and meaning of 'home' for women is quite distinct from men's, Saunders (1989, p. 180) argues that 'men and women express the same sorts of sentiments about their homes'. He suggests 'that the image of home as a haven is not a peculiarly a male one, and that for both men and women, the home may be experienced as a realm where they can relax, 'be themselves', establish their own rules of conduct and feel relatively secure' (*ibid.*, p. 182). Darke (1994, p. 13), however, highlights differences in Saunders' sample, in that the women's views were more complex than men's - as Gurney (1997) also found - and she questions the validity of the findings, which were based on a single question in a large scale survey (522 men and women, in 450 different households).

Meaningful changes in context

As noted throughout this thesis, everyday life, for most people, is lived out, in part, in a dwelling place, and life rarely stands still for very long: events within and outside our control directly and indirectly affect us whether we consciously know it or not. Certain changes in context can be particularly meaningful and change the direction of a person's life and the experience and meaning of 'home'. Gurney (1997) tries to make sense of 'home' through lived experience by linking different layers of meaning. He takes what could be said to be a holistic approach to understanding the meaning of 'home', linking experience, wider social construction and the ideology of 'home'. In his study of 'home' and life histories, he suggests that life events, or in his words a 'climatic event' or 'turning point' in an individual's life can be viewed as an episode in a much longer oral history that has temporal salience (*ibid.*, p. 375). Gurney (*ibid.*, pp. 375-376) found that meanings of 'home' were dynamic, reflecting deeply personal experiences, and consequently were subject to daily appraisal. 'Home' was shaped by life events which defined episodes of 'home'; Chapters in an individual's life, in which life events acted as a filter for 'home' experiences and help make sense of 'home' (*ibid.*, pp. 375-376). Gurney's (*ibid.*, pp. 376, 383) episodic ethnographies provided a

mechanism to reflect upon climatic events in personal biographies and the impact they have upon the meaning of 'home', where climatic events led to reassessment and negotiation of meanings, with emotions at the core. For one woman, climatic events, or Chapters, included the death of a parent, starting work, getting married, having children and not working, miscarriage, family conflict and stress (*ibid.*, pp. 376-380).   All along, life events were determining the woman's home and life circumstances, and later that of her marital family.

Life events and other peoples' or organisations' rules impact on 'home' and life circumstances, and force people to make choices about the course of their personal and home life. Each episode permeates all subsequent episodes and evaluations of previous episodes, whether consciously or subconsciously; meaning is constantly evolving and reconfiguring. Gurney (1997, p. 383) concludes that emotional discourses are the most significant rationalisations drawn upon in making sense of 'home', where turning points in life such as bereavement, marriage and having children can be crucial ways in which people attempt to explain what 'home' means to them.   In other words, reflecting on one's life can help piece together the realities of 'home'.

Others have also recognised the consequential character of particular events within the biographies of individuals (Thomson *et al*., 2002, p. 337). Denzin (1989), who takes a narrative perspective, identifies 'epiphanies' which represent interactional moments and experiences that leave marks on people's lives by altering their fundamental meaning structures. And like Gurney (1997), Mandelbaum (1973) identifies 'turning points' that occur through a single event or experience. Giddens' discussion of a 'reflexive project of self' (1991, p. 244) and the ordering of self-narratives identifies 'fateful moments': 'times when events come together in such a way that an individual stands at a crossroads in their existence or where a person learns of information with fateful consequences' (*ibid*., p. 113). Thus major personal events such as bereavement, parental separation, having children, relationship breakdown, homelessness, unemployment, illness, substance misuse, prison or being in state care, can disturb the 'normal' pattern of life. As Sixsmith (1986, p. 290) found, 'knowledge of the home and the important events people have experienced there are strong ties between environment and the person. These can become integral parts of an individual's history and sense of identity and continuity'.

As noted earlier, childhood housing experiences often provide the reference point for 'home', thus, 'climatic events' (positive or negative) in childhood can significantly shape future experiences of 'home'. Henderson *et al*. (2007, p. 126) found that young people whose family was fragmented through parental divorce, separation, or death, and who also

experienced the loss of their physical family space, found themselves reconfiguring the meaning of 'home'. For some this involved investing in the idealised creation of a future 'home', while for others it meant dealing with the practical realities of their current 'home' status (*ibid.,* p126). Hill (1991, p. 304) identifies a body of literature in sociology which views the family as the primary socialising agent that facilitates the successful passage of an individual from childhood to adulthood (see Hareven 1986, Jamieson 1987; Kalmuss and Seltzer 1989; Kenkel 1966) with the role of parent being central. Studies of family interaction suggest that cohesive and integrated families produce children whose emotional and affectional needs are likely to be satisfied, with strong family ties greatly increasing the likelihood that a person will assume responsible roles in society (Hill, 1991, p. 304). In contrast, families characterised by a lack of cohesion, neglect, or abuse are more likely to damage children, resulting in weak self-identities and poor coping skills, and possible over dependence on individuals and institutions later in life since they missed necessary maturational steps (*ibid*., pp. 304-305). Unexpected twists and turns are often encountered during the transition from youth to adulthood (Heath, 2008, p. 9).

Thomson *et al*. refer to 'critical moments', 'key moments of biographical change in young people's lives' (2002, p. 336), which young people in the sample, or the researchers, considered to be highly consequential but not necessarily recognised as significant at the time (Henderson *et al*., 2007, p.20). These critical moments act as biographical reference points; the lives of some young people were particularly vulnerable to events beyond their control, some critical moments are more consequential than others, and for some people rather than others, depending on resources and timing (*ibid*., 2007, p. 21). As Thomson *et al.* (2002, p.338) note, the way young people respond to such moments is strongly dependent on their access to material, financial, cultural, social and emotional resources; 'individuals are not entirely determined by their circumstances, and faced with difficult conditions will respond differently', which can have far-reaching consequences. Young people have differing degrees of control, if they have any, over events taking place (*ibid*., p. 340) and over subsequent responses and choices made by them and other parties.

Throughout the life course, significant events and the stresses of life are often lived out within the 'home' environment which can create a complex 'home-life' relationship. As outlined earlier, for unemployed people home can act as a retreat from the outside world that marginalises and stigmatises the unemployed (Sixsmith and Sixsmith, 1990, p.23), but can also become a place of stress, with strained family relationships owing to financial pressures. In many societies the breadwinner/provider role for men makes it difficult for them to feel

comfortable at 'home' during unemployment (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 113). In circumstances of homelessness, May (2000, pp. 738-756) suggests that 'moving within, between and through places – sometimes by necessity, sometimes by choice – must have an impact upon any subsequent articulations of a wider sense of home not only as a residence but as place', where a sense of homelessness may be more deep rooted than a sense of 'home', indeed if 'home' has ever been experienced at all. Similarly, Tomas and Dittmar (1995, p. 505) found that it was hard for homeless women to make a clear distinction between house (characterised by abuse and relocation) and 'home' (meaning safety and security). For some women the relationship between housing as a place of safety and security, and 'home' as psychologically meaningful had been severed completely, and for others the loss of one did not entail the loss of the other; where some meanings of 'home' survived in the absence of 'a place' (*ibid*., pp. 505 & 510). In all these cases the meaning and experience of a dwelling place changes due to a 'significant event' (in a way that is similar to experiences of 'not-home', as outlined earlier).

So places can become meaningful as transitional markers or symbols of critical life events (either positive or negative). Places that formerly had no meaning may become meaningful through tragic events, as a result of which such places may be consciously valued as deeply meaningful (Manzo, 2003, pp. 51-53). As Antonovsky (1974, p. 2) states, 'if anything has been learned in the study of stressful events, it is what is important for their consequences is the subjective experience of the meaning of the event rather than its objective character.' The meaning of an event to an individual can reverberate through their life and alter their experiences and meanings in numerous ways, positive, negative, and relatively neutral. Personal issues and experiences that may influence our relationships to places are themselves a product of a larger context (Manzo, 2003, p. 54). The transition through homelessness illustrates this point well. McNaughton (2008, p. 102) found that although moving from homelessness into your own housing is a positive passage, the qualitative experience can be intensely difficult, complex and multifaceted. Objective and subjective realities change simultaneously. McNaughton's (*ibid.*, p. 102) participants found that as their material reality changed they had to subjectively reconcile their new material reality with their lives; with the abilities they had, and with the new social role and interactions they were engaging in. Thus, changes in subjective and/or objective reality trigger a transition into a new 'home-reality'. In this respect, the realities of 'home' are experienced individually, uniquely interpreted and lived out over time.

4.6   Overview

The literature suggests that the meanings of 'home' and 'not-home' are bound up with subjective feelings towards a dwelling place in an emotional relationship, whereas homelessness is largely concerned with the physical lack of a permanent dwelling place. As Robinson (2001) states, 'homelessness is presented in material and physical terms, such as rooflessness, while home is considered in emotive terms'. Put simply, in commonly used phrases; *I feel / I don't feel* at 'home' (intangible) is in contrast to *I am* homeless (tangible). Dovey (1985, p.51) notes that 'the phenomenon of 'home' is essentially intangible as there is no precise point at which a house becomes a home'. Individual 'home' experiences often cluster around such labels; for example, empirical study participants are often asked to think of their experiences in such terms (home, not-home, homeless). 'Home' realties are not lived out according to pre-determined criteria however, but are immersed in individual life context, from childhood onwards which determines the role and experience of 'home'. 'Home' is 'a bonding of person and place and a set of connections between the experience of dwelling and the wider spatial, temporal and sociocultural context within which it emerges' (Dovey, 1985, p.44). Context provides the essential clues as to how a dwelling place does, or does not, become 'home'; the lines between 'home', 'not-home' and homelessness are not always clear cut, and can often blur or overlap. Perceived distinctions between male and female experiences and meanings of 'home' are not always clear cut either; there are similarities regarding emotional significance, and differences in relation to roles within the 'home' environment, although these have changed, and continue to.

Many studies of 'home' offer an insight into people's broad notions, ideas or ideals of 'home', and what 'home' means to them, which may draw on their housing experiences. Few studies however, examine individual experiences of 'home' in different housing situations and dwelling places. To date, no study has combined the homeless and 'home' experience and captured the real 'home life' histories of men and women in the context of recently moving on from homelessness into a sole tenancy. This study sets out to address this gap. The next Chapter outlines the methodological approach taken in conducting this research with regard to the epistemological position, philosophical perspective and methods of enquiry. The approach taken has provided a unique insight into the housing histories of seventeen formerly homeless individuals, which are detailed in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight.

Chapter Five: Methodology

5.0 Introduction

The previous Chapters outlined established thinking on the meaning of 'home', illustrating representations of the 'ideal home' and 'real homes'; distinctions between 'home' and 'not home', based on feelings towards a dwelling place; and the representation of homelessness as the 'physical' lack of a permanent dwelling place.

The purpose of this Chapter is to explain how I approached and conducted this research. It outlines the choices I made in developing and delivering my research proposition, philosophical and theoretical stance, methodological approach and methods, all of which provided clear direction for fulfilling the two main objectives of the research, to explore:

> what 'home' is for different people;
> the context and temporal nature of 'home'.

In addition to explaining and justifying the research approach undertaken, this Chapter describes the analytical approach employed to make sense of and interpret the data, as well as examining limitations of the research and relevant ethical considerations.

5.1   The epistemological position of the research

The epistemological stance taken in this study is that of social constructionism, in which 'all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context' (Crotty, 2003, p. 42). As noted earlier, experiences of 'home' are intertwined and shaped by people's social realities which are directly and indirectly influenced by the social sphere/society they live in.   'Home' is 'a bonding of person and place and a set of connections between the experience of dwelling and the wider spatial, temporal and sociocultural context within which it emerges' (Dovey, 1985, p.44). 'Home' can be understood as a combination of *material* reality, and *perceived and experienced* reality influenced by ideological, political and economic forces, where 'personal, shared or societal-wide values, attitudes and meanings, and experiences about home are rooted in the inter-play of individual, spatial and societal forces as they emerge in individual actions and practices' (Després, 1991, p. 108). Crotty argues that culture is 'the source rather than the result of human thought and behaviour…as a direct consequence of the way in which we humans have evolved we depend on culture to direct our behaviour and

organise our experience' (2003, p. 53). Culture itself is the human world of 'significant symbols' – words for the most part but also gestures, drawings, musical sounds, mechanical devices like clocks, or natural objects like jewels – anything, in fact, that is disengaged from its mere actuality and used to impose meaning upon experience' (Geertz, 1973, p. 45). To quote Crotty again, 'We are all born into a world of meaning…we inherit a system of significant symbols', so that 'when we first see the world in a meaningful fashion, we are inevitably viewing it through lenses bestowed upon us by our culture' (2003, p. 54). 'Social realities are socially constructed' (*ibid.,* p. 55), although the social world is open to subjective interpretation, 'regulated by normative expectations and shared understandings' (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 13)

As people grow however, they begin to interpret their own realities through many different lenses, so the meaning that is attached to things, events and experiences is subjective, where subjective reality finds individuals negotiating meanings within social situations (Cuncliffe, 2008, p. 126). Subjective meaning shapes people's realities and are important in people's lives (Crotty, 2003, p. 15), in which meanings are not discovered but constructed (*ibid.,* pp. 42-44), emerging only when consciousness engages with the world and with objects in the world (*ibid.,* p. 43): 'Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting' (*ibid.,* p. 43). 'The object may be meaningless in itself but it has a vital part to play in the generation of meaning' (*ibid.,* p. 48), and 'it is in and out of this interplay that meaning is born' (*ibid.,* p. 45). The researcher must seek to understand the meaning that people attach to their own experiences, an event, circumstance or other phenomenon (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 27), offering explanations 'at the level of meaning rather than cause' (*ibid.,* p. 23).

So in this research the meaning of 'home' emerges out of an individual engaging with a pre-existing dwelling place (an object). As Crotty argues, 'the object involved in the social constructionist understanding of meaning formation need not involve persons at all', so whether the object of interaction is described as natural or social, 'the basic generation of meaning is always social, for the meanings with which we are endowed arise in and out of interactive human community' (2003, p. 55). Human beings engage with a reality and make sense of it, and 'it is possible to make sense of the same reality in quite different ways' (*ibid.,* p. 47), because 'different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon' (*ibid.,* p. 9). No two people are the same, or share the same exact reality or circumstances. Meaning can be constructed on both a general and individual (unique) level. Taking a constructivist stance 'requires that we not remain straightjacketed

by the conventional meanings we have been taught to associate with the object' but 'approach the object in a radical spirit of openness to its potential for new or richer meanings' (*ibid.,* p. 51). In understanding the social realities of participants, this research seeks to provide 'context related interpretive insights', in Cuncliffe's words (2008, p. 126) , highlighting the relationship between context and 'home'.

5.2   Theoretical perspective

A theoretical perspective, informed by an epistemological position, is described by Crotty as 'our view of the human world and social life within that world' (2003, p. 7). Applying a theoretical perspective to research provides the philosophical stance that lies behind the chosen methodology and 'provides a context for the research process and grounds its logic and criteria' (*ibid.*). In other words, the chosen theoretical perspective helps guide and navigate the researcher's engagement with the subject/phenomenon under exploration through the application of appropriate methods. The following section outlines the rationale behind the approach I undertook.

An interpretivist approach

As the research is based around a social constructionist epistemology, taking an interpretivist philosophical stance seemed the most logical approach to observe interactions between human beings and their world (of 'home'), focusing on participants' perceptions and experiences, and the way they make sense of their lives (Creswell, 1994, p. 162). As Kant proposed in his 1781 work *Critique of Pure Reason*: 'perception relates not only to the senses but to human interpretations of what our senses tell us; and our knowledge of the world is based on understanding which arises from thinking about what happens to us, not just simply from having had particular experiences' (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 6). Dilthey, during the 1860s-70s, went on to emphasise the importance of 'understanding' (or *'verstehen'* in his native German) (*ibid*, p. 7), a perspective that Max Weber (1864-1920) took forward, agreeing with Dilthey about the contrast between the interpretative approach (*verstehen*, understanding) needed in the human and social sciences and the explicative approach (*erklären*, explaining) focused on causality, that is found in the natural sciences (Crotty, 2003, p. 67). Thus the investigation of social reality and natural reality require different methods. Dilthey suggested that the 'understanding' of social reality should be sought through the 'study of people's 'lived experiences', which occur within a particular historical and social context' (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 7). He proposed that 'social research should explore 'lived experiences' in order to reveal connections between social, cultural and historical

aspects of people's lives, and to see the context in which particular actions take place' (*ibid.,* p. 7). Crotty (2003, p. 67) echoes this stance: the interpretivist approach 'looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world'. Similarly, Johnson *et al.* (2006, p. 132) note that *'verstehen'* entails 'capturing the actual meanings and interpretations that actors subjectively ascribe to phenomena in order to describe and explain their behaviour through investigating how they experience, sustain, articulate and share with others these socially constituted everyday realities'. Thus, in adopting an interpretivist approach I sought to explore how people understand their social worlds and the interrelatedness of different aspects of people's lives (psychological, social, historical and cultural), which forms the basis of subjectively meaningful experiences and understandings of 'home'.

Johnson *et al.* (2006, p. 147*)* note that *'verstehen'* (understanding) involves inductively describing and explaining patterns of actors' intersubjective meanings. So in order to explore the full depth of participants' housing and social histories, employing an inductive approach generates knowledge about the world through 'direct observation (induction) rather than deduction from abstract propositions' (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 6). Inductive research starts open-ended and exploratory, beginning with a topic and observations, so the type and nature of the research findings are defined upon completion, where evidence is used 'as the genesis of a conclusion' (*ibid.,* p. 14). An inductive approach derives learning 'by looking for patterns and association from observations of the world' (*ibid.*, p. 14) i.e. regularities in experience, in order to reach conclusions (or to generate theory). As Snape and Spencer (*ibid.,* p19) note, 'the diversity of perspectives adds richness to our understanding of the various ways in which that reality has been experienced', where 'external reality is itself diverse and multifaceted'. Inductive research moves from detailed observations of the world towards more abstract generalisations and ideas (Neuman, 2003, p. 51) 'commonly seen as moving from the particular to the general' (Mason, 2002, p. 180). This approach gives this research a foundation in subjectivity and interpretation, which is something similar to Glaser and Strauss's 'grounded theorising', 'whereby explanation and theory are fashioned directly from the emerging analysis of the data' (*ibid.,* p. 180).

Adopting an interpretivist approach enabled me to give participants a voice, in which personal accounts capture 'the power of language to illuminate meaning' (Legard *et al.,* 2003, p. 138). Thus participants' voices, in dialogue with the researcher, generated the data. I was able to explore the context of their lives, their worlds, and hear their personal interpretations of the experiences they had had. The participants provided a contextual framework within

which to make sense of, and interpret their thoughts and experiences of 'home': how 'home' was constructed around them (social constructionism), and understood/experienced by them (meaning). Interpretivism emphasises 'the importance of understanding people's perspectives in the context of the conditions and circumstances of their lives', and in doing so seeks to obtain 'thick description and as much detailed information as possible about people's lives (from their own perspectives and, to a more limited extent, our own [researchers'] observations either of the circumstances in which they live or their engagement with the research issues)' (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 21). As such, it is recognised that the researcher's own interpretations can be important, provided that they are clearly delineated from those of the participants (*ibid.,* p. 21). So in interpreting participants' stories, I adhered as closely as possible to their accounts, but acknowledge that deeper insights can be obtained by synthesising, interlocking and comparing accounts of a number of respondents (*ibid.,* p. 21).

5.3   Methods of enquiry

The methodological approach I have employed; interpretivism, provides a clear direction for my choice of methods, which have been implemented in such a way as to capture the real essence of each participant's 'home-life'. My chosen methods aim to provide a rounded 'understanding of research participants' views and actions in the context of their lives overall' (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 7).

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews

The focus of this research is the experience of 'home' among people who have experienced homelessness; the central objectives are to explore and understand what 'home' is for different people, and the contextual and temporal nature of 'home' for them. As outlined in the introduction, the sample for this research was a sub-sample of participants who took part in the FOR-HOME project I worked on. The FOR-HOME project collected information from participants through face-to-face interviews using semi-structured questionnaires that produced chiefly statistical data (http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/scwru/pubs/2011/craneetal2011forhomefinalreport.pdf). The aim of this research however, is to complement that data with an in-depth qualitative look at people's housing histories. In order to capture the full depth of people's housing histories in-depth face-to-face interviews were the natural choice of data collection, so that 'knowledge of the social world is acquired through intimate familiarity with it and capturing the voices of people who inhabit it' (Brewer, 2004, p. 313).

With the aim of gaining an in-depth insight into the participants' housing histories, interviews were based around a semi-structured interview schedule focusing on two key themes – reflections on housing experiences, and on the meaning of 'home' – explored through open-ended questions which allowed participants to tell their own story (see Appendix A). Interviews were conducted face-to-face: 'a physical encounter is essential context for an interview which is flexible, interactive and generative, and in which meaning and language are explored in depth' (Legard *et al.,* 2003, p. 142). In order to capture the depths and nuances of the interviewee's own language, it is important to capture the data in its natural form (*ibid*., p. 142) by sound recording interviews. All participants consented to the recording of their interview.

It was envisaged that designing the interview in this way would provide both structure and flexibility, and encourage free-flowing dialogue so that material would be generated by the interaction with the participant, asking questions in such a way as to encourage the participant to talk freely (*ibid.*, p. 141). This approach meant participants were free to 'wander' around their housing histories. May (pp. 744-745) found that free-flowing interviews gave people the time to talk around their biographies so as to capture the multiplicity of factors shaping their actions at particular points in time, and to explore the detailed timing of events in different parts of the biography. I judged when to introduce questions and probes, and where probes could help achieve 'a deeper and fuller understanding of the participant's meaning' (*ibid*, p. 141). I was as alert as possible to nuances, hesitations, emotion and non-verbal signals (*ibid*, p. 144). There was an undiluted focus on the individual, allowing for 'detailed investigation of people's personal perspectives, for in-depth understanding of personal context within which the research phenomena are located, and for very detailed subject coverage' (Ritchie, 2003, p. 36). This in-depth format permitted full exploration of the factors that might underpin participants' answers: reasons, feelings, opinions and beliefs, which in turn provide explanatory evidence (Legard *et al.,* 2003, p. 141). This enabled me to see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee and to understand how and why they had come to their particular perspective (King, 2004, p 11).

Participants were eased into the interview with contextual questions; asking about their current accommodation and housing plans, which facilitated the development of a general conversation with the participant and provided space for the participant to relax into the interview, hopefully creating a climate of trust, and demonstrating my interest and desire to understand their perspective (Legard *et al.*, 2003, p. 143). The only contextual information taken from the FOR-HOME project was age. Further contextual information was obtained

throughout the interview as detailed below. The central focus of the interview was then introduced; recollection and exploration of their housing and social history, from their first housing memory through to the present day. It was stressed that it was understandable if they couldn't get the sequential order correct on first attempt, and that it could be pieced together with the interviewer's assistance. Participants were able to explore the sequence of their biographies (May, 2000, p. 745). A 'housing history' table, like a calendar, was built into the interview schedule to assist with retrospective questioning (see Appendix A). The table emphasised the contextual elements of each housing episode (timeframe, type of accommodation, geographical location, life at the time i.e. employment, education, relationships), which were also useful probes for me. This tool also allowed me to make notes during the interview which assisted with recording an accurate sequential order. Notes were also made on comments that were pertinent to other questions/subjects, so that responses could be referred back to during the interview and/or after the interview as part of the analysis.

Taking this approach allowed the participant to reconnect with their housing experiences and bring them to the forefront of their mind. Many participants' recollections flowed from one housing episode to the next, i.e. they understood that I was interested in hearing about the same contextual elements for each housing episode. This meant that participants were free to tell their story, and minimal probing was often all that was required at this stage of the interview. In studies which look back at a participants' history, the use of people's 'life stories' have proven particularly useful in understanding experiences and social constructions (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 8). This approach is particularly pertinent when looking at experiences of 'home', in which 'home' is an emotionally based and meaningful relationship between dwellers and their dwelling places that is created and evolved over time (Dovey, 1985, pp. 34 and 54). In short, the experiential memory of 'home' encapsulated in housing histories is crucial to understanding the meaning of 'home' (Mallett, 2004, p. 70).

With housing experiences fresh in their minds, questions followed about how the participant viewed, and felt about, their housing experiences, and what their housing preferences were. Participants were then asked general questions about the meaning of 'house' and 'home' and their views on homelessness, which led to questions highlighting, and reflecting on experiences of 'home'. This line of questioning led the first participant to highlight housing experiences that were *not* experienced as 'home', and they were asked what was different about those housing experiences. There was no specific or direct question in the interview schedule about 'not-home', which may have been an oversight on my part,

although, as noted earlier, the literature pays little attention to the notion of 'not-home'. Thus, the experience of 'not-home' was spontaneously raised by a participant. The semi-structured nature of the interview provided me with freedom to respond to the issue. I subsequently raised the notion of a dwelling place not being 'home' with the other sixteen participants. Thus, 'not-home' became a key theme and area of analysis alongside 'home'. I may have started the research with a few working ideas but I remained open to emergent concepts and themes (cf. Layder 1993).

Incorporating a 'flexible' structure into the interview schedule also allowed topics to be covered in the order most suited to the participant (Legard *et al.,* 2003, p. 141). Topics would overlap, for example a participant was free to talk about their best housing experience when recounting their housing history. I felt that using such an approach was also well suited to exploring complex issues and studying processes that occur over time (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 5). In the same vein, Ritchie (2003, pp. 36-37) notes that the individual interview is particularly 'well suited to research that requires understanding of deeply rooted or delicate phenomena or responses to complex systems, processes or experiences because of the depth of focus and the opportunity they offer for clarification and detailed understanding'. In a face-to-face interview probing and clarification also help yield fairly detailed retrospective accounts (Lewis, 2003, p. 53). In-depth interviews are 'the only way to collect data if it is important to set the perspective heard within the context of personal history or experience; where delicate or complex issues need to be explored at a detailed level, or where it is important to relate different issues to individual personal circumstances' (*ibid.*, p. 58), as this research seeks to do in exploring the relationship between 'home' and 'context'.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews allow for the description and display of phenomenon as experienced by the participants, 'in fine-tuned detail and in the participants' own terms', thus offering 'the opportunity to 'unpack' issues, to see what they are about or what lies inside, and to explore how they are understood by those connected with them' (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 27). In essence, the participants were given a direct and explicit opportunity to convey their own meanings and interpretations through the explanations they provided, whether spontaneously or in answer to my probing/questions (Lewis, 2003, p. 57).

The research population

As already mentioned, in order to access a sample for my research I was able to utilise my established relationship with FOR-HOME project participants in Nottinghamshire and

Yorkshire (177 in total). The FOR-HOME project also included participants in London (223 in total). I decided early on in the study that is was not feasible to include any of the London participants, for several reasons. First; I had no established relationship with them since I had not interviewed them; strangers may have been less willing to participate. Second; I was constrained by the logistics and cost of travelling to London, as the cost would have had to be met from my own pocket, and I only lived between thirty to sixty minutes drive from the Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire locations. Third; there were significant differences between the two samples which could hinder plausible comparison. They were operating in very different housing and employment markets, and the availability of, and types of, homeless services and accommodation and support services in the two areas was also different (for example, in London The Clearing House, operated by Broadway, fast tracked rough sleepers into temporary housing, often social housing, with two year tenancies).

My sample was purposively selected on the basis of salient criteria (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 5): particular features or characteristics were chosen to enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes that I wished to study (Richie *et al.,* 2003, p. 78). When I was arranging follow-up interviews in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire, I was able to identify a sub-set of participants who had moved-on from their resettlement tenancy before the end of their participation in the FOR-HOME project. These participants had experienced three distinct housing situations/circumstances in the previous 18 months before being interviewed for this study; this formed the basis for my eligibility criteria:

(i)   recent homelessness (formal homeless accommodation or informal/hidden homelessness);
(ii)   a sole tenancy (resettlement tenancy); and
(iii)   resettlement tenancy ending (for whatever reason) and moving on to another dwelling place.

The rationale for these criteria is that each participant had a varied housing career, having recently experienced a number of different housing circumstances/situations, each of which offered varying degrees of security of tenure, privacy and amenities. Thus, it was envisaged that there would be difference in experience between different housing situations. The aim was to attain a sample of fifteen to twenty individuals who satisfied these criteria, male and female, geographically spread across Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire.

Recruitment

Immediately after the completion of either a six or eighteen month FOR-HOME research project interview, I asked participants who fitted the eligibility criteria if they would be

willing to take part in a *separate* and *unrelated* interview as part of this PhD study. The nature of the study and what their involvement would entail was verbally explained and detailed in an information leaflet (Appendix B). To mitigate against any feeling of obligation to participate, owing to their participation in the FOR-HOME project, I emphasised that participation in the research was voluntary and would not in any way affect their participation in the FOR-HOME project. I also emphasised that the research was separate from the FOR-HOME project. This allowed prospective participants to make an informed decision as to whether to participate or not. The prospective participant was then contacted at a later date to see if they would be willing to take part in an interview, at which time the nature of the study was explained again. Positive willingness to participate may have been influenced by the fact that I had already interviewed each participant on two or three previous occasions as part of the FOR-HOME project, so some familiarity had been established. In the FOR-HOME project, contact was also maintained through regular tracking of participants (via phone calls, letters and house calls) and the sending of Christmas cards. A 'thank you' payment (cash) for taking part was not financially viable for this study (it would have been at my own expense), so there was no financial incentive to take part, or any other reciprocal relationship between myself and the participants.

The eligibility criteria dictated a recruitment process which was dependent on FOR-HOME project participants moving on from their resettlement tenancy; this meant that recruitment for this research took place over an 18 month period: February 2008 – August 2009. Towards the end of recruitment, women proved particularly difficult to recruit. This may have been because women made-up only just over a quarter (104) of the FOR-HOME project sample; in addition, a financial 'thank-you' payment may have been expected as in the FOR-HOME project. For example, two women were approached to take part both of whom preferred not to be interviewed in their own home, even though I had previously interviewed them in their own home for the FOR-HOME project. This reluctance may have been due to the remit of this study – a history of housing experiences – which they may not have wanted any other household members to be privy to. Subsequently, ethical approval was granted for the two women to each receive £15 cash remuneration as a 'thank-you' in return for their thought, time and assistance. The cost of this which was met by my then employer (Sheffield Institute for Studies on Aging, University of Sheffield), since the sample was a sub-group of the FOR-HOME project sample. I do not believe this payment had any effect on the nature of the interview material. The cost of this was met by my then employer (Sheffield Institute for Studies on Aging, University of Sheffield), since the sample was a sub-group of the FOR-HOME project sample.

Seventeen participants, twelve men and five women, were eventually recruited, which approximately mirrors the gender composition of the broader FOR-HOME sample; seventy-four per cent men and twenty-six per cent women (Crane *et al.,* 2011, p. 7). The participants were chiefly from Nottinghamshire (fourteen), while the remainder (three) were from Yorkshire. After moving-on from their resettlement tenancy, participants, on average, had moved only once, with five participants having had more than one move; the highest being four moves. At the time of interviewing, the majority of participants (ten) were living in another sole tenancy, three were living in formal homeless accommodation, two were living in an informal or hidden homelessness situation, and two were living with their partner (partner's tenancy). Thus I recruited a diverse range of participants according to age, gender and current housing situation, allowing for the meaning of 'home' to be explored according to a diverse, but comparable, range of circumstances.

5.4   Data interpretation and analysis

In taking an interpretivist approach, I sought to understand participants' own meaning of 'home' by inductively describing and explaining patterns of actors' intersubjective meanings (Johnson *et al.,* 2006, p. 147). The methods I employed, in-depth face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured interview schedule, achieved this through putting participants' voices and 'home lives' at the heart of the research. It was then my task to interpret and illuminate their voices through systematic and comprehensive analysis of the data they generated, where 'inductive analysis requires the analysis…always be embedded in the data themselves, so that analytical categories emerge from the data, are faithful to it…[and] capture people's voices accurately' (Brewer, 2000, pp. 151-152). Lengthy data interpretation and analysis, over a number of stages enabled the data to be distilled, refined and focused, allowing each participant's voice to be heard; illuminating their unique, yet similar, housing and social histories. Different processes were used at each stage of analysis which produced a range of data (qualitative and quantitative), as detailed in Table 5.1 below.

Analysing the data

The interview transcripts, the basis of this research, required in-depth analysis. Initial analysis involved reading each participant's transcript (hard copy) at least twice, and colour coding (with highlighters) each housing episode according to the particular housing situation, for example, purple for a sole tenancy. This helped to identify and index the number of housing episodes by housing situation. Transcripts were also annotated with text to highlight references to key questions, for example best housing experience, and to summarise key

points in a lengthier statement. At this stage, themes started to emerge from the data, particularly concerning features of 'home', housing mobility and significant events, some of which appeared to be common across the sample. A 'history of home' template (see Appendix D) was produced: each housing episode was detailed using the same key categories (housing, life, significant event, age, duration, location, home, not-home). Each participant's 'history of home' was completed using the transcript data that had already been analysed. This format captured the context of each participant's life during each housing episode, and proved to be a vital reference tool throughout the further analysis and interpretation of the data; it was the foundation of each participant's story. It was already clear at this stage that 'not-home' was a much more common experience than 'home', and that homelessness had been a frequent experience for many.

A recurring theme throughout participants' 'histories of home' was high residential mobility, which for many participants began at a young age and involved moving between a range of housing situations. This pattern warranted focused quantitative analysis which involved utilising the 'history of home' templates to count the number of housing episodes per participant by housing situation, and the number experienced as 'home' or 'not-home', which was inputted into an Excel spreadsheet. Analysis of the data involved additional analytical categories: the whole sample, by gender, by age, and across categories, for example the number of sole tenancy episodes among females that were experienced as 'home'. Similarly, each participants 'history of home' was utilised to build their 'home' and 'not-home' profile, detailing (text in an Excel spreadsheet) what made a particular housing episode (and housing situation) 'home' or 'not-home' for them. Themes emerged out of this analysis. Coded themes; features of 'home' and 'not-home', were developed which encapsulated a range of similar feelings under a particular theme, for example 'positive relationships' was a feature of 'home' which covered relationships with parents, siblings, partner and/or staff at formal homeless accommodation. The frequency of each feature was recorded by housing situation, age and gender. This process of analysis identified levels of housing mobility/transience and security which informed interpretations of the influence of transience on experiences of 'home' and 'not-home'. It also identified similarities and differences between experiences of 'home' and 'not-home' across different housing situations, and by age (childhood and adulthood) and gender.

Analysis then turned to examining the primary focus of this research; the temporal context of 'home'. The housing contexts (situations) participants had experienced had already been considered in terms of their frequency and if they had been experienced as

'home' or 'not-home'. Exploring what life was like during each housing episode, pieces together how 'home' fitted into participants' lives. As noted in Table 5.1 (Stage 5), piecing together the 'home-life' of each participant went through several stages of interpretation and analysis. The reason for this was the desire to capture the full depth of each participant's story; holistically looking at when each housing episode/situation was experienced, and its duration, alongside the social context (social circumstances) and emotional context ('home'/not strong feelings/'not-home') of each episode. In other words, context provided the framework within which the data could be analysed.

An early focus on 'significant events' was based on my interpretation of certain social contexts as 'significant' rather than on participants' own interpretations. Similarly, I interpreted social contexts in terms of 'stability' and 'instability'. However, by concentrating on particular social contexts and determining their focus, I missed out the nuanced nature of participants' day-to-day lives. To allow for systematic analysis of each 'home-life', I wanted to construct a full synopsis of each participant's 'home-life', which would be a comprehensive, primary reference tool during analysis. The 'temporal profile' grid structure presents the core aspects of each participants 'home-life' (see Appendix E). This structure allowed for initial identification of 'primary' social contexts, which were grouped under key themes. It also allowed for the recognition of connections within and between patterns of mobility, 'home' and 'not-home' experiences, and social context. This process unearthed patterns (key themes) in the direction that many participants' lives took, and provided a clear way of illustrating participants' 'home-lives' through the presentation of detailed case studies of three participants' lives.

Case studies were brought to life through detailed analysis of individual transcripts, which pieced together the paths that participants' lives took, and revealed the inter-relationship between time, context and housing experiences. In addition to the case studies, singular analysis was undertaken of the 'temporal profile's' and interview transcripts of each participant not included in the case study presentations. This process built up a 'brief life' account of each of the fourteen participants. These accounts supplement the case studies, with individuals experiencing similar social situations and contexts as individuals in the case studies. Together, the case studies and 'brief life' accounts capture the contextual reality of 'home'.

Thus, in taking an interpretivist approach, participants' housing and life histories were analysed as single narratives and as collections of stories around common themes (Thompson, 2000, p. 270) which allowed for the construction of an argument based on comparison

between different accounts (*ibid*, p. 285) of the same phenomenon, 'home'. As Tesch (1990, p. 96) notes, the main intellectual tool is comparison: comparing and contrasting, forming categories, discerning conceptual similarities, refining categories and discovering patterns. 'Just naming and classifying is not enough. We need to understand the patterns, the recurrences, the *whys*' (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 67).

This section has illustrated how a systematic and comprehensive, but not rigid process of analysis was undertaken; the data was segmented, i.e. divided into relevant and meaningful 'units', whilst maintaining a connection to the whole (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 95). Retaining links to the original data and revisiting them constantly is an integral part of the analysis process (Spencer *et al.,* 2003, p. 204). An essentially inductive process meant that data segments were flexible and categorised according to an organising system that was predominantly derived from the data themselves. The data was interrogated with regard to the content and themes they contained, and categories were formed as a result (Tesch, 1990, p. 96). Interpreting the data involved constructing and documenting what the data meant and represented, and what could be reasonably inferred from the data (Mason, 2002, p. 149). The following Chapters present the data and bring it to life through the actual words of participants who, as Spencer *et al.* (2003, p. 214) note, portray how a phenomenon (home) is conceived, how important it is, and convey the richness and colour it holds for them.

Quantitative data is used to illustrate clear patterns, not to suggest causality. The quantitative data supplements, and complements, the qualitative data, and together, the data sets provide a clear picture of 'home' and 'not-home' experiences across different housing situations and by gender.

Table 5.1 Processes and stages of analysis

Stage	Data	Process
1	*Qualitative:* - housing and social history	• Annotation of interview transcripts highlighting: each housing episode by type of housing situation (colour coded), experiences of 'home' and 'not-home', key questions, contextual data
2	*Qualitative:* - History of Home (per participant)	• Import transcript data into 'History of Home' template (Appendix D) including key categories per housing episode – housing, life, significant event, 'home'/'not-home'
3	*Quantitative:* - number of housing, 'home' and 'not-home' episodes per participant - number of housing, 'home' and 'not-home' episodes by housing situation/age/gender	• Excel spreadsheets • Excel – spreadsheets, graphs, pie charts, tables • Excel – spreadsheets, graphs, pie charts, tables
4	*Qualitative:* - 'home' and 'not-home' profile of each participant by housing situation - identify and categorise primary features of 'home' and 'not-home' by housing situation/age/gender - general view of 'home' *Quantitative:* - primary features of 'home' and 'not-home' by housing situation/age/gender	• Excel spreadsheets • Excel spreadsheets – themes, coding • Excel spreadsheets - themes • Excel spreadsheets - graphs, pie charts, tables
5	*Qualitative:* - 'home-life' of each participant (timeline per housing episode)	• Excel spreadsheet: 1. Pathways: age at the time, housing situation, life, significant event, 'home'/'not-home' 2. 'home-life' pathway: chapters colour coded as stable or unstable situation, categories – age at the time, housing (number of housing episodes), life, significant event, 'home'/'not-home' symbols 3. 'home' relationships 1: physical relationship (above or below a line and colour coded permanent/temporary accommodation), emotional relationship (above or below a line and colour coded home/neutral/not-home), life relationship (above or below a line and colour coded stable/unstable) 4. 'home' relationships 2: age at the time, physical context (above or below a line and colour coded permanent/temporary accommodation) , emotional context (above or below a line and colour coded home/neutral/not-home), life context (above or below a line and colour coded stability/instability) 5. FINAL 'temporal profile' grid (Appendix E): age at the time, duration, colour coded by housing situation, above or below a line 'home' (a row for 'home' context and a row for social context)/not strong feelings (social context)/'not-home' (a row for 'not-home' context and a row for social context)
6	*Qualitative:* - identify primary social contexts *Quantitative:* - primary social contexts by age/gender *Qualitative:* - the context of 'home' overtime	• Temporal profile grids – themes, coding • Excel spreadsheets – categories (childhood, housing and homelessness, health, behaviour/lifestyle, relationships, employment/further education) • Case studies – 'temporal profile' grids, interview transcripts

As noted above, each interview was recorded and I personally transcribed each one. Adhering to confidentiality and anonymity was given particular consideration during the analysis and interpretation of data, the reporting of findings, and the presentation of case studies and 'brief life' accounts. Anonymity has been protected by categorising and broadening certain contextual details, where necessary: broader references to age such as 'before they turned twenty-one' or 'aged twenty to twenty-five' are used; timeframes of several days, weeks, months, or years are used instead of a specific number. No place names are used. Pseudonyms have been used, and other contextual circumstances were generalised where necessary, for example 'incident with step-parent' instead of 'physical abuse by step-parent'. So in taking these steps, the intention is that individual participants cannot be identified from the characteristics and circumstances described which has meant that a certain level of compromise was present at the level of the contextual detail in the testimonies.

5.5   Strengths and limitations of the study

This study examines experiences and meanings of 'home'; drawing on detailed housing histories collected from people who have experienced homelessness. As discussed in previous Chapters, because of the large number and wide diversity of housing experiences that characterise the histories of people who have experienced homelessness, this is an appropriate approach in exploring the meaning(s) of 'home', and 'not-home'. A sample of people who have not experienced homelessness would, almost by definition, be less diverse in this respect.

The sample is diverse in other respects as well. Focusing on difference is valuable in qualitative research as it can identify the absence or presence of a particular phenomena in the accounts of different groups; it can explore how manifestations of phenomena can vary between different groups; and it can explore more broadly differences in the contexts in which phenomena arise or the research issue is experienced (Lewis, 2003, pp. 50-51). Chapters Seven and Eight address these points by analysing the interview data, looking at differences according to age, gender, different housing situations, and particular social contexts. In making these comparisons, and in producing quantified comparisons, the intention is not to generate findings or conclusions that can be generalised to a wider population; it is to outline and explore patterns *within* this body of data only.

A qualitative research project must acknowledge an inherent issue with face-to-face interviewing, in that the participants choose how much detail to disclose. In addition, a participant's version of events, their recall, may not be absolutely accurate; for example, their

understanding and the prominence of events may have diminished over time. Lewis (2003, p. 54) highlights the danger of deterioration in the quality of data collected through problems with recall, distortion and post-event rationalisation. Personal testimony always has a residue of ambiguity (Fontana and Frey, 2005, p. 697) so it cannot be assumed that interviewing results are a true and accurate picture of the respondents' selves and lives (*ibid.,* p. 699). May (1999) highlights possible issues with homeless people recounting their housing histories, where they may lack the obvious markers by which to frame events, such as employment and stable accommodation. May (1999) also suggests that recall may also be hampered by more obvious problems of memory experienced by those with a history of drug or alcohol dependency or mental health problems, which can be common amongst people with a history of homelessness.

In recalling experiences of 'home', the consideration of context is said to be key, where 'how home is and has been defined at any given time depends upon specification of locus and intent and the broader historical and social context' (Mallett, 2004, p. 84). The relationship between 'home' and memory is complex and fluid and must take account of the significance of 'home' experiences and memories at various stages of the life cycle (Csikszentmyhalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981, cited in Mallett, 2004, p70). As outlined above, the methods and line of questioning employed in this study brought the context of participants housing experiences to the fore. This approach will have enhanced recall accuracy and helped participants' piece together a fuller picture of 'home'. Recognising all these points, I reported the stories that the participants' told me, and they are at the heart of the findings.

5.6 Ethical and safety considerations

As required by the University of Sheffield's ethics approval process, participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix C) which was verbally explained to them. The section on confidentially and anonymity was emphasised, highlighting the caveat that if I became aware of a situation in which the participant, myself, or another person could be in imminent danger, that I would have to take appropriate action i.e. disclose that information to my supervisory team at the University of Sheffield. The identity of participants was known to my PhD supervisor and to the two Directors of the FOR-HOME project, who were supporting my research. I told participants that the interview could be stopped at any time and they didn't have to answer anything they didn't want to. Verbal consent was obtained to record each interview, stressing that the recording would be deleted upon completion of the PhD study. The recording of interviews was chosen to allow a less formal and free-flowing dialogue to

develop between each participant and myself. It also enabled me to focus on each participant as writing is a distraction. This allowed the detail of the participant's testimony to be captured through transcription at a later date. All transcription data is stored on my personal password protected computer. Data recorded on paper was secured in a locked filing cabinet in my home office.

At the core of my research are the housing and social histories of people who have experienced homelessness. The line of questioning and conversation during the interview meant that participants were asked to recall and disclose personal and potentially sensitive information about themselves. I had outlined the nature of my study to each participant in person when I first asked them to take part. I reiterated that information over the phone when making the interview appointment and again before the interview commenced. As part of the FOR-HOME project interviews I had already asked participants questions that led to the disclosure of personal and sensitive information, albeit to a lesser degree. Having had that experience, then taking part in my research meant participants already had an idea of what I would be asking them to talk about. Participants may therefore have been more relaxed and comfortable in answering such questions for this research, as they had already disclosed personal and sensitive information to me. Conducting at least two previous interviews with each participant as part of the FOR-HOME project also meant that a level of familiarity and rapport had been established. This may have reassured participants and put them at ease, possibly making them more willing to open-up and disclose, so producing richer, more in-depth data. May (2000, p. 743) found this to be case when undertaking research in a night shelter he had previously worked in on a voluntary basis. He had already established relationships with several residents which proved crucial to the move beyond a standardised account. Even though familiarity had been established, I maintained my role as 'researcher' throughout the research process. I remained objective and professional, showing understanding and empathy when deemed appropriate.

My previous experience as an academic researcher equipped me well for undertaking this research study. I have expertise in conducting face-to-face interviews with vulnerable groups, including homeless people, many of whom were dealing with challenging personal circumstances and vulnerabilities, for example drug misuse, alcohol misuse, mental health problems, and/or criminal behaviour. This has allowed me to hone skills with respect to successfully manage questioning around potentially sensitive issues and spot signs of discomfort. I remain objective during interviews and do not go beyond expressions of empathy i.e. I do not give advice or comment favourably or unfavourably on people's decisions or circumstances (Lewis, 2003, p. 69). As such, I was well aware that my line of

questioning might uncover painful experiences and lead participants to disclose information which they had rarely or never previously shared (Lewis, 2003, p. 68). So at the beginning, and throughout each interview, I reiterated to participants that they didn't have to answer anything they didn't want to, or were not comfortable with, and that they could stop the interview at any time.

I had CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) clearance for the FOR-HOME project, which covered me for this research study. Neither I, my supervisor, nor the two FOR-HOME project Directors believed that my personal safety was at risk from any of the research participants. As part of the FOR-HOME project, (for which there had been ethical approval via the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health) I had interviewed each participant of this research on at least two prior occasions; the first time in their formal homeless accommodation or a day centre, and secondly in their sole tenancy, and in some cases I had exchanged pleasantries with them if I saw them again at their formal homeless accommodation for example. As part of the FOR-HOME project, a risk assessment of each participant had been carried out in conjunction with project directors and project workers at the participant's formal homeless accommodation or day centre they frequented. This highlighted any issues, such as a history of violence or inappropriate behaviour, that might require the presence of two interviewers or a male interviewer. For the duration of the FOR-HOME project risk was continually assessed via liaison with project workers at the participant's former homeless accommodation, and any workers, friends or relatives they had consented for us to contact if we had trouble getting hold of them. Any safety issues or risks that I felt were posed by the participant, or by the area in which they were living, were recorded after each FOR-HOME project interview in a 'post-interview record sheet'. Thus, although I was already familiar with the participant and their living environment, I was aware that things might have changed between their last FOR-HOME project interview and the interview for the present research.

Prior to carrying out the interviews for this study I provided FOR-HOME project colleagues with details of the location of each interview, contact details of each participant and any particular safety concerns regarding the participant. Colleagues also provided 'safety' cover during the interview: I phoned in before and after each interview, and I would phone them if the interview was over running or they would phone two hours after the interview had started if they hadn't heard from me. This 'Safety Procedures Code' had worked well during the FOR-HOME project.

At the time of interviewing, as noted earlier, five participants were homeless, of whom three were residing in formal homeless accommodation (with staff on site) which is where I conducted their interviews. Another individual was staying with a friend and suggested meeting at the formal homeless accommodation where I had interviewed her as part of the FOR-HOME project. Staff at the accommodation were happy for us to use an interview room. The last homeless individual was staying temporarily with family and I interviewed him at that location. On entry, I assessed it as safe, and when a family member returned to the property I perceived no safety risk. Two participants (one male, one female) were living at their partner's tenancy and interviews were conducted there. In both cases, their partner was in the property (in another room) during the interview. My assessment was that neither posed a safety risk. Both partners came into the room we were interviewing in for a few brief minutes (less than ten minutes), to introduce themselves or to say hello when I arrived at the property. It was not felt that their presence influenced the participant's answers. The remaining ten interviews were all conducted in the participant's sole tenancy which I had previously visited as part of the FOR-HOME project, at which time no risks were identified. No risks were identified upon arrival at each interview location, or during each interview. Throughout each interview I continually assessed and judged the atmosphere of the interview, i.e. whether the participant came across as agitated, relaxed or anxious in themselves or about certain questions or topics. This informed my judgement about what questions and/or level of probing was deemed appropriate so as to maintain a positive interview experience for both the participant and I.

The described methods I employed, and the approach I took to data interpretation and analysis, puts participants 'home lives' at the heart of this research. Participants generated a wealth of data that revealed how their understanding of 'home', and 'not-home', had evolved over time in relation to the context of their lives and the fulfilment of needs. The next three Chapters interpret these insights through a range of data presentations which address the aims and objectives of this study. Chapter Six outlines a general picture of what 'home' is: common experiences (features) of 'home' and 'not-home'. Chapter Seven presents a profile of housing and 'home' experiences, highlighting the specifics of what made different housing situations 'home' or 'not-home', and what 'home' and 'not-home' meant for different people. Chapter Eight builds up a contextual picture of the participants lives, beginning with a social profile of the participants then examination of commonalities and differences in the experience and impact of three particular contextual changes. The remainder of Chapter Eight presents detailed case studies of three participants' housing and 'home' trajectories within the context of their lives. 'Brief life' accounts of the remaining fourteen participants supplement the case studies.

Chapter Six: What is 'home'?

6.0   Introduction

As evidenced throughout the preceding Chapters, 'home' is a very personal experience, which, at the same time, can also display common elements of experience; familiarity, routine and continuity; belonging; family and social relationships; privacy, autonomy, freedom and control; and personalisation, across different subjects groups. This Chapter will explore the meaning of 'home' for seventeen people who recently moved on from homelessness into a sole tenancy (social housing or private rented accommodation). Each participant was asked to recount their housing and personal history from their first childhood memory to the time of interviewing. Reflecting on their housing experiences, participants were asked whether any housing situation was experienced as 'home' during the time they lived there, and what made it 'home' for them; if they had not experienced any accommodation as 'home', and if not, why not? (see Appendix A). As noted earlier, the experiential memory of 'home' encapsulated in housing histories is crucial to understanding the meaning of 'home' (Mallett, 2004, p. 70). Building on these experiences, this Chapter will present a general picture of what 'home' and 'not-home' means to the research participants by identifying commonalities across their experiences. Firstly, a brief profile of the participants will be presented.

6.1   Profile of participants

The sample of seventeen participants is made up of twelve men and five women. The average age of participants at the time of interview was twenty-nine years old with the female sample being a lot younger; average age of twenty-one years old (youngest eighteen years old, oldest twenty-six years old) compared to an average age of thirty-three years old (youngest nineteen years old, oldest forty-three years old) amongst males. Males therefore had had more time to experience a greater number of, and lengthier housing episodes. At the time of interviewing the majority (ten) of participants were living in a sole tenancy. Of the remaining seven participants, three were living in formal homeless accommodation, two were in an informal/hidden homeless situation (staying temporarily with family or friends) and two were living at their partner's tenancy. Six participants were in a relationship at the time of interviewing.

6.2   Common 'home' experiences

Common experiences of 'home' refers to characteristics or features of 'home' experienced across different housing episodes and situations, where more than half the participants have described at least one 'home' experience in similar terms. In total, seventeen per cent (66) of housing episodes were experienced as 'home'. General perceptions and meanings of 'home', i.e. not relating to a specific housing episode, will be outlined later in the Chapter.

Positive relationships

The most common feature of 'home' reported by participants was 'positive relationships'; experienced by all seventeen participants. This mirrors evidence in the literature where the most important meaning of 'home is related to a person's relations with others within the 'home' (Hayward 1977, p. 10). For the purpose of this study a 'positive relationship' is defined as a self-reported positive relationship between the participant and at least one other resident of the particular dwelling place.   Three quarters (thirteen) of the seventeen participants experienced 'positive relationships' when 'living with parents or a parent during childhood', where the most frequently reported 'positive relationship' was parental relationships (twelve participants). Two thirds (eight) of these participants specified parents, mum and dad or a parent in their description of 'home':

> Mum and dad together. (Amy)
>
> Always felt at home living with mum and dad. (David)
>
> I suppose my parents more than anything else to be honest, my home where my parents live. (Scott)
>
> When you're growing up you think "this is my 'ouse, my parents live in this house so it's home." But when you go somewhere else it ain't because it's no relation to you. I think it was the people that made it feel like home, my mum. (Anthony)
>
> Just things I did with my parents and stuff like Christmas and that, birthdays. I just think home is like being with your family and stuff. (Craig)
>
> Me mam and dad were there. (Rob)

For others (four participants), having the whole family (parents and siblings) living together made a dwelling place 'home':

> Family around me. (Ian)
>
> Obviously I'd say when I was young with my family. (Richard)
>
> Family all together. (Rob)

I don't know, I can't really remember, just 'cause we were getting on all us family we were just a normal family. (Julie)

For two participants it was the relationship with one parent in particular (mother) that made the dwelling place 'home'. In one case it was the participant, her mum and a step-parent figure living together, and for the other it was just him and his mum. In both cases their mother later died (when they were still a child):

She made it home 'cause it were mum who lived there, it were just homely. (Clare)

I think it was the people that made it feel like home, my mum. (Anthony)

Thus, the participant's experiences mirror the literatures emphasis on positive family relationships making a dwelling place 'home', where emotional discourses stressing family, intimacy, and love are the most significant rationalisations drawn upon in making sense of home (Gurney, 1997, p. 383). As Henderson *et al*. (2007, pp. 125-126) found, for young people (16-25 years old) family was coterminous with 'home', invariably connected to the family of origin, and an associated physical space. Some participants experienced other, 'parental like' positive relationships which made a dwelling place 'home'. Two participants experienced positive relationships with foster carers. For both participants there had been a history of extended periods of moving house several times; one with her maternal mother and several siblings, and the other moving between multiple social care settings. The particular foster carers were people that could be relied upon as they provided a 'normal' family life. For one participant a positive relationship with her adoptive family, especially her mum made the dwelling place 'home'; as did staying with nice people in a 'other social care setting':

She (foster carer) was there for me all the time, I could rely on her. Say if she was cooking the dinner and all the girls were there and I asked "can I have a quick word." She would say "girls, get out." She was always there. (Amy)

I loved them to bits. It was normal family kind of life we used to have Sunday dinner together about 12 o'clock. (Diane)

My mum's house will always be it. I was there from age 2, I moved there because I was adopted. (Nicola)

I was surrounded by nice people. (Nicola)

Other, 'non-parental' relationships were cited as a feature of 'home'. For four participants the positive relationship they had when cohabiting with a partner, made the dwelling place 'home'. Similar to relationships with parents or foster carers, living with a partner was about sharing life with someone else i.e. not being on your own, loving and/or caring about each other:

116

Because I live with **** and **** lives with me we won't do anything without checking with each other. We are respectful, like, that it's our place. It's a bit of hers, a bit of mine. (James)

I always considered life with **** [girlfriend] as home. (Richard)

Whilst cohabiting with a partner, two participants became parents. Positive relationships with their children also made the dwelling place 'home':

Everything was there [wife, children, house, money], my life was perfect. Life was at its best. (Stephen)

Where I had my children was home. (Ian)

For another participant, having her own tenancy and having her daughter living with her and her boyfriend stopping over made the dwelling place 'home':

...yeah well if you're close to somebody that makes it feel a lot more like home. Like here makes me feel at home 'cause ***** [boyfriend] is here all the time and I've got me daughter. (Julie)

Significantly, for three participant's, formal homeless accommodation was experienced as 'home' because of positive relationships with staff and/or other residents. It could be suggested that staff acted as a substitute family for two of the participants, both of whom experienced upheaval in parental relationships in early childhood (before the age of eight years old). Thus, as Mallet (2004, p. 74) suggests, in today's world the nuclear family may have limited relevance to the meaning of 'home' for many people, although the literature does not explore in any depth how non-kinship relationships can make dwelling place 'home':

I was surrounded by people I got on with. (Nicola)

They [staff] made me feel like home, they were like a little family as well. The staff were like my family, if you get me? I got on with them really well. If I ever needed anybody they'd be there. They made it home for me. (Julie)

It's like a home, it's got love in it hasn't it, so it is important to call a place home, it is to me anyway. This place I think is home. All the staff love you, they actually care about you. (Clare)

For a slight majority of participants (nine) positive relationships characterised only one particular housing situation as 'home', which for all but two this was 'living with parents or a parent during childhood'. For seven participants different housing situations were characterised by different positive relationships. For example, one participant experienced four different housing situations as 'home' because of different positive relationships – with parents or a parent when 'living with parents or a parent during childhood', with their

employer whilst living in their employer's house, with fellow prisoners, and with their partner whilst living in their partner's tenancy.

All the experiences of positive relationships described above are based on the participant knowing there was someone there for them in their dwelling place; they weren't on their own, they had someone to talk to and share things with. The importance of a positive parental relationship in the experience of 'home' cannot be over emphasised, be it biological or not. As Shotter (1974) notes, the relationship between infant and carer is characterised by 'psychological symbiosis' (cited in Jenkins, 2008, p. 77). There is an indispensable role of other(s) in the infants' development of mind, selfhood and identity (Jenkins, *op. cit*.) where persons are not born they are creations of their parents (Kaye, 1982, p. 53). Thus, it can be suggested that relationships (positive or negative) experienced in childhood dwelling places can have a lasting influence on self and future experiences of 'home'. The succeeding Chapters explore in more detail, the role and significance of positive relationships in participants trajectories and experiences of 'home'.

Positive selfhood

For the purpose of this study 'positive selfhood' is defined as feeling good in oneself, where the self is the individual's private experience of herself or himself, and selfhood is an aspect of personal identification (Jenkins, 2008, p. 50). Over two thirds (12) of participants described at least one 'home' experience in terms of 'positive selfhood'[3], describing how a dwelling place was 'home' because of the positive way it made them feel in them self. Residing in a particular dwelling place made the participants feel good which made it 'home'. Positive selfhood manifested itself in a range of personal feelings. For just over half (7) of the 12 participants the dominant feeling was one of feeling comfortable in oneself in a dwelling place:

> When you know within yourself that this feels right it's like that, feeling comfortable where I am. (James)

> If you feel comfortable, the areas good, you like the flat and the people are good. I think this area is pretty nice. Feeling at home you feel comfortable and it's permanent it takes all the stress away. (Anthony)

> I think it's just comfortable, I was comfortable there. I think part of it feeling homely is feeling comfortable where you're staying. (Nicola)

---

[3] Selfhood - The quality by virtue of which one is oneself; personal individuality; ipseity; that which constitutes one's own self or individuality; (one's) self (Oxford English Dictionary, 1911, http://www.oed.com)

It wasn't really home it was more accommodation but it was, I felt comfortable there as well. (Nicola)

Just like comfortable, everything around was comfortable. I was surrounded by nice people. I don't know...it was just nice. The first one was the nicest. (Nicola)

I think it's because I settled down and got a job and everything…just felt cosy and you know I felt comfortable for the first time in a long time. (Lucas)

The place where you feel most comfortable I suppose that's it. (Ian)

'Positive selfhood' in a dwelling place was also described as feeling at ease. Again, just over half (seven) of the twelve participants described at least one 'home' experience as somewhere that made them feel at ease; a place where they didn't have to worry; they could relax; they felt safe and secure, where positives outweighed any negatives:

It didn't seem like I had any hassle then. I was too young to get into any hassle. You've got no hassle of paying rent and bills and any of that sort of thing. (David)

Not having a care in the world. (Scott)

Yeah definitely, I feel proper at ease here. (Anthony)

It felt homely when I was there on my own I could have the fire on watching TV and relaxing on the sofa, that felt homely. (Nicola)

I wasn't really secure at the YMCA but I felt secure there, homeish. (Nicola)

I think it was the last place that I felt secure. (Lucas)

Just 'cause I knew I were looked after, I was that young, nought could happen to me. Me mam and dad were there, there were a nice feeling about it when I was that age. I can't really explain it. (Rob)

Just a feeling I get that I'm safe and that and that I don't really think nothing bad is going to happen and things like that, the feeling you get when you know you will be alright. It just feels right 'ere for the time being, the place I'm at now. It feels right. It's like a safety net here I know nothing can really go wrong for me here 'cause I've got support and everything around me. Everything I need is here. I feel more secure here. (Rob)

I felt more safer with people [staff] around 'cause I get a bit scared being on my own, even here [sole tenancy] I don't like stopping on my own but there people were there all the time, all night. (Julie)

What could be seen as ultimate 'positive selfhood' in a dwelling place was experienced by three participants, describing 'home' as a place that made them feel happy and content; feeling satisfaction with a dwelling place:

I was away from all the pain and I was able to let me self go, that's why it felt like home. I was able to be happy for a bit. (Amy)

When I've been content it's been when I've felt most at home somewhere. (Richard)

It was perfect, life was at its best, that's when everything in my life was perfect. I mean everybody in their life has one bit of it when everything runs 100% and that's when it did. Yeah we had everything so there was just no worries whatsoever. (Stephen)

Thus, it can be suggested that for some participants 'home' provides continuity of feeling, a positive environment which instils positive feelings about self; emotional security. Feeling positive about oneself in a dwelling place may be a more prominent feeling for people who have experienced homelessness. It is they who have had the unwelcome worry of living in a strange place with strangers, such as in formal homeless accommodation; the worry of trying to find permanent shelter and setting up a new 'home'; acquiring furniture and appliances; and setting up benefits and utilities. There is a lot of uncertainty when homeless. Having a roof over one's head again is usually a positive new beginning. It provides a base from which one can hopefully start to build a better life, where a dwelling place may thus become 'home'.

A dwelling place being experienced as 'home', because of the 'positive selfhood' it instils in the dweller, is a new perspective in the 'home' debate. 'Home' characterised by a sense of belonging, and, serving as a haven is the closet the literature gets to positive selfhood, where both can make the dweller feel good in themselves i.e. at ease, relaxed, comfortable. As Sixsmith (1986, p. 287) identified comfort, relaxation and familiairty contribute to a sense of belonging to 'home'. 'Home' can provide a place where the dweller can get away from outside pressures, a place of peace and rest (Hayward, 1977, p. 10). The significant distinction between 'positive selfhood' and 'belonging' is that the characteristics of 'belonging' and 'home' being a haven, are focused on the dweller's feelings about something bigger than themselves; they are a lot more to do with a physical place and the enviroment created in and around it. The two terms closely relate to the external world outside 'home', for example 'home' being an escape from the external world (haven), having a 'home' means you are part of 'normal' society (belonging). None of the participants used the terms haven, belonging or anything similar when describing their 'home' experiences. The closet term they used was 'safe'. Thus it could be argued that the terms 'haven' and 'belonging' are too wide and literal, whereas 'positive selfhood' captures the true essence of self and 'home'. As the participants illustrate, feelings about self experienced in a 'home' are much more detailed and personal; the individual dweller feeling good in and about themselves, emotionally secure in his or her dwelling place.

The 'norm'

Over half the participants (ten) experienced at least one housing episode as 'home' because it was the 'norm'. For the purpose of this study the 'norm' is used to describe familiarity with a dwelling place where it functions as the hub of relationships and everyday routine life. The 'norm' was primarily used to describe, 'living with parents or a parent during childhood', as 'home', which all but two of the ten participants did. The other two participants used the 'norm' to describe similar parental-type housing situations as 'home'; for one it was living with her adoptive parents, and for the other it was living with another family as a child. Half (five) of the ten participants in question described, 'living with parents or a parent during childhood', as 'home' because it is where they grew up, and for just under half (4) it was because it was all they had known:

> It was alright, it was where I grew up, it was my home. I was at school until I went to my dad's. (Amy)

> It's where I grew up. It's the place where you lived for years. You go to school, play, come home, have your dinner and go out do what you want. It's where I grew up. It's the place where you lived for years. (David)

> It's where I grew up and went to school, I don't know I think it's 'cause most of my significant events in my life happened there, growing up and things like that. (Lucas)

> Where I grew up as a child, my home. (Ian)

> I just think home is like being with your family and stuff, growing up and stuff, just things I did with my parents and stuff like Christmas and that, birthdays.' (Craig)

> Just like I said, knowing that I can always go back there because it's my home and where my parents live, that's what I know 'init? (Scott)

> At first it was [address] but that's just because I lived there for so long and I didn't know anything else different did I. I regarded it as home because I didn't know any different. (Anthony)

> Just that's all I'd ever known since I was a child, since I were a baby. For as long as I can remember, as early as I can remember that's where we've always lived. (Paul)

> It's what you called your home. I don't know 'cause I only lived there until I was 8 year olds so…. (Clare)

> It were just where I went to school, friends again, she made it a nice home [aunt], it's what you called your home, I had me dinners there like when I was at home with me mum. (Clare)

Similarly, living with adoptive parents during childhood was 'home' for one participant because it was all she had known:

> I don't know…it's what I was used to as a kid you know what I mean I can't put it into words. I just always knew it as home. (Nicola)

It is generally the accepted norm in society that the dwelling place where you grow up with your biological family is 'home'. After all, as these participants described, it is all you know when you're a child. As a child or teenager you don't know anything else, your world revolves around the dwelling place where you live and the people that reside there, which is usually your family. You assume it is 'home', and that is what you come to accept a childhood dwelling place as; that is usually what you learn and are told 'home' is.   As the literature suggests, the regularity of living with family (during childhood) instils a sense of familiarity; it is the 'norm', where social relationships, including kinship relations are pivotal in generating familiarity, a process of creating and maintaining permanent relationships of caring, sharing and solidarity of feeling and action (Somerville, 1997, pp. 236-237).

Obviously, every child is individual, and everyone's childhood and childhood housing experiences are different. This is where the individuality of the idea of 'home' evolves from. That is why 'home' means different things to different people. Childhood places are where experiences and perceptions of 'home' begin to be shaped and formed; the individual origins of 'home'. The temporal nature of 'home' is examined further in Chapter Eight.

Experiencing a dwelling place as 'home' because it was the 'norm' was not only experienced when 'living with parents or a parent during childhood'. In adulthood, two participants experienced a dwelling place as 'home' because it was where 'normal' life happened; it was where they lived, ate and slept. As some commentators suggest, (domestic) activities carried out within 'home' are the essential building blocks of 'home', where 'home is not simply a person, a thing or place, but rather it relates to the activity performed by, with or in person's things and places' (Jackson, 1995, p. 148). 'Home' as a functional place provides for the essential functions/needs of life, the routine of life, an anchoring point through which human beings are centred (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 11). It can be suggested that this is 'home' at its most basic. These are the basic functions of 'home', and as such may be taken for granted as they become part of normal life and may not readily be recalled as features of 'home'. For some people, such as those who have experienced homelessness, these basic functions of 'home' may be more meaningful or valuable because they have had to live without a base from which to function 'normally':

> If I'm sheltered and I can wash and eat and what not and I can sleep there then that's home to me really, that's what I class as home really. You have to make the most of what you've got. (Scott)

It's like the hostel I classed that as my home because that's where I operated from it was my base, it's where I went every night. (Scott)

Personal control

For the purpose of this study 'personal control' is defined as the dweller exerting individual control over their dwelling place. For over half (ten) of the participants, having personal control over a dwelling place made that dwelling place 'home'. Personal control was described in three main ways; one's own space, freedom/autonomy, and 'mine'.

Exerting personal control, in the form of the dweller having their 'own space', was the most dominant description, with over half (six) the ten participants describing a 'home' experience in this way.   'Home' provided participants with their own little piece of the world, theirs and no one else's; even if it was just one room, for example their own bedroom. Having their own personal space allowed participants to set physical and emotional boundaries in and around that space, making it their own domain. If they had nothing much else in the world, or had to share most other things, they had one thing that was theirs; their own individual space, which made that space 'home'. This is an aspect of 'home' neglected in the literature where the focus is primarily on privacy, autonomy, freedom and control. As participants illustrate, personal space was highly valued:

> I had my own room, my own space. (Amy)

> I always used to have to share a bedroom with my sister. When I went into foster care I got my own bedroom it was like my own space. If I wanted to be on my own I could go there. I could never do that when I lived my sister as it was her room as well. I think everyone needs their own space don't they it's part of what people need in their life their own space, their own time to sit down and think and that. (Diane)

> It was nice being able to listen to my music and just chill out in my room and watch a DVD. Most of the time I used to ignore the door. (Nicola)

> My bedroom more than anything really [made it home] 'cause that was my space in the house, you know what I mean. Emmh…I don't know. I think just because it was my space. I had a tele and a video and that it was just like having downstairs upstairs. (Lucas)

> My own bedroom. (Julie)

> ...'cause that were like my first little room as well. I had like me kitchen and me fridge. I just used to get me shopping off them every week. You can just go up and get away can't you. You can sit in the front room which is shared but it's nice just to chill out in your room on your own. (Julie)

> Yeah a flat to myself. They were really nice flats, perfect for me. I really liked living there. I used to let me mum come round for showers and stuff. I felt like I were doing something for her. I were looking after her, cooking her tea and stuff. (Julie)

> This is a house, obviously it's my home but it's not mine if you know what I mean. Me room is my home. (Clare)

Having a feeling of freedom/autonomy in a dwelling place made it 'home' for half of the ten participants. 'Home' was a place where participants could express their own personal freedom and autonomy, set their own rules, set their own agenda, have things the way they wanted them to be, and make choices about how the physical environment would look and feel. As Després notes, 'within the territory of home, dwellers are allowed to exert control over space and the behaviours which take place within it' (1991, p. 99), where 'home' is the 'the most basic and potent of environments classed as primary territories where users expect near total control of this environment in order to perform the important social and personal behaviours which define their residence as a home for them' (Smith, 1994, p. 34):

> I didn't have someone saying to me "you've got to go out you've got to do this." If you wanted something doing you'd do it. (Amy)

> It's the fact that I don't have to answer to anyone. If I want to put my stuff in here I can. I don't have to answer to anyone. If I want to move the living room around I can. If I want to redecorate I can. I haven't got to check with everything I do. I haven't got to do the paper work or make a phone call to the landlord. (James)

> When you've only got three people in a house and staff aren't there hardly ever and they have to go out to meetings you don't have to worry. (Nicola)

> My choice, I decided how it is, what goes where. (Clive)

> I can cook food when I want when I want something to eat. I can do whatever I want really. I've got my post coming and I know no one can open me post and things. (Julie)

The experience of 'home' as a place that allows for personal freedom/autonomy may well have been more significant for the sample due to their experience of having to live by someone else's rules when they were living in formal homeless accommodation or in an informal/hidden homeless situation, for example staying with family or friends. Control over many aspects of their lives was reduced considerably and was often in someone else's hands. A homeless individual is usually beholden to the state for physical (shelter) and financial support; having to live by the state's rules in order to secure support. Similarly, formal homeless accommodation providers have their own rules that have to be adhered to in order to remain in the accommodation. Rules are generally centred around day to day living, for

example, curfews, meal times, engaging with a support worker on a regular basis, no alcohol or drug use, no visitors, no pets. Homeless individuals don't get to choose who they live with or share facilities with, and they have to adhere to the rules or face eviction. Thus homeless people often have limited physical, financial and personal resources at their disposal; no long-term dwelling place/home, constrained freedom/autonomy, and few personal belongings. There is a physical loss of a dwelling place/home and an emotional loss of personal control. As participants described above, 'home' provides personal refuge and personal space to be oneself, make personal choices, and to live how one wants to live; freedom of action. As Peterson (2000, p. 34) found, for homeless people 'home' is about taking back control of their lives and their living environment, as one homeless woman illustrates: 'I have had my freedom constrained…when I am free after all these years, I want to shut and lock my door'. Home is the prime site for personal autonomy, it's yours, you have a certain amount of control over it, it's surroundings you like rather than ones that are imposed, you behave differently as you have the freedom to do what you want (Putman, 1990, pp. 7-8).

Control of personal space was expressed more fervently by half of the ten participants, who identified a dwelling place as 'home' because it was theirs: 'mine'. Declaring a dwelling place as 'mine' went beyond mere control; 'home' was under their personal possession, they felt able to exert personal power over the dwelling place; the participants took ownership of the space. The experience of 'home' as a place that is 'mine' may be felt more strongly by those who have experienced homelessness; out of necessity rather than choice, homeless people have to live in dwelling places that in no way will be theirs, for example formal homeless accommodation or sleeping on a friend's sofa. Such fervent expression of 'home' as 'mine' is not explored in the literature:

> It's mine. It's actually my home now, I can make it mine. I've made it mine. It's the first place that I've had on my own that's actually been mine so it does feel more like a home. It's just the fact that it's mine that makes it feel like home. (Diane)

> Just the fact that my name is on the tenancy. (Anthony)

> I got stuck in that situation with so much instability, my life style at the time, that sort of thing. I was looking forward to the time, you do after living that life for a long time, you look forward to your own place again. It's hard to obtain once you've been in that lifestyle for so long because you're out of the system. (Richard)

> It's home because it's mine that's what makes it mine, my choice. Is it because it's home or is it because it's mine, because it's mine. (Clive)

> It [address] was [home] 'cause it were just mine on me own. (Julie)

Thus, from the descriptions of 'home' outlined above, it can be suggested that personal control over dwelling place gives the dweller space to be themself, a place that is truly theirs; emotional and physical ownership of place. As the literature illustrates, privacy aids personal control of a dwelling place, where domestic privacy allows for the psychological establishment of personal space (Duncan, 1981; Franklin, 1986:31, cited in Somerville, 1997, p. 232). Participants did not use the terms 'privacy' or 'private' when describing their 'home' experiences. So for participants the reverse may have been true; privacy may have been a by-product of personal control but they didn't recognise privacy as a feature of 'home' as privacy couldn't be realised without personal control. For participants, personal control was all about them, whereas privacy is more about a physical dwelling place and its relationship to the external environment.

Personalised space

For the purpose of this study 'personalised space' is defined as the dweller putting their own personal stamp on a dwelling place, for example through décor and displaying personal belongings. As noted throughout this Chapter, 'home' is chiefly expressed in personal terms relating to feeling at ease in a dwelling place. Just over half (9) the 17 participants felt enough at ease to put a bit of themself into at least one dwelling place, where personalising a dwelling place made it 'home'. Personalising a dwelling place was chiefly expressed through participants putting their mark on it or feeling that they could personalise it if they wanted to. Over half (five) of the nine participants personalised a dwelling place in this way; this made it 'home' for them. They marked out their individual space:

> Pictures of people and pop stars and celebrities. I bought posters and I could put them on the wall because it was my room I could put anything on the wall. (Amy)

> ...it's got my own stamp on it rather than the house [previous tenancy]. It's a bit plain because I'm skint but it's got more things in it. (Diane)

> Just put posters up and stuff init'. You always do that when you're younger. Football, football, football. When I was younger it was all football. It's all football now. (David)

> You can put your own stamp on it. It's a nice little flat as long as it gets sorted out. (Anthony)

> Me room is my home, it's got my mark on it. (Clare)

Participants also personalised a dwelling place by having their own 'stuff' (possessions) in it. This was the case for just under half (four) of the nine participants in question. Having personal possessions around them in a dwelling place made it 'home', reinforcing evidence in

the literature, that having the ability and freedom to adapt one's dwelling environment to one's taste, especially by displaying items, were essential aspects of a 'home' (Smith 1994, p. 44):

> You have your possessions, you have photos up and everything. Because I live with **** [partner] and **** [partner] lives with me, we won't do anything without checking with each other. We are respectful like that it's our place. It's a bit of hers, a bit of mine. All the art work's mine but she's happy with it because she likes my art work. (James)

> I had my old quilt cover from my mum's and my old teddies. I had a massive stereo but I was in the tiniest room. It had a sink in it, another sink like a bathroom sink, my bed, microwave, fridge, cupboards and everything. I had the loudest stereo and one of the smallest rooms. It was nice having things like that. (Nicola)

> I've made it home. Daft little things like Pot Pouri. I don't even like it, flowers. I don't know, photographs but they are all mine, and everything about here, it's not right good at the moment because I've got to tart it up a bit, emmh but everything you see is me. (Clive)

> We [her and her boyfriend] have 'cause we've bought lots of stuff for it, put photos up, we've done us garden 'cause it was a state we've done it all nice and put a gazebo in it and made a fence. We've done her [daughter] bedroom up lovely. (Julie)

Thus, participants wanted to, and felt able to, personalise their living space to their individual tastes. Participants had possessions around them of their choice, that they liked and liked to have around them. Certain possessions may be relied upon to make one feel good, such as a family photo. Through personalisation of a dwelling place participants created a space they wanted to be in which ultimately symbolised themselves; personal tastes, likes, interests and personality. Participants put themselves on display, which reaffirms evidence in the literature; that 'the desire to act upon and modify the dwelling and to express one's ideas and values is interpreted as a subconscious expression of the self' (Després, 1991, p. 100). Personalisation is a way in which individuals express themselves and their identity (Smith, 1994, p.33). This made 'home' very personal, a part of them self. 'They' made it 'home', as Sixsmith (1986, p. 290) found 'you're bringing a part of yourself into the place – in your things. You feel like you're accepted in it 'cos you can be yourself in it, you created it'. Participants shaped a dwelling place into what they wanted it to be; 'home', where the dweller contributes part of themselves to the structure, appearance and feel of the place (Doyle, 1992, p. 795).

Again, personalising a dwelling place may be more significant for people who have experienced homelessness due to a number of reasons; they may have had to leave possessions behind or lost them; access to storage for personal possessions is often limited, for example storing items temporarily with family or friends; and the freedom to express

oneself is often constrained, for example, rules in formal homeless accommodation often prohibit personalisation such as decorating. Also, participants may not have wanted to invest much time or resources into personalising formal homeless accommodation as they knew they would have to move on. Frequent moving will undoubtedly have reduced motivation to personalise a dwelling place. Thus, it could be suggested that feeling able to express one's self was a big deal for some of the nine participants; examples are personalisation in a sole tenancy and social care settings, often achieved even with limited resources and reliance on charitable donations and small grants to buy the basic essentials such as kitchen utensils, a bed and bedding.

Other experiences of 'home'

Consistency is a common underlying theme in the experience of 'home', featuring in many participants' accounts of home-life, as noted above regarding positive relationships and the 'norm'. Over a third (seven) of participants described at least one housing episode as 'home' because it was a 'consistent place'. For the purpose of this study a 'consistent place' is defined as a consistent dwelling place; a place to return to. 'Home' as a consistent place was chiefly experienced as a 'permanent' place. Just over half (four) of the seven participants in question described at least one 'home' experience in this way:

> Because of my age and where I am in my life I need to start thinking about security and everything. I've just been coming and going, coming and going through the years. This is the closest to me settling down at the moment. Through growing up I knew I was never going to stay in one place for too long so I never wanted to class it as home. It was always leaving and going on to the next place. (James)

> I did regard the other place as home because I thought I was going to stay there permanently. (Anthony)

> When you've got your parents there you know it's guaranteed you can stay there. (Anthony)

> Feeling at home it's permanent and you know it's permanent. It takes all the stress away because when you're in somewhere like ****** [formal homeless accommodation] you know you're going to have to find a place in a year when the tenancy is up but here [own tenancy] you haven't got the pressure you can look for work and do normal stuff. It's secure isn't it because it's yours, it's still the Council's but you've got a tenancy agreement and unless you break that tenancy agreement it's still yours. I wouldn't break my tenancy agreement. (Anthony)

> Whenever I've lived in a stable situation, lived somewhere for a long time, I've considered it home. (Richard)

> Yeah I would now [consider it home] 'cause I've reached the stage now where I'm not going to move again. (Ian)

Similarly, nearly a third (three) of the seven participants experienced 'home' as a place they knew they could go back to every night. Knowing they could return to the same dwelling place every night made that place 'home'. Such a level of consistency and routine instilled a sense of continuity, stability and familiarity of place and experience; as Sixsmith (1986, p. 294) notes, 'home' can be 'a place of continuing stability from which one can go into the world and return to in the knowledge of its being there for us'. Smith (1994, p. 32) similarly notes that having a place to return to engenders feelings of continuity, stability and permanence, with Tognoli (1987, p. 659) suggesting that the experience of continuity distinguishes homes from houses. Participants did not have to worry about where they were staying each night; 'home' was always there to return to, it was an intrinsic part of their existence, where 'after wandering it [home] is the place where one experiences the return to the unity of oneself' (Perla, 1985, pp. 70-71):

> It's always there. (Diane)
>
> Just like I said, knowing that I can always go back there because it's my home and where my parents live that's what I know 'init'? (Scott)
>
> I had my own room and everything, where I went every day, it didn't matter what I were doing, basically where I lived for 15 year. (Paul)
>
> It's where I lived. I got up, went to work, come back, it's where I lived, that were me home for 5 year nearly. (Paul)

From the descriptions of 'home' outlined above, it can be suggested that 'home' as a consistent place provides participants with regularity and security of place. Thus, a dwelling place being experienced as 'home' because it is a consistent place is similar to a dwelling place being experienced as 'home' because it is the 'norm'; both instil a sense of familiarity of place. For participants, the distinction between the two seems to be that the 'norm' is about a dwelling place generating a feeling of 'home' because it provides a base from which to function 'normally' and live an 'ordinary' everyday life, in the regularity of activity and relationships. Consistent place, however, seems to be about dwelling place generating a feeling of 'home' because it is a place to return to, which is about regularity of place. As the participants illustrate, 'home' is a familiar place where particular activities and relationships are lived (Mallett, 2004, p. 63), the central place of human existence, a pivotal point around which human activity revolves; it is the security of a place (home) to return to (Tognoli, 1987, pp. 657-658).

Participants cited other features of 'home' related to making a physical dwelling space a comfortable place to live. Just under a third (five) described 'home' as 'homely', a place that was taken care of. Descriptions included that, it had nice things in it, for example good

furniture (not second-hand), that it was maintained, i.e. cleaned, and that it was cosy and comfortable to live in:

> Like a home, not like a shabby horrible place. (Diane)

> My girlfriend was a good home-maker. (Richard)

> It was comfortable, everything was comfortable, nice people [other residents], nice place, nice furnishings. (Nicola)

> We had quite a bit of money. We had nice things, a settee. (Julie)

> I bought nice things, improved it, I took care of the place. (Julie)

> It's nice inside, homely [décor], a proper living room, nice furnishings. (Clare)

General views of 'home'

All but three (fourteen) of the participants made general comments about the meaning of 'home' not relating to a specific housing episode. These comments may have derived from a culmination of different influences such as personal experience, the media, social norms, family and friend's views, and personal experiences of 'home'. It is notable that in making general comments about what 'home' is, the participants focused on one particular feature of 'home': 'positive selfhood'. Twelve of the fourteen participants who made general comments about the meaning of 'home' talked about 'positive selfhood', with particular reference to 'home' being a place where you feel comfortable. This was highlighted by ten of the participants in question:

> It's just how it feels, yeah, to feel comfortable somewhere. I think everyone would like to feel comfortable somewhere rather than uncomfortable somewhere. (Diane)

> It's all about feeling comfortable. You've got to feel comfortable. If you don't feel comfortable somewhere then there is no way you are going to be able to go "this is my home" because you can't relax. Having a home is about being able to relax and feeling comfortable. If you can't do that you can't class it as a home. (James)

> You feel a lot more comfortable don't you in yourself, you can get on with a lot more stuff if you feel at home rather than if you are staying somewhere where you don't feel at home you feel a lot more happier going back there. (David)

> I suppose that's another thing a homely feeling being relaxed and not worrying, being comfortable really where you are I'd have said makes the home really. It makes me feel a lot happier. I love having a home. If they took it away from me I'd be gutted me, proper devastated. It makes me feel happy and comfortable. (Scott)

> You've got to feel comfortable, if you're not comfortable somewhere it's not really home I reckon. But if you feel proper comfortable and everything around you is comfortable to you then that's home. (Anthony)

I think part of it feeling homely is feeling comfortable where you're staying. You can't feel at home if you're not comfortable and certain places you do and certain places you don't. (Nicola)

Wherever you feel comfortable you can call it home. (Lucas)

Home is actually somewhere you enjoy going to. It depends what you make of it really isn't it, how comfortable you feel there. If you feel comfortable, somewhere where you can relax and don't have to bother about anything. (Ian)

You feel comfortable with your surroundings really, comfortable with people around ya really. Home is where, I can't explain it it's like your private space. Feeling at home is just happy with your surroundings. (Julie)

Comparing their experiences of 'home' and their general comments about the meaning of 'home', all but one of the ten participants who commented that 'home' is a place where you feel comfortable, had also experienced a dwelling place as 'home', owing to the feelings of 'positive selfhood' that it encouraged. Thus, for that one participant, their general comment about dwelling place being 'home' because you feel comfortable there, did not seem to be based on personal experience.

Over two thirds (ten) of the fourteen participants who made *general* comments about the meaning of 'home' highlighted other features of 'home'. Each of which was highlighted by fewer than five participants; positive relationships (one participant); a consistent place (three participants); personal control (four participants); personalised space (three participants) and the 'norm' (two participants):

A settled way of life, it's important to call somewhere home that stability and knowing where you are staying every night is calling somewhere home. (Paul)

I don't think you are going to have anywhere like that until you can have your own choices and do what you want. (David)

A home is where you plan to stay and what you make comfortable, you close the door and then that's it you're in your own private castle sort of thing, and that's it. (Stephen)

6.3   Common experiences of 'not-home'

In recounting their housing and personal histories, participants were asked what was different about places that they had regarded as 'home'. This line of questioning led the first participant to identify dwelling places that were *not* experienced as 'home'. I subsequently asked what was different about those housing experiences. There was no specific or direct question in the interview schedule about 'not-home', but the semi-structured nature of the interview provided

me with freedom to respond to the issue. I consequently raised the notion of a dwelling place not being 'home' in subsequent interviews. If a participant reported that they had not regarded a particular dwelling place as 'home', they were asked why not, what was different about that dwelling place, i.e. what was missing (see Appendix A)? Fifteen participants experienced at least one dwelling place as 'not-home'. This common occurrence is discussed in detail in the succeeding Chapters. Common experiences of 'not-home', experienced across different housing episodes and situations, include more than half the participants describing at least one 'not-home' experience in similar terms; I shall discuss this further immediately below. For the purposes of this study, 'not-home' is simply a dwelling place that participants said they did not experience as 'home'.

Detailed descriptions of 'not-home' were much less common in the interview material than experiences of 'home'. This may be due to the fact that 'not-home' is not a commonly used term like 'home' is; we generally don't say "I'm going to not-home" like people often say "I'm going home". Thus a dwelling place may not be as readily conceived or viewed as 'not-home'. Despite this, as just suggested above, participants did have definite ideas about why a dwelling place was 'not-home'. For example, just over half (nine) of the fifteen participants had experienced at least one housing episode as 'not-home' because it was 'not permanent':

> ...it wasn't home, it was just somewhere to stay. (Amy)

> ...it wasn't home type of thing, it wasn't yours. You knew how long you'd got. (Anthony)

> It was work, only temporary. (Richard)

> That wasn't a home to me at all it was just somewhere to come back to, to use [drugs] even though it was where I lived, there was a difference. (Richard)

> It was someone else's place. (Richard)

> Other places are just some where to go where you're passing through. (Ian)

> Apart from the first place [parents' house] everywhere else has been just somewhere to live. This place isn't homely really it's just somewhere to live really. (Craig)

> ...when I've stopped with friends here there and everywhere , basically just somewhere to stay, temporary, not home. To them it were home but to me it weren't home it were just somewhere to put my head. (Paul)

> Just the surroundings, you can't really call it home because it wasn't home it was just somewhere I was dossing really. Just somewhere I was using for my drug taking really. I wouldn't treat this place like it. Things I were doing there I wouldn't do in my own home. Just somewhere I could abuse really, that 'were it. Somewhere I

could do things where I wouldn't do anywhere else and I could get away with it without any consequences. (Rob)

They were just stopping places, staying places, they weren't your home. Obviously you say everywhere is your home, you say you're going home but they just weren't, there were nothing there. (Clare)

'Cause they're not somewhere where I had any intention of staying. It's like here I have no intentions of staying here. It's like I told you, when I've been on the list 12 month I *will* bid to go back to ***** [town]. (Stephen)

'Not permanent' characterised experiences of 'not-home'. No other characteristics were experienced by more than half the participants. The significance of this is examined in the succeeding Chapters. Other characteristics included a lack of personal control (five participants), 'instability' (five participants), a lack of 'positive selfhood' (five participants), a 'lack of positive relationships' (three participants), and simply 'not homely' (two participants). The literature touches on all of the features of 'not-home' participants experienced but not in any detail. It certainly does not identify a particular focus of 'not-home' or a singular characteristic, as the participants in this study experienced, i.e. 'not permanent'. This will be examined in the succeeding Chapters. Interestingly, none of the participant's experienced or identified 'not-home' as a transitional place, as the literature does, where 'not-home' may cater for personal circumstances/needs at the time; for example being homeless and living in formal homeless accommodation may not be a wholly negative experience but, rather, a stepping stone to home (cf. Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 131). One participant had 'no strong feelings' towards a 'sole tenancy' he experienced and viewed it as just that. a stepping stone:

It was just a stepping stone. Like I said I started off in rented rooms. I've been in so many rented rooms it's not for me, I don't want that but it's ideal for a stepping stone. (James)

6.4 Mixed feelings: 'home' and 'not-home'

Experiences of 'home' and 'not-home' were not always straightforward. Some participants had mixed feelings about their housing experiences, some housing episodes were both a positive and negative experience. Just under a fifth (three) of participants described at least one housing episode as both 'home and 'not-home'. Although this was not a common occurrence, only four housing episodes in total were experienced as 'home' and 'not-home'. Two of these three participants experienced one housing episode each as simultaneously 'home' and 'not-home'. For the other participant a housing episode turned from a positive experience of 'home' into a negative feeling of 'not-home'; everything changed. These participants' experiences resonate with evidence in the literature, in which 'home' can

actually be found to disappoint, aggravate, neglect, confine and contradict as much as it can inspire and comfort (Moore, 2000, p. 213). 'Home' can be a space of strife as well as joy (Manzo, 2003, p. 51), in which 'it is possible to be homeless and at home at the same time, as home has more to do with a state of mind and emotional engagement that is has to do with a fixed place' (Moore, 2007, p. 150). Having mixed feelings towards a dwelling place shall be explored in more depth in the next Chapter, in relation to specific housing situations.

For some participant's descriptions of experiences of 'home' and 'not-home' were generic, inasmuch as just over half (nine) the participants used the same description of 'home' and/or 'not-home', applied to two or more housing episodes. Different housing episodes and situations were given a generic label, with respect to why they were experienced as 'home' or 'not-home'. Two participants used the same description of 'home' and eight used the same description of 'not-home' for different housing situations and episodes. Thus, for these participants, descriptions were not specific to a particular housing situation or episode, but were more of a general feeling or view:

> Home's not home to me anymore until I can have my own stuff and do my own thing. (David)

> It's where you're living, where you rest at night. If you're sheltered and you can wash, eat & sleep it's home, you make the most of what you've got. (Scott)

> It wasn't really home type of thing, it wasn't yours you knew how long you'd got. So one day you've got a year left so it's like the time goes down so you can't really call them at home because it ain't really yours you're just staying there. (Anthony)

> It was easy to tell yourself at the time using drugs that I wasn't homeless but when I look back now I had none of the things that make a place a home. (Richard)

> Lack of security and stability, 'cause I never looked at it like I was going to stay there for any amount of time. (Lucas)

> Just somewhere to stay, just passing through, never thought I would stay for long. (Ian)

> Not home as I didn't feel "this is great.". Just somewhere to live, try and make the best of it. (Craig)

> I wasn't bothered about the place it was just somewhere to doss, just using the place for drugs I could get away with it. I wouldn't treat my Dad's like that. (Craig)

> It was home because it was in [name of town]. (Clive)

> They were just stopping places, staying places they weren't your home. Obviously you say everywhere is your home, you say you're going home but they just weren't there were nothing there. I were forever unsettled, I were just too unsettled to feel 'ought. (Clare)

6.5   Overview

Many of the participants' common experiences of 'home' mirror the 'common home' depicted in the literature; positive familial and other social relationships; a consistent place embodying the 'norm' of familiarity, routine and continuity; personal control, by which is meant privacy, autonomy, freedom and control; and finally personalised space. Similarly, participants' common experiences of 'home' mirror human needs, and all promote psychological well-being:

- the 'norm' → physiological/safety/existence/psychological security
- personal control, personalisation → autonomy/freedom
- positive relationships → social/relatedness/emotional autonomy
- positive selfhood → self esteem/self actualisation/growth

'Home' makes a major contribution to meeting, or not, the needs of the dweller (Annison, 2000, p. 259), and is a catalyst to fulfilling a variety of needs, both physiological and psychological. A dwelling place aids the fulfilment of needs, it is a place where the dweller can form a bond (attachment) to a dwelling place, turning it into 'home'.   In contrast, common experiences of 'not-hone' do not mirror the 'not-home' presented in the literature; common experiences were dominated by the physical 'lack of permanence' of a dwelling place, whereas the literature focuses on negative emotional feelings towards a dwelling place. For participants, 'home' seems to be about *emotional* security and 'not-home' seems to be about a lack of *physical* security. Thus the dominant characteristics of 'home' and 'not-home' are not opposites, as other studies suggest (Smith, 1994, Tognoli, 1987). Although some studies found no consistent physical or social dimensions to either 'home' or 'not-home' (Horwitz and Tognoli, 1982). All of the issues highlighted here are examined in detail in the succeeding Chapters.

For someone who has experienced homelessness, the act of reflecting on housing experiences may make different episodes and features of 'home' and 'not-home' more prominent than others, i.e. positive experiences may come to the fore and negative experiences may be supressed. It is important to note therefore, that just because some participants didn't cite any of the common experiences outlined above, it does not mean that they didn't experience them; it may simply be that they weren't the main memory of that individual housing episode. Only certain aspects of 'home' may have been recalled when put 'on the spot' during their interview. Tognoli (1987, p. 659) suggests that 'it is possible that memories of past homes are distorted to fit the current conception of one's present abode'.

Thus, the absence of a feature or features of 'home' in an account of a dwelling experience does not automatically mean that it was 'not-home', and *vice versa*. I shall illustrate in the next Chapter specific housing situations that were experienced as 'home' or 'not-home' because of the presence of different features of 'home' or 'not-home', more dominant in some housing situations than in others.

Chapter Seven: My housing, my 'home'…?

7.0   Introduction

The previous Chapter showed that for the seventeen participants in this research study, emotional well-being within a dwelling place is the foundation of 'home'; giving 'home' its meaning. As Dovey notes, 'home' is an 'emotionally based and meaningful relationship between dwellers and their dwelling places' (1985, p. 34). It is this emotional relationship with a dwelling place that defines the very nature and essence of 'home' as distinguished from a 'house' (Moore, 2000, p. 210); house and 'home' are intimately connected and yet distinct (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 79). Houses are made into 'homes' (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998, p. 31. Thus, 'home' carries meaning beyond the simple notion of a shelter (Watson and Austerberry, 1986, p. 8): 'house' assumes a neutral status as a container, whereas a 'home' is understood to be psychologically meaningful (Tomas and Dittmas, 1995, p. 504). When asked if there was a difference between 'house' and 'home', all but two participants made a clear distinction between the two, with the main difference being that a 'house' is just a place to stay (eight participants), whereas 'home' is a dwelling place where you feel good in yourself (six participants) and is homely (six participants). Thus, 'home' is an *emotional* dwelling place whereas a 'house' is simply a *physical* dwelling place, a mere shelter:

> A house is just somewhere you go back to, you stay there and then you go. A home is somewhere you go and you're happy, you've got your own space, you don't just come in and out, you stay there and do what you want. It's not just a roof over your head it's your home. (Amy)

> A house is just somewhere to lay your head at the end of the day. Home is actually somewhere you enjoy 'going to 'init? (Ian)

> This is not my house it's my home, and I would always hope, I might be wrong, that you or anybody else would be welcome here. Whereas a house is something built with bricks, whereas this is my home. (Clive)

While many studies of 'home' have focused on what 'home' is in terms of feelings about a dwelling place, they don't always take into full consideration the influence of the practical situation of a dwelling place. For example, evidence is lacking about which housing situations are more likely to be experienced as 'home' or 'not-home', and why. There is a narrow and somewhat limited focus on differences between owner occupiers and renters, arguing that owner occupiers make more of an emotional and financial investment in a dwelling place than renters (e.g. Saunders, 1989). Few studies have examined in detail the experiences of 'home' across different housing situations, whether for a single sample group

or by gender (although one detailed study is Gurney, 1997). As noted earlier, historically, men and women tended to perform different kinds of tasks in the 'home' so experience 'home' differently. Evidence of how men and women experience different 'home' environments (housing situations), and what 'home' means to them is lacking, however. The focus and methodology of this study has provided rich data that goes some way to filling this gap, as detailed in this Chapter and succeeding Chapters.

The participants in this study experienced a range of different housing situations and a high number of housing episodes, allowing for basic quantitative exploration, particularly in relation to housing situation and gender. Quantitative data is drawn upon throughout this Chapter only to illustrate clear patterns, not to suggest causality. For the purposes of this discussion all figures have been rounded up or down as appropriate. The quantitative data supplements and complements the qualitative data, and together the data sets provide a clear picture of 'home' and 'not-home' experiences across different housing situations. This Chapter will explore the relationships between the participants, and their ideas of 'home' and their dwelling places/housing situations. In this context, a 'housing situation' is an objective classification, while a 'housing experience' is a subjective experience. A profile of the participants' housing and 'home' experiences will be presented first. How particular housing situations shaped participants' housing trajectories will then be examined. The nuances of what characterised different housing situations as 'home' or 'not-home', and which were the 'best' and 'worst' housing experiences, are then be explored. The sample size of twelve males and five females means that only extremely clear and robust patterns and differences according to gender will be presented.

Even though the participants represent only a small fraction of the population of people who have experienced homelessness, which is in itself a small sub-set of the general population, there is no reason to think that the nuanced distinction between 'home' and 'not-home' that emerges from their accounts is absent in the wider, general population. As noted in Chapter Five, 'not-home' was not an initial line of enquiry in this study. Participants inductively talked about 'not-home', and for some, it played an integral part in their housing histories. The significance of this should not be underestimated, not least in how experiences of 'not-home' may affect experiences of 'home' experiences, and vice versa.

7.1 Profile of housing experiences

The participants' housing histories illustrate varied experience of different housing situations. The most common housing situations experienced by this study's participants, defined as

those that seven or more participants experienced at least once, are: 'living with parents or a parent during childhood'[4], 'living with a partner'[5], a 'sole tenancy'[6], 'formal homeless accommodation'[7], 'informal/hidden homelessness'[8], 'prison' (including young offenders institution) and a 'social care setting'[9]. As detailed in the eligibility criteria, common housing experiences among participants were homelessness and living in a sole tenancy. All participants had experienced living in 'formal homeless accommodation'; all but two had 'lived with parents or a parent during childhood'; all but three had experienced 'informal/hidden homelessness', and eleven had lived with a partner. Some aspects of the participants housing histories seem to be gendered, and whilst caution must be exercised in generalising from a small scale qualitative study, these differences seem marked, and are thus worthwhile analysing and theorising as they may inform future studies.

Transient housing trajectories

A single housing situation equates to an individual housing episode. The seventeen participants experienced a total of 381 individual housing episodes between them. The number of recorded housing episodes per participant varied greatly, from seven (male, aged 19) to 43 (male, aged 34), with an average of twenty-two housing episodes per person. Proportionally, this figure is much higher than the national average of Britons living in sixteen different homes in a lifetime[10]. Apart from one participant, all participants could be said to have moved frequently, experiencing fifteen or more different housing episodes each. Females experienced a narrower range of housing episodes than males; between 16 and 25, compared to between 7 and 43 among males. The average number of housing episodes was greater for males; 24 per male from a total of 286 episodes (three quarters of all housing

---

[4] For the purpose of this study 'living with parents or a parent during childhood' describes a number of different parental circumstances; living with parents, living with a parent and step-parent, or living with a single parent and their partner

[5] For the purposes of this study 'living with a partner' is defined as; having a joint tenancy or joint owner occupation with a partner, living in a partner's tenancy, or living with a partner's family (parents or extended family).

[6] For the purpose of this study a 'sole tenancy' is a 'sole tenancy' of a dwelling place including a tenancy of a room in a shared house and sole owner occupation.

[7] For the purpose of this study a 'sole tenancy' is a 'sole tenancy' of a dwelling place including a tenancy of a room in a shared house and sole owner occupation.

[8] For the purpose of this study 'informal/hidden homelessness' is staying temporarily with family or friends (as an adult), including situations which are intolerable and tolerable but there is a preference to live separately; and rough sleeping, not formal homeless accommodation

[9] For the purpose of this study a 'social care setting' is accommodation provided by a local authority social services department when a child has been taken into their care i.e. the state is in charge of the child's welfare.

[10] 16 homes includes houses in childhood, university lodgings, rented flat shares, first time buys, family homes and downsizing for retirement. http://www.scotsman.com/news/sixteen-the-average-number-of-homes-you-ll-have-in-a-lifetime-1-6840940 published 2nd March 2007.

episodes), compared to 19 per female from a total of 95 episodes. Possible explanations for this difference are examined below.

The overall total of 381 housing episodes for a sample of seventeen, relatively young, people, is a highly significant finding and one which allows a thorough and detailed representation of participants' housing experiences. This figure clearly shows that frequent moving characterised participants' housing trajectories, in which the central reason for movement was the need to find shelter. People move residence for different reasons, positive and/or negative. Among young homeless people, Jackson (2015) found mobility talked of as a resource, but also in terms of loss and dislocation (p. 67); mobility could be tactical and purposeful, for example keeping out of a hostel, keeping safe on the streets, or avoiding being a nuisance to friends (pp. 72-75). Moving is known to be stressful. In some cases, moving is not always voluntary, and may be triggered by a stressful event, such as unemployment, divorce, parental abuse or neglect, relationship breakdown with parents, substance misuse, or criminal behaviour.

Thus, the stress of moving may be compounded by further personal stress. For the majority (14) of participants, frequent moving between different dwelling places, and different housing situations, often involved moving away from the area they grew up in. For some, this meant moving distances up to 30 miles away, for example moving to the next village or nearest city or town. For others, moves involved greater distances, for example to other parts of England, other countries in the United Kingdom or Europe. Factors and motivations which triggered moving included:

- being taken into care (by social services);
- employment;
- being asked to leave by family or friends;
- eviction or abandoning a tenancy, for reasons including rent arrears or anti-social behaviour;
- moving in with a partner;
- family/relationship breakdown;
- moving to better private rented accommodation;
- moving into a sole tenancy;
- not coping with a sole tenancy;
- moving into a better homeless situation, for example from the streets to a hostel, or from a hostel to supported housing;
- fleeing violence, feeling unsafe;
- wanting a 'fresh' start, for example moving away from the drugs scene; and
- going to/leaving prison.

Participants were asked how they felt about their experiences of moving around different housing situations. For some, the experience of moving frequently was definitely negative and frustrating, given that they wanted to settle down in one place:

> You move somewhere you've got to move out and find somewhere else to go you move on it's just another piece of the puzzle it's just a big puzzle. I've just got to end it. When I find somewhere else to go it's my space and I'm not moving anywhere. (Amy)

> I think people have a better life if they stay in one place. It's more stable and they get roots and things, don't they? All the people that I know that have just lived in one place all their life are a lot better mentally that people who have been all over the place. When you move all over the place you make friends and then you move to be close to one family member then you move away and you lose that family, so it's better to be in one place with all your family and friends and that. (Diane)

> It's crap. I still haven't been able to do what I want to do or get what I want. Obviously have a relationship with somebody, have kids, do what I want with who I want and where I want and when I want, not you've got to do this, you're living here. (David)

> It's frustrating 'cause I would just want to settle down. It would be nice to live in one 'ouse for 10 years or more, you know what I mean but I think the longest I've lived in one place since I left home is 2 years, you know what I mean. (Lucas)

> I didn't enjoy it, not knowing where you were stopping every night it's not very good. (Paul)

Similarly, Jackson also found young homeless people weary of the constant movement: one individual in that study felt like a hitch-hiker, never expecting to feel at 'home' anywhere (2015, p. 79).

For others in this study, moving had become a 'normal' part of their life, they had become used to it. For some this meant a feeling of ambivalence:

> It's just the way my life has gone, although I wouldn't change it. No matter through all the crap I've been through I wouldn't change it. I'd do it all again. Through growing up I knew I was never going to stay in one place for too long so I never wanted to class it as home. It was always leaving and going on to the next place. (James)

> It's weird moving around because I wasn't used to moving around. I stayed in one place for years. It was weird at first but then I just got used to it. Then when I moved into [supported accommodation] I wasn't that bothered. When I moved into [supported accommodation] I thought "what the hell am I doing here?" But when I moved to [supported accommodation] I was kind of like that for a week but as soon as I moved up here [sole tenancy] sound, no problems up here, I don't know why. (Anthony)

> To me it's never been important staying in the same place for any long period of time, that's not been really important to me. Obviously I would like to stay in the same

place, like here, somewhere nice I would like to stay in it and improve on it but it's never been an important thing for me. It's more like emotional stability that matters to me. It goes back to my youth really travelling a lot when I was young [to different countries with his parents]. I was thinking about this the other day, that may be that's why I don't place such an emphasis or haven't in the past. It's not bothered me, not as much as it would to someone else moving that frequently, you know stayed in one place. (Richard)

I'm used to it [moving around] so…it's not a new thing, I've done it before. I just get used to doing it, it doesn't stress me out. (Craig)

It doesn't [moving around] bother me at all. I've done it that much it really doesn't bother me. It's probably because you always know in the back of your head you can't settle down I suppose. I just don't know. (Clare)

This is similar to May's findings among homeless men, for whom moving wasn't a wrench: not really leaving anything behind, packing your bags and going (2000, p. 747).

Expressing similar thoughts, several participants in the present study felt that moving around was part of a bigger picture, something that they would get through to get to a more positive place:

My housing experiences have been a maze, they've had their good points and their dead ends, it's a bit like a maze you're in and out, because I mean I've been in one place and come out and gone back so it's like going around in a maze but you know it's like a maze but it's got to stop, I've got to get to the centre of the maze and then I'll be alright, I'm just not quite there yet. What I want is to be out in a peaceful place, out in the middle of the country in a village but not somewhere that's too far out though, well I don't know, maybe. (Amy)

At first when I moved down to [supported accommodation 2] that was a stepping stone from [supported accommodation 1], and [supported accommodation 2] to [supported accommodation 3] was a stepping stone to more independence, then here [sole tenancy] is completely independent. (Anthony)

It's not the best life but I'm not going to tell anyone I had a really shit life. I've never lived on the streets, I've never had to get that far. There are a lot more people out there worse off than. (Nicola)

It's just a means to an end really, I had to do it in order to get on with life. (Ian)

For others in this study, moving was a by-product of their lifestyle of substance misuse, as Jackson (2015) also found:

There's a difference because there are times when I've moved out of choice like abroad and did contracts. Then there was other times back here when I've moved not out of choice but through drug use, due to a chaotic lifestyle, basically drugs ruling,

governing my life especially in the last few years since I split up with [girlfriend], crack cocaine and heroin. (Richard)

I've got such a problematic life [drug use]. I mean, 'cause I say I do want to put roots down and settle down. (Lucas)

I started hanging around with the same people as before when I got sent to prison so I ended up getting sent to prison again. And I've been there ever since, in and out, in and out, no where to live. The only people I end up stopping with are people using drugs. I end up getting back into the same vicious circle. I didn't enjoy it not knowing where you were stopping every night it's not very good. I think that's why I moved 'ere 'cause I don't know no one in [town]. (Paul)

When I think on it now it was quite bad being on drugs and that, 'cause like there were times where I didn't actually care where I was stopping. There were some right dodgy places where I were stopping in tents and things like that. I didn't like it but I had to do it 'cause I had got no where else to stop 'cause I were on drugs. Thinking about it now I do feel quite bad but actually at the moment it didn't really bother me, I was more bothered about drugs and that. It's like when you're on heroin and that it numbs all your feeling and everything like that so that when you come off it, it all starts flooding back. So at the time it didn't really bother me, all I was bothered about was the drugs and that but now [thinking about it now] it was actually quite bad, it was horrible really but that's how it was, that's what drugs did to me. (Rob)

Frequent moving between dwelling places, and its influence, is not a specific topic for investigation in the 'home' literature. This is particularly interesting given that the literature identifies 'continuity' as a key feature of 'home' experiences (see Chapter Three). As Tognoli (1987, pp. 659-660) suggests, the experience of continuity, whether it be of activities or relationships, differentiates homes and houses. Looking outside the 'home' literature, however, does give an insight into the impact of frequent moving. The detrimental effect of moving frequently in childhood has been well-documented, particularly the social and psychological impacts. As noted earlier, Oishi and Schimmack (2010, p. 989) found that individuals who had moved frequently in 'childhood' reported lower levels of well-being than those who had not. Frequent 'childhood' moves could make maintaining long-term relationships difficult; for example, peer rejection at a new school could lead to withdrawal and loneliness, with long-term consequences such as dropping out of school and engaging in criminal activities in 'adulthood' (*ibid.,* p. 990). One of the participants clearly recognised the impact that moving early in her childhood had had on her:

I left home at such a young age. At [that age, a teenager] you should be settling down getting on your feet thinking about what you want to do. I haven't done that. I've always had to think about what I'm doing tomorrow. It's crazy it really is the way I've had to grow up and stuff. It's mad and people think my life is easy because I put on a front. They know nothing about my life they don't know what I've had to go through to get here today. (Amy)

The looked after children literature provides clear evidence of the negative impact of frequent moving between care placements in childhood. English children move home on average three times before reaching adulthood (Moyers and Mason, 1995), whereas it is not unusual for those in the care system to experience three moves in the course of a year (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2008b). Ward (2009) found that instability impacts adversely on the welfare outcomes of looked after children. Constant change can have a major impact, not only on children's and young people's patterns of attachment and emotional wellbeing (Ward, Munro and Dearden, 2006) and their sense of self-esteem and identity (Skuse and Ward, 2003; Unrau, Seita and Putney, 2008), but also on their access to education (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003) and health care (Ward et al., 2002). Ward (2009, p. 1115) found that the 242 children and young people she studied had 965 placements between them in the four years of the study, with the majority of placements lasting 6 months of less. Children and young people aged 10 and older experienced a significantly higher number of placements. The care system is also characterised by other instability; for example a change of social workers as a child moves through the system and the case management process (*ibid,* p. 1116). The pattern of instability found in care frequently mirrored children and young people's experiences before and after the care episode (*ibid.,* p. 1117). This was the case for three of the participants in this study who had experienced living in a social care setting, especially for James:

> I've had such an unsettled childhood it didn't do me no favours so I was a bit of a wild child, loose cannon so that made it harder for foster carers to get on with me and relate to me. They'd put me in the foster care and after a couple of days the foster carer would be like, "No we can't handle him he is too much." They'd come and get me then a children's home and look for somewhere else and it would just carry on like that.

Such instability compounds a child's perception of life as transient, and jeopardises their chances of long-term well-being (*ibid.,* p. 1118). In addition, Ward found that many of the children and young people she studied went into care with extensive support needs (*ibid,* p. 1114); the instability of placements could have exacerbated their existing needs and/or created further needs. Ward (2009, p. 1117) suggests that older children must find it particularly difficult to think about the future, to settle down to work at school, or to make friends if they are uncertain where they will be living in the next school term. James, quoted immediately above, found that moving around different care placements disrupted many aspects of his life:

> I would say it was annoying 'cause you can't get any possessions, you can't settle, you can't do nothin' because you don't know whether you are going to get woken up the next day and be told. "Right the next place." You can't really afford to have anything. I was living with one bag basically, because I knew there was a fair chance I'd be up

and leaving and not knowing where I was going, so I couldn't afford to have stuff to haul about here there and everywhere. It was awkward.

The *real* impact of frequent moving in childhood is illustrated in detailed accounts of participants' lives which form the basis of Chapter Eight.

Transience across different housing situations

The frequency of particular housing situations among the seventeen participants is quite stark, with 'informal/hidden homelessness' accounting for the greatest proportion of housing episodes, at a quarter (96), closely followed by a 'sole tenancy', accounting for just under a fifth (67), and 'formal homeless accommodation' accounting for just over ten per cent (45) of housing episodes. Thus, 'homelessness' (formal homeless accommodation and informal/hidden homelessness) was the most prevalent housing situation, accounting for over a third (141) of housing episodes. 'Living with parents or a parent during childhood' accounted for just over ten per cent (50) of housing episodes. On average, participants had experienced six different kinds of housing situations each; the highest was eight (two participants) and the lowest four (two participants), with males averaging six and females five.

The spread of housing episodes across different housing situations illustrates a lack of continuity, with movement between what could be deemed 'secure' and 'insecure' housing situations, a finding which resonates with other studies. Watson and Austerberry (1986, p. 9), for example, found homeless women moving within a homelessness continuum, with sleeping rough at one end and outright home ownership at the other, and 'in between …an extensive grey area, ranging from hostels, hotels, temporary accommodation, sleeping on friends' floors, licences, to insecure private rented accommodation, mortgaged accommodation and so on'. Similarly, May (2000, p. 746) found that single homeless men with histories of episodic homelessness coupled with continued reliance upon often insecure private rented housing, often turned to friends or relatives on becoming homeless rather than to a formal network of emergency services, only occasionally staying in hostels and night shelters. Sosin *et al.* (1990, p. 171) also found a typical pattern of homelessness characterised by residential instability rather than constant homelessness over a long period. They found that respondents tended to move in and out of homelessness, where 'it is not the lack of housing *per se*, but the quality, stability and adequacy of housing between spells of homelessness that is important' (*ibid.*).   In the next Chapter, participant's stories show how transience within and between different housing situations shaped participants' housing trajectories.

Transience and homelessness

The prevalence of homelessness, by definition an insecure housing situation, clearly fuelled high levels of movement among participants', and drove up the number of housing episodes. As Jackson (2015, p. 83) suggests, 'becoming homeless involves being put in motion'. Maycock *et al.* (2008, p. 58) found young homeless people commuting between a variety of temporary living situations including hostels, the home of a friend or family member, and, in some cases, prison. Jackson (2015) suggests that young homeless people are *fixed in mobility* (p. 67), with many moving backwards and forwards between the spheres of family and the 'homeless circuit' (p. 79). Relying heavily on finding shelter in informal/hidden homeless situations, in particular, drove the research participants' movement. This is a notoriously insecure/temporary homeless situation; the generosity of a friend or relative only lasts so long, and such networks can soon become exhausted, impelling the person to move on to the next friend, relative or acquaintance (see also May, 2000). Fitzpatrick found young homeless people preferring to rely on family for somewhere to stay rather than friends as they felt they were intruding and that they were a drain on the friend's resources (2000, p. 96). There may be more of an obligation for family to provide support; it has, for example, been suggested that human obligations are a pairing of the idea of need with the idea of duty and obligation (Ignatieff (1984, p. 27). The nature of participants' homeless histories, and how homelessness shaped participants' housing and social trajectories, is examined in detail in the next Chapter. Such detailed accounts are largely absent in the 'home' literature, where understanding of how much or why homeless people move, of their experiences of movement, or the impact such movement has upon their experience of homelessness and any subsequent understandings of 'home', is severely limited (May, 2000, p. 741).

Even when exiting homelessness, housing insecurity and transience often continues, entering the housing market at the lowest end of the quality spectrum (Frederick *et al.,* 2014, p. 971). Individuals often turn to the private rented sector due to outstanding rent arrears with the local authority, for example, and long waiting times on local authority housing registers. A deposit for the rent can be a struggle to accrue, although rent deposit schemes are sometimes accessible. Private rented housing usually offers less security of tenure (assured shorthold six-month tenancies are common place) than local authority housing; rent levels are often considerably higher; and accommodation is often smaller and of lower quality (see Crane *et al.*, 2011; and Crane *et al.*, 2016).

Experiences of homelessness

Participants' in this study made a clear distinction between when they were and weren't homeless. Although support agencies defined them as homeless, some participants didn't class themselves as homeless when staying temporarily with family, or in supported/formal homeless accommodation; something which other studies have found (see Fitzpatrick, 2000; and Veness, 1993, for example):

> I didn't see myself as homeless because…at first I didn't see it as that because I've never lived on the street or anything like that, but then I did start thinking I am homeless because I haven't got a home, I had [supported] accommodation. (Nicola)

> When I was staying at my friends I didn't [see myself as homeless] 'cause I thought kipping on the street was homeless, but I was constantly reminded by agencies I interacted with that I was homeless. I was conscious of the fact that I was considered a homeless person even though I wasn't on the street. I came back to the same place every night [a friend's place] so I had my belongings there even though the tenancy wasn't in my name or I wasn't paying rent. (Richard)

> I had a roof over my head [supported accommodation], I had somewhere to go even though it weren't a home. It was still somewhere to go and eat and sleep and that. (Diane)

> When it first started[homelessness] it used to annoy me but then you get used to it. I've been here [homeless] before and got out of it, I can do it again. I've always been quite optimistic. I've been through a lot. (James)

Being defined as homeless was generally viewed in a negative light:

> [I felt] Scared I think that I had nowhere to go, yeah, another insecurity 'init? (Lucas)

> Well, being homeless doesn't phase me at all it's just that actually being homeless, not having a place to go back to being your own, you're like a second class citizen really. I was brought up to have a home and being homeless didn't include me, it didn't come into it. (Ian)

> People tend to look at you different, not very nice, they think you are all the same [homeless people]. (Craig)

> [It made be feel] A bit depressed actually. When you walk around and you look at people with nice clothes and clean things and it makes you think…if it's not your fault it makes you think why am I homeless, why is he not? I don't know, it's sort of hard to explain. (Scott)

For others, being defined as homeless didn't appear to bother them. Homelessness was a particular housing situation that they were in at that time, it didn't define them:

> I don't think it made me feel bad. Emmh I would say it stopped me getting a job, definitely. (Clive)

I wasn't really bothered. Like now I'm not really one of those people, I'm not really bothered what people think, they can take me as I am. I wasn't really bothered but 'cause I was bothered at the time that I'd got nowhere to stop and that but it was just one of those things, I couldn't do nought about it at the time 'cause I was dependent on drugs. (Rob)

I don't look homeless.   Some people can look homeless like what people call tramps. I don't think that's nice but…like people that haven't got this and are homeless, and haven't got this, so can't wash or eat or 'owt like that. People don't look at me in the street and think - homeless. (Clare)

It doesn't bother me. At the end of the day I'm homeless, so what, they don't know why I'm homeless. Homeless is just a word. There are a lot of meanings to that one word. It doesn't bother me. At the end of the day if you are homeless you've just got to deal with it, there's no point dwelling on it because that ain't gonna get you nowhere. Just think right I'm homeless, you've got to pick yourself up and find something to do. (Amy)

 I were fine really, no one really said it. I were living like a tramp, really, having, nowhere to go and chasing me clothes about with me. When Sarah [a friend] kicked me out and I was stopping at people's houses I had to ask people if I could get in the bath and do my washing for me. It wasn't very nice to ask people but I'd rather be clean. People did it for me all the time. (Julie)

Some of the participants' comments highlight the support they received when homeless. As outlined in Chapter Four, some of the homelessness literature looks at the mobile nature of homelessness and how mobility is essential in accessing resources and support to fulfil basic needs. Wolch and Rowe found that mobility paths were central to the social networks and coping strategies of the homeless (1993, p. 115), with service provision (formal and informal) for the homeless, and the characteristics of the communities in which they were located; strongly influencing the support networks of the homeless and their daily paths (*ibid.,* p. 116). Similarly, Jackson found that young homeless people's moorings (hostels, friends' houses, colleges, homeless services) can be temporary or of more lasting importance, but are key points of orientation (2015, p. 67). Decisions were made on a day-to-day basis about where to go and where not to go (*ibid.,* p. 75), with various agencies - hostels, jobcentres, and local authorities –playing a decisive role in the movement and patterns of homeless people (*ibid.,* p. 102). The nature of homelessness means there is a relative erosion of time-space continuity, which affects social networks and coping strategies, with people having to migrate to service rich localities to meet basic needs, for example, and the absence of fixed stations restricting access to family, friends and formal support services (*ibid.,* p. 117).

Accessing support can also be restricted by homeless individuals often having little to offer in terms of reciprocity; the case for many of the participants' in this study owing to their personal circumstances; explored in the next Chapter. For homeless individuals, reciprocity, which could offset imposition on a friend, for example, is rarely an option (Wolch and Rowe,

1993, pp. 131-132). As noted elsewhere, few people do something for nothing, even if simple recognition is all that is needed; individuals co-operate with each other if they think their efforts will be reciprocated in some way (De Swaan, 2001, pp. 86-89). Reciprocity is said to work better if positive relationships are formed through frequent meeting, providing an arena for trust to be built (*op. cit.*), although this can be difficult to achieve when homeless. Among homeless men, May found that support was frequently unavailable, as friends were unable to accommodate others for long, if at all, due to either a lack of space or pressure from landlords (2000, pp. 746-747). Maycock, *et al.* found that young people who failed to exit homelessness had few social supports on which to draw, with most describing weak social ties and limited sources of help or comfort (2008, p. 141). Wolch and Rahimian argue 'that the availability of social resources may have a stronger influence in shaping patterns of coping and adaptation to homelessness that individual characteristics that commonly have been used to categorise homeless people' (1993, p. 165).

The breakdown of traditional support networks often means having to find alternative networks that are not spatially fixed. Homeless people often find support (information and resource sharing, for example) within a local homeless network made up of similar, and similarly mobile homeless people; a social network may form around a shared pattern of behaviour, such as substance misuse (*ibid.*). Wolch and Rowe argue that the social networks and daily paths of homeless people profoundly affect their coping abilities, for example in accessing food, clothing, shelter, personal security, emotional support, social services, income and/or employment. The relationships between homeless people and their daily environments, both social and physical, profoundly structure their immediate survival strategies, their coping abilities, their personal identity and self-esteem, their short and long-term goals, and their chances to exit homelessness and construct a desired future (*ibid.*, p. 118). The social and spatial contexts of homelessness are thus mutually reinforcing. Chapter's Eight and Nine explore in detail the levels and kind of support participants received, and how a lack of support shaped their housing trajectories.

Such work, however, focuses on the daily mobility paths of people living on the streets, for whom mobility was essential in accessing resources and support. This is important to consider here, in relation to how social support networks can be utilised to access shelter and move on from homelessness. Movement in terms of moving from one dwelling place to another is not, however, the main focus of the studies cited above; they do not tell us much about the impact of frequent moving when homeless on experiences of 'home' and maintaining relationships, for example. In this study, participants' detailed stories tell us a lot

about how frequent moving within and between different housing situations impacted on their experiences of 'home', which is the central focus of Chapter's Eight and Nine.

Transience and gender

The distribution of different housing situations varied markedly by gender. Females had a more even spread of episodes across different housing situations; the largest category was 'informal/hidden homelessness' (twenty) closely followed by 'living with parents or a parent during childhood' (nineteen), 'formal homeless accommodation' (sixteen) and a 'social care setting' (fifteen). In contrast, male episodes clustered in two housing situations: 'informal/hidden homelessness' and a 'sole tenancy', with 76 and 57 episodes, respectively.

Concentrations of housing episodes in certain housing situations may, in part, be attributable to the younger age profile of females; the males had simply had more time to live independently and experience different housing situations. A 'sole tenancy' for example, accounts for a higher proportion of male episodes than housing situations only experienced in childhood, such as 'living with parent or a parent during childhood' or a 'social care setting'. These 'childhood situations' account for a higher proportion of female episodes due to their younger age profile. That said, 'living with a partner' accounted for a greater proportion of female episodes. It has been found that, as with marriage, women tend to cohabit at a younger age than men, with women aged between 16 and 24 being twice as likely as men to cohabit (Abbott *et al*. 2005, p. 152). For the young women in this study, 'living with a partner' may have been an attractive option compared to the other housing options open to them, although there may be more specific factors at work, such as loneliness. Wolch and Rowe, for example, found that homeless women endured abusive relationships rather than face the streets on their own (1993, p. 125). Similarly, Tomas and Dittmar found that homeless women felt that relationships with men provided protection and security when homeless, although, paradoxically, such protection might come at the cost of being abused within the relationship (1995, p. 509).

The average number of housing episodes per housing situation is not considered here, since the figures are distorted by the small sample size. In some housing categories, for example, a single participant represents a particularly high number of episodes; 43 per cent of 'social care setting' episodes were experienced by one male, as were 53 per cent of 'prison' episodes and 19 per cent of 'informal/hidden homelessness' episodes; one female experienced 18 per cent of 'living with parents or a parent during childhood' episodes. Thus it is not possible to discern meaningful patterns of movement between or within different housing situations that are independent of the sample size and composition.

Interestingly, 'homelessness', formal homeless accommodation and informal/hidden homelessness, accounted for over a third of housing episodes for both females (36 episodes) and males (105 episodes). This suggests that 'homelessness' may not be as age specific as other housing situations, such as living in a 'sole tenancy' (at present, if you are under the age of 18, the law says you are not allowed to hold a social housing tenancy[11]). Further possible explanations for this pattern are discussed in the next Chapter.

For both males and females, 'informal/hidden homelessness' was more common than 'formal homeless accommodation'. There could be a number of possible explanations for this pattern; participants may not have wanted to wait to go through the bureaucratic, and sometimes long process of a formal homeless application; informal/hidden homelessness is often a quicker, more convenient option; the relevant local authority may not have had a duty to house certain individuals under homelessness legislation priority need criteria, making 'informal/hidden homeless' the next, or only option; and, finally, 'informal/hidden homelessness' may actually be a preferred option for some people, for various reasons.

'Formal homeless accommodation', for example, accommodates people with many vulnerabilities and problems, all concentrated in one place, making it unappealing to homeless people who don't want to expose themselves to more problems and/or exacerbate their own existing vulnerabilities. McNaughton found that living in hostels is often felt by people to expose them to greater risk, such as increased drug and alcohol use, assault or victimisation, or subsequent deterioration in their mental and physical health – than staying with friends, or even rough sleeping (2008, p. 89). Jackson found similar reluctance to enter the hostel system which was perceived as unsafe, preferring to draw on existing connections to avoid sleeping on the streets, for example staying with a friend (2015, pp. 74-75). As noted above, May found single homeless men often turning to friends or relatives first rather than to formal support (2000, p. 746). In the present study, 'formal homeless accommodation' was more frequent for the females; they may have been deemed particularly 'vulnerable' and in 'priority need' due to their age or gender, or it may have been because four out of the five females in question had lived in a 'social care setting', and care leavers are classed as a 'priority' need group by the Homelessness Act 2002.

---

[11] https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/finding-a-place-to-live/young-people-and-housing/#h-renting-accommodation

This finding, however, is in contrast to the national pattern in England, where between 1 January and 31 March 2015, 13 per cent of statutory homelessness acceptances[12] were lone males and 9 per cent were lone females (DCLGa., 2015, p. 7). Past studies have found that single homeless women often tried to avoid the heavily male dominated spaces of institutional care which form the infrastructure of visible homelessness in contemporary Britain (homeless hostels). They turn instead to other spaces in their search for shelter, for example sofa surfing or forming/staying in relationships with men, as noted earlier (Watson and Austerberry, 1986). In recent years, 'female only' supported housing projects have gone some way to addressing this need.

7.2   Profile of 'home' and 'not-home' experiences

The high number of housing episodes experienced by participants shows how they had mixed experiences of different dwelling places, with clear trends in terms of positive and negative experiences. All seventeen participants experienced as least one housing episode as 'home', with just under a fifth of all housing episodes being described in these terms (66). Just under half (32) of these episodes were experienced in childhood. On average, each participant experienced four housing episodes as 'home'. Males and females were more or less equally as likely to experience a housing episode as 'home', with just under a fifth of female (17) and male (49) episodes being experienced as such. It should be noted that nearly a quarter (16) of 'home' episodes were experienced by one male, in that he experienced all but one of his housing episodes as 'home'; 'home' was where he was living, where he rested at night, where he could wash and sleep. This resonates with Watson and Austerberry's finding that some homeless women considered their present accommodation to be 'home' because they considered anywhere they currently slept, as 'home' (1986, p. 103).

All but two participants experienced at least one housing episode as 'not-home'. One of the two participants is the male described above, who experienced all but one of his housing episodes as 'home'; and the other is a male who experienced only one housing episode as 'home' and attached 'no strong feelings' to the remaining thirty episodes. 'Not-home' was a much more common experience than 'home'; over a third of housing episodes described in these terms (147). Nearly a third (45) of these episodes were experienced in childhood. This concerning trend of negative housing experiences in childhood is examined in detail in Chapter Eight. On average, each participant experienced ten housing episodes as 'not-home'. Much like experiences of 'home', males and females were similarly likely to

---

[12] In cases where a local authority is satisfied that an applicant is eligible for assistance, is in priority need, and has become homeless through no fault of their own, the authority will owe a main homelessness duty to secure settled accommodation for that household. Such households are referred to as acceptances.

describe a housing episode as 'not-home'; over a third of both male and female episodes were described as such (110[13] and 37[14] episodes respectively). All other housing episodes (168) have been classified as 'no strong feelings', i.e. identified as neither 'home' nor 'not-home' by participants, and a category more prevalent than 'home' and 'not-home'. The high number of housing episodes experienced by participants helps to explain their apparent lack of emotion toward many of their dwelling places. This lack of feeling adds a new dimension to the 'home' debate, not really exploring the absence of *any* emotions toward dwelling places, choosing instead to focus on positive emotions (home), as noted earlier. Possible reasoning behind such a lack of emotion, and its relevance to 'home', is considered in the succeeding Chapters.

'Home' and 'not-home' in different housing situations

Again, the high number of housing episodes experienced by the participants enables clear identification of how experiences of 'home' and 'not-home' differed according to the particular housing situation: 'living with parents or a parent during childhood' was the most common housing situation to be described as 'home' (20 'home' episodes), closely followed by a 'sole tenancy' (16 'home' episodes); 'informal/hidden homelessness' was the most common housing situation to be described as 'not-home' (48 'not-home' episodes), followed by a 'sole tenancy' (31 'not-home' episodes).

All housing situations, other than 'living with parents or a parent during childhood' were more likely to be experienced as 'not-home' rather than 'home'. Homelessness accounted for nearly half (69) of all 'not-home' episodes. Thus, for these participants, there was a clear link between 'not-home' and homelessness, unsurprising to an outsider given the insecure and undesirable nature of homelessness. The 'home' literature does not make a clear link between 'not-home' and homelessness, or raise questions about a possible connection, which may, in part, be attributable to the minimal focus it places on 'not-home'. This is particularly interesting given that connections are made between 'home' and 'not-home', and 'home' and homelessness, as outlined in Chapter Four. This suggests that the literature sees 'not-home' and homelessness as different, and distinct, housing circumstances. The link between 'not-home' and homelessness for participants in this study could be a consequence of the transient and temporary nature of homelessness and the subsequent impact on access to support, as discussed earlier. Such links, and possible implications for experiences of 'home', are explored in the succeeding Chapters.

---

[13] 30 episodes were experienced by one male; 27 per cent of all male 'not-home' episodes

[14] 16 episodes were experienced by one female participant; 43 per cent of all female 'not-home' episodes

Even though 'prison' is a negative situation and living in a 'social care setting' is often temporary in nature, only a small proportion of such episodes were described as 'not-home'. Ambivalence, accepting the housing situation for what it was, may be an explanation for this trend; a consequence of their circumstances, not their choice, just a functional dwelling place, a means to an end. As such, there may have been little, if any emotional investment in such a dwelling place. As James highlighted earlier, being moved around social care placements was 'normal' for him so it wasn't worth investing in possessions; he couldn't settle.

Gendered experiences of 'home' in different housing situations

Whether different housing situations were experienced as 'home' differs according to gender. These figures should be treated with considerable caution, owing to the small number of 'home' episodes experienced by females in comparison to males. For males, 'home' episodes were concentrated in two housing situations; 'living with parents or parent during childhood' (16 episodes) and living in a 'sole tenancy' (12 episodes). In contrast, female 'home' episodes were more evenly spread; 'living with parents or a parent during childhood', a 'sole tenancy' and a 'social care setting; each accounted for just under a quarter (4) of episodes. Differences in experience of 'not-home' across different housing situations according to gender are not included here, as in many cases, figures were skewed by a single person experiencing a majority or all of the episodes. For example all episodes of 'living with a partner', that were described as 'not-home', were experienced by one female; and 'living with parents or a parent during childhood' accounted for the largest concentration of 'not-home' episodes (12) among females, with the majority (9) of these episodes experienced by one female.

Common experiences of 'home' and 'not-home'

The essence of what made a dwelling place 'home' or 'not-home' for the participants was discussed in the previous Chapter. As noted there, all seventeen participants experienced at least one housing episode as 'home'. As noted, 'positive relationships' were a feature of 'home' for all participants, and dominated descriptions of episodes of 'home' (34, over half of 'home' episodes). This was followed by the 'norm', (28 episodes, although 16 of these were experienced by one male) experienced by ten participants; then 'positive selfhood' (24 episodes) experienced by eleven participants. Fifteen participants (10 male, 5 female) experienced at least one housing episode as 'not-home'. The only common feature of these was 'not permanent' experienced by over half the participants (nine), and featured in just under half (69) of 'not-home' episodes .

The high number of housing episodes in the data allowed me to identify the prevalence of a single feature of 'home' and 'not-home' respectively, showing that the participants' construction of 'home' tended to focus on a singular feature, unlike the more general social construction of 'home', which encompasses several features. As noted in Chapter Three, the literature portrays a culture of 'home', in which societal forces produce and reproduce the meaning of 'home' (Després, 1991, p. 96), with recurrent descriptions of 'home' relating to house, family, haven, self, gender and journeying (Mallet, 2004, p. 62). Even so, as Rivlin and Moore (2001, p. 328) note, 'there may be people for whom a general understanding of home will not apply, nor match their own personal experience or desire for home'. The reality of 'home' can be in conflict with the ideal of 'home'.

For the participants in this study, 'home' is about emotional security and 'not-home' is about physical insecurity (rather than emotional). These are not direct opposites, contrary to a common picture in the literature, which suggests that 'home' and 'not-home' are oppositional feelings both based on emotions, whether positive or negative (see Smith, 1984). The experience of these participants seems to suggest that, for them, 'not-home' relates more closely to the meaning of homelessness, as outlined in Chapter Four; having no 'home' or permanent abode, no accommodation. While my data about participants' feelings confirm the literature's assertion that the meaning and experience of 'home' is subjective, this polarisation of feelings, around a single feature, is not identified in the existing 'home' literature, nor is there much discussion of the specific factors that promote or hinder the creation of 'home'. The likely origins, and implications of such definite feelings about 'home' and 'not-home' are examined in the succeeding Chapters.

It is also interesting to look at the relationship between different features of 'home', in that there appears to be a connection between certain features. In just over half (18) of episodes that featured 'positive relationships', 'positive selfhood' also featured. Likewise, of the twenty-four episodes that featured 'positive selfhood', three-quarters (18) also featured 'positive relationships'. This suggests that 'positive relationships' and 'positive selfhood' may often go hand-in-hand as features of 'home', although it is not clear which engenders which, or if they were simply experienced at the same time. A similar pattern can be seen in respect to 'personal control' and 'personalised space'.

Common experiences of 'home' and 'not-home' among males and females

Common experiences of 'home' differed markedly according to gender. As noted earlier, caution should be taken in interpreting the figures owing to one male experiencing a quarter of all 'home' episodes. All features of 'home' were more common among females, except for

the 'norm', with 'positive relationships' being the most dominant (13 episodes, 76 per cent); this featured in less than half (21) of male 'home' episodes. Similarly, Gurney found that although both men and women portrayed 'home' as an emotional sphere, emotional accounts were more to the forefront of womens accounts of 'home' (1997, p. 383). Contrary to the traditonal portrayal of 'home' as a domain over which men have control and in which women have little autonomy (Mallett, 2004; Saunders, 1989; Wardaugh, 1999), in the present research, 'personal control' featured in well over half (10) of female episodes, but only in five male accounts. Similarly, other studies with homeless women have found that control is an integral part of 'home' for them. Among Peterson's (2000, p. 35) sample of homeless women, 'home' meant a locked door, control over their immediate environment, a place of choice where they can do as they like, where it is their rules that prevail.   Saunders notes that many women may exert considerable control and autonomy over the 'home' at the same time as working within it (1989, p. 180). In contrast, in the present study the 'norm' dominated male episodes (25), although nearly two-thirds (16) of these episodes were experienced by one male. Features of 'home' were most similar with regard to the positive way that 'home' made males and females feel about themselves; 'positive selfhood' featured in nearly half (8) of female, and a third (16) of male 'home' episodes.

Even taking into account the cautionary caveats outlined above, it can be suggested that these findings show females had to experience a greater range of 'home' features in a dwelling place before they could call it 'home', and that the female need for 'home' can be satisfied in a greater number of ways. This resonates with Gurney (1997) who found that the meaning of 'home' for women was highly ambivalent and complex, in comparison to male respondents. In order to experience a dwelling place as 'home', it is clear that females in this study looked to take possession of the dwelling space, asserting their selves through personal control and personalisation.

In order to give a more nuanced picture of respondents' experiences of 'not-home', less common features (experienced by less than half the participants) will also be considered. Again there was clear difference according to gender. Among females, a greater range of features could make a dwelling place 'not-home' (as was the case with 'home'): four out of the six 'not-home' features characterised over a quarter of female episodes, the most prevalent ones being a 'lack of positive selfhood' (46 per cent of episodes) and 'not permanent' (43 per cent of episodes). In contrast, male 'not-home' episodes were dominated by 'not permanent' (48 per cent of epsosdes) and 'instability' (44 per cent of episodes).

Thus, males and females had in some respects similar, and in some respects different experiences of 'home' and 'not-home'. Female experience was largely based around emotions (relationships and self) whereas male experience was more focused on less emotional, more physical and functional aspects. This resonates with conflicting evidence in the literature as to differences in the experience and meaning of 'home' according to gender. Gurney found that men were more likely to offer negative and instrumental meanings of 'home' at the beginning of their accounts, whereas the situation was reversed for women; emotional and positive accounts came first, 'home' was inseparable from significant life events that had taken place there, and much more complex (1997, p. 374). In contrast, Saunders (1989, pp. 180-182) argues that men and women express the same sorts of sentiments about their homes, although Darke (1994, p. 13) highlights differences in Saunders' sample, in that the women's views were more complex than men's.

7.3 Housing experiences: what makes different housing situations 'home', or 'not-home' for different people

In order to ascertain what made different housing situations 'home', 'not-home', or an experience with 'no strong feelings' attached to it, the unique housing histories of the seventeen participants will now be examined. 'Best' and 'worst' housing experiences[15] are also examined. Differences in experience according to gender are highlighted throughout. Again, caution is required with regard to figures according to gender; in some cases females experienced only a small number of episodes, meaning that generalisations cannot always be offered about females, nor can comparisons be made with males.

As detailed in Chapter's Three and Four, many studies of 'home' have asked individuals to describe their experiences of 'home'; usually encompassing different housing situations. There is limited detailed evidence about experiences of 'home' and 'not-home' across very different housing situations (in terms of security and stability) that the participants of this study experienced. The high number of housing episodes that participants experienced offers detail about what made different housing situations 'home' or 'not-home' for them.

For participants, the prevalence of features of 'home' and 'not-home' differed markedly across different housing situations. Looking at experiences at the smaller scale of each housing situation, compared to across all the housing situations, shows the nuances in housing experiences. For example, in certain housing situations there were oppositional feelings, for example the main feature of 'home' when living with 'parents or a parent as a

---

[15] a number of participants cited more than one housing episode as their 'best' or 'worst' housing experience

child' was 'positive relationships' and the main feature of 'not-home' was a 'lack of positive relationships'. This is in contrast to the larger scale view across all housing situations as outlined above, in which the main features were not opposites. This section will look at the detail of what made different housing situations 'home' and 'not-home'. Housing situations have been grouped together according to general commonalities in their circumstances; childhood settings, homelessness, independence and co-dependence. Summaries of the findings are presented in briefing boxes below. The differing circumstances of particular housing situations; a 'sole tenancy', 'informal/hidden homelessness' situations and different 'social care settings' will also be examined. Prison was a common housing situation (34 episodes), but so few episodes were experienced as 'home' or 'not-home' that analysis was not warranted. The experience of 'home' and 'not-home' was also minimal in a number of other housing situations, for example 'social care settings'. These findings are presented on the premise that they provide an insight into how 'home' and 'not-home' is not always a straight forward, 'typical' experience, and can be experienced in a range of housing situations. Figure 7.1 summaries the findings.

Figure 7.1   Main feature of 'home' and 'not-home' by housing situation

	HOME	NOT-HOME
Parents or a parent during childhood	Positive relationships	Lack of positive relationships
Sole tenancy	Personal control	Not permanent
Formal homeless accommodation	the 'norm'	Not permanent
Informal/hidden homelessness	the 'norm'	Instability
Living with a partner	Positive selfhood	Not permanent
Social care setting	Positive selfhood	Lack of control

Childhood settings

Living with parents or a parent during childhood

50 episodes: 20 'home' episodes, 12 'not-home' episodes

HOME = 'positive relationships'   NOT-HOME = a 'lack of positive relationships'

All but two of the fifteen participants (eleven males, four females) who at some point lived with 'parents or a parent during childhood', identified at least one episode as 'home. Just short of half (20) of such episodes were experienced as 'home', chiefly because of 'positive relationships'; the case for both males and females. Participants experiences reflect the normative view of 'home' in British society as a nuclear family living in a dwelling place,

---

158

with the literature overwhelmingly depicting family as the basis of the 'ideal home' (see Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Much as other studies have found, family has been found to be coterminous with 'home', particularly for young people. 'Home' is invariably connected to the family of origin, and an associated physical space, where family produces a sense of safety, security and contentment (Henderson *et al.*,2007, pp. 125-126).

For three females, 'living with parents or a parent' during childhood' was a negative experience, with nearly two-thirds (12) of their episodes being described in this way (nine episodes were experienced by one female); characterised by a 'lack of positive relationships' and 'instability'. Other studies have found similar feelings among females who experienced homelessness and whose residential instability originated in childhood (see Tomas and Dittmar, 1995).

Social care

35 episodes: 7 'not-home' episodes, 4 'home' episodes

NOT-HOME = 'lack of control'   HOME = 'positive selfhood'

Over a third (seven) of participants had experienced living in a 'social care setting' at some time during their childhood, with a greater proportion of females having had this experience: 4 out of 5 females compared to 3 out of 12 males. However, males experienced over half (20) of the social care episodes; caution is required in interpreting this finding as one male experienced all but five of those 20 episodes.

A number of different 'social care settings' were experienced by participants: foster care, children's homes, and 'other social care settings' including a boarding house, a mother and baby unit, and a school hostel. Foster care accounted for the highest proportion of episodes (16) and was most common for the females, accounting for nearly three-quarters of their social care episodes (eleven), compared to only a quarter of males' episodes (five).

It is unknown why 'foster care' was more common for females; it may be that they were classed as particularly vulnerable; their needs were perceived as more long-term than was the case for males; they may have been assessed as having fewer social or behavioural issues and were therefore easier to place. This resonates with the difference in experience of formal homeless accommodation according to gender, as noted earlier. In contrast, the most common experience for males was 'other social care setting' accounting for over half of their episodes (11) compared to a fifth of females (three). Four of the seven participants had experienced two or more different types of social care setting, while the other three in question had only experienced foster care.

Four episodes (two in 'foster care', two in a 'mother and baby unit') were experienced as 'home', by three females, all were characterised by 'positive relationships', and three were also characterised by feelings of 'positive selfhood' and 'personal control':

> I had no worries, I didn't worry about what might happen to me when I got in, it was a lot easier. (Amy)

> It was the whole place, secure and that, something that's always there. (Diane)

Only a fifth of 'social care setting' episodes (seven) were actually experienced as 'not-home', by two males and one female. This was chiefly because of a perceived 'lack of control'. As noted earlier, the lack of negative feeling ('not-home') toward living in a social care setting; a temporary housing situation, might have been down to feeling ambivalent, it being a consequence of circumstances, accepting the situation for what it was, or their sense it was just a functional dwelling place, or a means to an end. Whatever the case, no emotional investment was required.

A focus on the meaning of 'home' for people who have lived in a 'social care setting' as a child, is lacking in the literature. This is an interesting absence, given that care leavers are consistently found to be over represented in the homeless population. A recent survey of 437 single homeless people found that 25 per cent had been in local authority care (Reeve and Batty, 2011, p. 2), and a fifth of people at Centrepoint have been in care[16]. Coram estimate that one third of homeless people have lived in care[17].

Homelessness

Informal/hidden homelessness

96 episodes: 48 'not-home' episodes, 5 'home' episodes

NOT-HOME = 'instability'   HOME = the 'norm'

Of the seventeen participants, all but three had experienced 'informal/hidden homelessness' (eleven males, three females). For the purpose of this study, 'informal/hidden homelessness' has been divided in two distinct sets of circumstances: first, staying temporarily with family or friends, for example 'sofa surfing', and second, rough sleeping, for example sleeping on the streets, in a car, a tent or similar. All of the fourteen participants in question had experienced varied homeless situations: all had experienced 'informal/hidden homelessness' and 'formal homeless accommodation', all eleven males had slept rough.

'Staying temporarily with family or friends' was the main form of 'informal/hidden homelessness', 81 out of 96 episodes (of which 61 episodes were experienced by eleven males), and was a negative experience for many. Just over half (41) of these episodes were experienced as 'not-home', chiefly owing to 'instability' and a lack of 'permanence'. Only four episodes were experienced as 'home'; all were when staying with family (a parent). Of the fifteen 'rough sleeping' episodes, nearly half (seven) were experienced as 'not-home'. A total of five 'informal/hidden homelessness' episodes were experienced as 'home', chiefly because it was the 'norm', one of which was rough sleeping.

As noted earlier, the 'home' literature acknowledges links between 'home' and homelessness, but does not make a clear link between 'not-home' and homelessness. It certainly does not make a link between 'not-home' and different forms of homelessness,

---

[16] (http://centrepoint.org.uk/about-us/the-issue/why-young-people-become-homeless, sourced 2.9.14).
[17] (http://www.coram.org.uk/supporting-young-people/our-supported-housing?gclid=CMGl_Oanj8cCFajKtAod7SIHAw, sourced 4.8.15).

such as the present research has found between 'not-home' and 'informal/hidden homelessness'.

It is acknowledged that research can be constrained by the unstable nature of 'informal/hidden homelessness'; subjects can be hard to locate and it can be harder for participants to commit to taking part in an interview, as they don't always know where they will be staying/located from one day to the next. This has resulted in a lack of understanding about links between 'informal/hidden homelessness' and feelings of 'home', or their absence. The participants' stories in this study seem to show that their reliance on having to accommodate themselves in informal/hidden homeless situations has hindered their formation of 'home'. And as May (2000, p. 741) argues, our understanding of how much or why homeless people move, of their experiences of movement, or the impact such movement has upon their experience of homelessness and any subsequent understandings of 'home', is severely limited. These issues will be examined in the succeeding Chapters.

Formal homeless accommodation

45 episodes: 21 'not-home' episodes, 8 'home' episodes

NOT-HOME = 'not permanent'   HOME = the 'norm'

All participants experienced at least one episode of living in 'formal homeless accommodation'. Nearly a third (five) experiencing it positively (as 'home'); this amounts to less than a fifth (eight) of episodes, and chiefly because it was seen as the 'norm'. As the literature notes, in transitory homeless spaces, attempts may be made to carve out a sense of 'home', a desire for some kind of fixity (Mair, 1986; Mitchell, 1997; cited in May, 2000, p. 739).

Interestingly, three females experienced 'formal homeless accommodation' as 'home' because of 'positive relationships' with staff and/or other residents. All three had experienced poor early family relationships. This is similar to Hill's finding with respect to homeless women, for whom relationships formed in the shelter dominated their perceptions of the shelter as 'home' (1991, pp. 304-305). Correlations have also been made between prolonged homelessness and the experience of a homeless hostel as 'home' (Garside *et al.*, 1990). Prior to experiencing 'formal homeless accommodation' as 'home', all but one of the five participants in question had three or more previous homeless episodes (formal homeless accommodation and/or informal/hidden homelessness).

Unsurprisingly, over half (nine) of participants identified at least one 'formal homeless accommodation' episode as 'not-home', although only just under half (21) of episodes were experienced as such, with 'not permanent' being the dominant reason, the case for both males and females, along with a lack of 'positive selfhood' among females:

> It wasn't really home type of thing, it wasn't yours, you knew how long you'd got. So one day you've got a year left, so it's like the time goes down, so you can't really call them at home because it ain't really yours, you're just staying there. (Anthony)

> It was easy to tell yourself at the time using drugs that I wasn't homeless, but when I look back now I had none of the things that make a place a home. (Richard)

> It was just somewhere to stay, just passing through, never thought I would stay for long. (Ian)

> They were just stopping places, staying places they weren't your home. Obviously you say everywhere is your home, you say you're going home but they just weren't, there were nothing there. I were forever unsettled, moving around all the time. (Clare)

It is interesting that only just under half of all homeless episodes were experienced as 'not-home'. Given that homelessness is commonly perceived as a negative housing situation, it might be expected that more episodes would have been experienced as 'not-home'. As found in 'prison' and 'social care setting' episodes, feelings of ambivalence might be an explanation for this trend.

Independence and co-dependence

Sole tenancy

67 episodes: 31 'not-home' episodes, 16 'home' episodes

NOT-HOME = 'not permanent'   HOME = 'personal control'

All participants had experience of living in at least one 'sole tenancy'. Three participants had only ever had one 'sole tenancy', their resettlement tenancy when moving on from homelessness during 2007-08. Over half of 'sole tenancies' were in the private rented sector (37) and twenty-nine were in the social housing sector (local authority or housing association)[18].

The prevalence of private rented tenancies may, in part, be due to the greater supply and variety of private rented accommodation, which has less stringent qualifying criteria than social housing. Local authorities and housing associations set strict eligibility criteria, given a limited supply of housing, which can mean a single person is on the housing waiting list for a number of years. Interestingly, the type of rental tenure varied according to gender; over half (6) of female tenancies were social housing and over half (33) of males were private rented. And as with 'formal homeless accommodation', the younger age profile of females and their history of being in social care (four out of five females) may have meant they were classed as particularly 'vulnerable', thus scoring higher on social housing eligibility criteria.

Eleven participants experienced a 'sole tenancy' as 'not-home', with just under half (31) of episodes being experienced in this way, chiefly because it was 'not permanent'. Negative experiences of a 'sole tenancy' were nearly as common among male (8) as among female (3) participants, with a 'lack of positive selfhood' being the main feature among females and 'not permanent' the main feature among males.

> I couldn't do anything to make it mine. If you do anything to it you're losing out [since it's not yours. (Diane)

---

[18] One sole tenancy was sole owner occupation.

Just under half (five males, three females) of the subjects experienced a 'sole tenancy' as 'home', with just under a quarter (16) of these episodes described as such, the most prominent feature being 'personal control'. Only four of these episodes were experienced by females, thus comparison according to gender is not warranted.

Even though social housing tenancies accounted for less than half of all sole tenancies, it was in this category of tenure that both 'home' and 'not-home' were most commonly experienced. This may be explained by the fact that participants had higher expectations of social housing and lower expectations of private-rented housing; commonly perceived to provide less security of tenure, and be more expensive, poorer-quality accommodation[19]. For these reasons, participants may not have made as much of an emotional investment, one way or another, in private-rented accommodation.

Living with a partner

33 episodes: 14 'not-home' episodes, 7 'home' episodes

NOT-HOME = 'not permanent'   HOME = 'positive selfhood'

Eleven participants (seven males, four females) experienced 'living with a partner', the most common situation being 'living in a partner's tenancy'; accounting for over half (19) of episodes. This was the main situation for both males and females, accounting for over half their episodes (12 out of 22 episodes, and 7 out of 11 episodes, respectively). 'Living in a joint tenancy' or 'joint owner occupation' accounted for over a quarter (nine) of episodes, and 'living with a partner's family' accounted for under a quarter (five), with three of the four females having this experience compared to only two of the seven males in question.

Very few episodes (seven) were experienced as 'home', all of these by the seven male participants; 'positive selfhood' and 'positive relationships' being the main reasons. Twice as many episodes (14) were experienced as 'not-home', seven of which were experienced by one female and six by one male. 'Not-home' episodes were characterised thus: 'not permanent', 'lack of positive selfhood', and 'instability'.

It is interesting to note here that a near equal proportion of 'informal/hidden homelessness' (50 per cent), 'formal homeless accommodation' (47 per cent), 'sole tenancy' (46 per cent), and 'living with a partner' (42 per cent) episodes were experienced as 'not-home'. The common feeling across these episodes was a 'lack of permanence'. Thus, 'not-home' was near equally as likely to be experienced in homeless situations (commonly perceived as

---

[19] Shelter (a housing and homelessness charity) states that a key function of social housing is to provide accommodation on a secure basis that is affordable to people on low income. (http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns/why_we_campaign/Improving_social_housing/what_is_social_housing). In contrast, most private rental properties are let out at market rates and on short term contracts of 6-12 months. In 2012 over a third of private rented homes failed to meet the governments Decent Homes Standard, and 85,000 complaints were made about rogue landlords. (http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns/why_we_campaign/improving_private_renting)

negative and temporary) as in situations commonly perceived as more favourable, less temporary and more positive than homelessness. This suggests that participants struggled to find a sense of permanence. The social context of participants lives during each of their housing episodes provides clues as to why this might have been the case; explored in the succeeding Chapters.

Other housing situations

Participants experienced other types of housing situation, but to a lesser degree. Six males experienced eleven episodes of living in 'accommodation that came with a job or education', with three episodes being experienced as 'home'; for one participant this was because it was the 'norm' and for another it was because he had a 'positive relationship' with his employers. A further four episodes were described as 'not-home' because the accommodation was 'not permanent' (two episodes) or owing to 'instability' (two episodes).

For some participants, living with family as a child was not just a case of living with their parental family.   Three participants (two male and one female) started their childhood living with parents or a parent but later went to live with 'extended family'. For all three this was because their mother had died, after which two went to live with an aunt and her family, while one went to live with grandparents after six months in foster care. In total, there were six different episodes of living with 'extended family', four of which were experienced as 'not-home' and one was experienced as 'home'.

> It were just where I went to school, friends again, she made it a nice home, it's what you called your home, I had me dinners there. Like when I was at home with me mum. (Clare)

One female, who was adopted aged two, experienced living with her adoptive family as 'home' right from the outset and throughout her childhood. One male who was adopted at six months old had 'no strong feelings' about living with his adoptive family. One male had a brief episode in a drug rehabilitation unit (one month) and another spent five weeks in hospital; both episodes were characterised as 'no strong feelings'.

7.4   Best and worst housing experiences

Eleven participants cited one housing episode as their 'best' housing experience, four cited two, and one cited three. One male didn't know how to answer the question, as he saw positives in all his housing episodes.   With the prevalence of 'not-home', it may not be surprising that 'worst' housing experiences were more frequent than 'best' housing

experiences; seven participants cited one housing episode as their 'worst' housing experience, six cited two, two cited four, one cited seven and the final one cited fifteen. The following briefing boxes summarise the main findings:

'Best' housing experiences: familial settings characterised by 'positive relationships'

In total, twenty-two different housing episodes were cited as the 'best' housing experience. 'Living with parents or a parent during childhood' was cited most often (nine episodes); for all eight participants this was because of 'positive relationships':

> My first house when I was with my family [mum and dad]. It was a proper house, a house altogether. (Craig)

> My best housing experience, I would say when I was all together with my family. That's from the first house, I can remember to living on ******* Road when we were all together 'cause it was actually a good time. We used to go on holiday a lot and that and that's when we were all close before the drugs. (Rob)

'Living with a partner' was cited four times as a 'best' housing experience; a 'social care setting' was cited three times, as was a 'sole tenancy', and 'formal homeless accommodation' was cited twice. Participants' 'best' housing experiences were dominated by memories of 'positive relationships', which featured in nearly three-quarters (15 episodes) of these accounts:

> And the early years when I was with **** [girlfriend] that was good, living with her, our house in ***** [city] and in ****** [city] for 4 years, that was OK. The relationship was just good at the time, so it was a good place. (Richard)

> Me kids were young, I was in a happy relationship in a lovely house, emh, and just no worries, no worries, none whatsoever, literally no worries whatsoever. I could do whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted. The kids had whatever they wanted. The missus, she had whatever. (Stephen)

'Worst' housing experiences: informal/hidden homelessness situations characterised by 'instability'

In total, fourty-nine housing episodes were described as 'worst' housing experiences. 'Instability' was the most prominent feature, closely followed by a 'lack of positive selfhood'.

'Informal/hidden homelessness' accounted for nearly half of these episodes (23[20]), mainly due to the instability of the living situation:

> When I've stopped with friends here, there and everywhere, basically just somewhere to stay, temporary, just somewhere to stay, not home. To them it were home but to me it weren't home, it were just somewhere to put my head. It were different because I were stopping here for a night, there for a night, there were no

---

[20] 15 of these episodes were experienced by one male participant

> stability. Every day I were like "Where am I going to stop tonight?" It was unsettled. No stability of knowing where I were going to be stopping. (Paul)

> Being 'omeless when me and my ex-wife split up. I went to prison then came out and had nowhere to live, back into the same vicious cycle. (Paul)

> My worst housing experience, bloody hell, being homeless and just dodging around everybody and being on drugs and that. When I think on it now it was quite bad being on drugs and that 'cause like there were times where I didn't actually care where I was stopping. There were some right dodgy places where I were stopping in tents and things like that. I didn't like it but I had to do it 'cause I had got nowhere else to stop 'cause I were on drugs. I'd say that really from all the times I were homeless, they were the worst. (Rob)

> My drug use was really chaotic, really bad. That was probably the worst experience in terms of homelessness. I've never actually been on the streets but that was effectively living in a car, it's stupid, 'init? (Richard)

'Formal homeless accommodation' accounted for over a fifth (11) of the 'worst' housing experiences, mainly due to feelings of a 'lack of positive selfhood'. For some participants this stemmed from living in a negative environment of drug use and living with people they wouldn't usually, or want to, associate with:

> Sixteen year old girls stay up late. They think they are dead good and can stay up late, because they're not at home, shouting and screaming down the corridor. It was horrible. (Nicola)

> I was living with a load of heroin addicts. (Nicola)

> That hostel it were 'orrible, dirty, just 'orrible and the people that lived there smack heads and that, 'orrible, I daren't touch 'owt. (Female)

> There was a weird atmosphere, it was like a prison block. (Anthony)

> I wasn't accustomed to that life of those kinds of people, drunks and junkies. (Ian)

As noted earlier, in 'formal homeless accommodation' there is often a concentration in one place of people with many vulnerabilities and problems, which can expose residents to risks (McNaughton, 2008). It seems unsurprising therefore that 'homelessness', i.e. 'informal/hidden homelessness' and 'formal homeless accommodation', accounted for over two thirds (34) of the 'worst' housing experiences.

Descriptions of 'worst' and 'best' housing experiences were typically situation-specific, rather than the general descriptions that were often the case in the ascriptions of 'home' and 'not-home', discussed earlier in this Chapter. For participants, 'best' and 'worst' may have been more common, emotive and precise terms than 'home' and not-home', conjuring up starker experiences and more definite feelings towards a dwelling place.

One housing situation was most frequently described as both 'home' and 'best' housing experience: 'living with parents or a parent during childhood', with the main feature

in both cases being 'positive relationships'. On the other hand, 'informal/hidden homelessness' was most frequently described as 'not-home' and the 'worst' housing experience, with the main features being 'not permanent' and 'instability'. This may almost seem obvious or common-sensical, but the message could not be clearer; being homeless is a negative experience.

7.5   Overview

From a young age the majority of participants in this study had moved frequently, often moving between different housing situations with different levels of security and permanency. As other studies have found, young people's 'independent housing experiences are characterised by a relatively high level of fragmentation, mobility and flux, whether by constraint or choice' (Ford *et al.* 2000, p. 2462). The transition to independent living is often a continuing process, not a one-off event; young people move between different housing situations, including social housing, parental homes, private renting, hostels and staying with friends (ECOTEC, 2008, pp. 7-8). Homelessness dominated participants' housing histories, accounting for thirty-seven per cent of their housing episodes; over two-thirds (68 per cent) of which was 'informal/hidden homelessness'. The insecurity of homelessness, particularly 'informal/hidden homelessness', fueled high levels of movement and pushed up the number of housing episodes. As other studies have recorded, youth homelessness has been found to be characterised by movement between different homeless situations (i.e. Maycock *et al.*, 2008).

Such housing histories may account for the fact that negative ('not-home') experiences of dwelling places were twice as frequent as positive ('home') ones. This suggests that participants only had a few reference points for 'home', often rooted in a limited number of housing situations, and often a long time ago i.e. in childhood when living with parents or a parent. This resonates with May's argument that when street homelessness, i.e. rooflessness, has become a long-term experience, a clear articulation of 'home' as residence can be difficult because the individual may only have access to limited experiences by which the concept of 'home' is usually understood (2000, p. 739). And as outlined above, participants only experienced strong emotions (i.e. feelings of 'home' or 'not-home') in just over half (213) of all housing episodes; all other episodes have been classified as 'no strong feelings', which suggests that participants either did not, or could not, make much of an emotional investment in those dwelling places, or may just have felt ambivalent. As Horwitz and Tognoli found, 'home' was deeply related to an individual's sense of personal growth and

changes, as a living process or a construction, rather than a fixed concept of place (1982, p. 339), implying that individuals had to be ready to create their own 'home'.

The main housing situation to be experienced as 'home' for both males and females was 'living with parents or a parent during childhood', while 'informal/hidden homelessness' was the primary housing situation to be experienced as 'not-home', although this was not the case among females. Females in this study experienced unlikely places as 'home' ('formal homeless accommodation', for example) and as 'not-home' ('living with parents or a parent during childhood', for example). Equally, feelings of 'home' and 'not-home' differed according to gender, with female experiences focused on emotional elements ('positive relationships' and 'a lack of positive selfhood'), whereas male experiences were focused on less emotional elements (such as the 'norm' and 'not permanent'). Overall, accounts of 'home' and 'not-home' were dominated by a single feature, with 'home' clearly centred on emotional security ('positive relationships') and 'not-home' centred on physical insecurity ('not permanent'). The next Chapter will offer further explanation for these patterns by examining the nuanced picture of 'home lives'. Detailed case studies of three participants' housing, 'home' and social trajectories show how the experience of a particular social context in childhood instigated housing and social change, which wasn't really a recipe for 'home'. Brief 'life' accounts of the remaining fourteen participants, presented in Appendix F, further illustrate this pattern.

Chapter Eight: Home life - the context of 'home' over time

8.0   Introduction

The previous Chapter outlined the main housing situations experienced by participants and how they were characterised by different features of 'home' and 'not-home', showing similarities, as well as clear differences, according to gender.   When recounting their housing experiences, participants were asked to detail what was happening in their life during each housing episode, thus providing a contextual framework within which 'home' experiences could be understood. For the majority of participants, their first 'home' and 'not home' experiences (fifteen and ten participants respectively) were during childhood (0-18 years old).

This Chapter starts with a contextual outline of the participants' lives by presenting a social profile of the participants. The remainder of the Chapter focuses on three particular social contexts that a number of participants experienced, which had changed their lives. Commonalities and differences in the experience and impact of the context change are examined. A more complex, nuanced picture of 'home life' is then presented in three case studies which capture the housing and 'home' trajectories of three participants within the social context of their lives, understanding that home is a complex process that builds over time, which is a myriad of personal, social, cultural and physical qualities' (Kellett and Moore, 2003, p. 131). Each case study illustrates how a significant change in personal circumstances - sudden or gradual, self-imposed or not, can lead to housing mobility and insecurity and social upheaval from a young age. Feelings of 'not-home' or having 'no strong feelings' were common, although feelings of 'home' could also be found.   Shorter, 'brief life' accounts, of all other participants, supplement these case studies (refer to Appendix F), and include individuals who experienced similar social situations and contexts as individuals in the case studies. The case studies and 'brief life' accounts are based on the stories participants told me, which include their own personal interpretations of events and meanings they gave to things.

Although participants had unique lives, there were some similar social circumstances in common. All had for example experienced at least one episode of homelessness and one episode of living in a sole tenancy. A brief overview of the range of participants' social circumstances will be outlined first.

8.1   Social profile of participants

Participant's lives were shaped by a variety of social contexts. For the purpose of this study 'social context' [21] refers to the individual social circumstances of a participant. Here is a detailed list of the various social contexts experienced by participants, grouped according to particular social characteristics:

Childhood
Parents together
Parents split up
Step-parent/figure (living in the same dwelling place)
Disagreement with family/carer/step-parent (including argument, not getting on, not liking/obeying rules)
Death of mother
Being adopted
Living with other family during childhood
Living in a social care setting
Schooling
Disrupted schooling (including expulsion, prolonged absences, moving schools)

Housing and homelessness
Formal homeless accommodation
Informal/hidden homelessness
Frequent moving (10+ housing episodes)

Health[22]
Mental health problems

Behavioural/lifestyle
Criminal behaviour/prison (including anti-social behaviour, theft, prison detention or other correctional setting)
Drug misuse
Alcohol misuse
Unsettled/unable to cope in sole tenancy

Relationships
Partner (in a relationship i.e. living or not living with a partner)
Split-up with partner
Child(ren)/being pregnant (children living with participant or not)

Employment/further education
Employment
Unemployment
Tertiary education/training (including college, training via the job centre or voluntary sector)

---

[21] Human social environments (i.e. social contexts) encompass the immediate physical surroundings, social relationships, and cultural milieus within which defined groups of people function and interact. Embedded within contemporary social environments are historical social and power relations that have become institutionalized over time. Social environments are dynamic and change over time as the result of both internal and external forces (Barnett and Casper, 2001).

[22] No participant reported physical health problems

Several social contexts were experienced by a majority (ten or more) of participants. All had experienced 'formal homeless accommodation'; nearly all had experienced 'frequent moving' (16), 'informal/hidden homelessness' (14), 'employment' (14) and 'unemployment' (15); and over half had experienced 'drug misuse' (11), 'tertiary education/training' (10) and 'criminal behaviour/prison' (9). All participants had experienced 'multiple' social contexts, averaging seven different social contexts each, with little difference apparent according to gender. Overall, the majority of participants had to cope, and deal with, significant social issues in both childhood and adulthood.

As discussed in the previous Chapter, participants' housing histories were characterised by high levels of transience; averaging twenty-two housing episodes per participant, well above the national average (sixteen different homes in a lifetime[23]). Frequent moving meant the majority of housing episodes were short, often very short term (6 months duration or less). Participants were moving around different housing situations and different dwelling places, and in some cases were moving around different dwelling places whilst remaining in the same housing situation, for example moving between family and friends ('informal/hidden homelessness') or different 'social care settings'. As noted in Chapter Seven, frequent moving was fuelled by reliance on informal/hidden homelessness situations. Again, it should be noted that the existing literature pays little attention to the possible impact of frequent movement between dwelling places on experiences, and meanings of 'home'.

High levels of transience were experienced in both 'childhood' (0-18 years old, 158 housing episodes) and 'adulthood' (19+ years old, 223 housing episodes), averaging nine and fourteen episodes per participant respectively. Please note that the figure for adulthood is based on sixteen participants as one participant was only eighteen years old. Levels of mobility were higher in 'late childhood' (11-18 years old), averaging six episodes per participant, compared to three in 'early childhood' (0-10 years old). The detrimental effect of moving frequently in childhood has been well-documented, as noted earlier. For example, Oishi and Schimmack (2010, p. 989) found that individuals who had moved frequently in 'childhood' reported lower levels of well-being than those who had not. In particular they found that frequent 'childhood' moves could make maintaining long-term relationships difficult; for example, peer rejection at a new school could lead to withdrawal and loneliness,

---

[23] Sixteen homes includes houses in childhood, university lodgings, rented flat shares, first time buys, family homes and downsizing for retirement.
http://www.scotsman.com/news/sixteen-the-average-number-of-homes-you-ll-have-in-a-lifetime-1-6840940 published 2nd March 2007.

with long-term consequences such as dropping out of school and engaging in criminal activities in 'adulthood' (*ibid.,* p. 990).

In presenting the case studies, consideration should be given to the inherent difficulty, for anyone, of precisely recalling past events and emotions. Ultimately, the sharing of information and level of disclosure was the choice of each participant. In order to maintain the confidence and trust of the participants, probing questions, which could have been interpreted negatively or hostilely, were, wherever possible, kept to the bare minimum or avoided altogether. This interviewing policy reflected two factors. The intrinsic difficulty and sensitivity of the stories themselves, loaded with emotional baggage, and the possibility of past negative experiences and/or fatigue of being asked to give an account of past events to statutory and/or third sector personnel; this is often required when attempting to access their services.

8.2   Change in social context

The experience of particular social contexts proved to instigate significant housing and social change for many participants. Certain social contexts were experienced by a number of participants, which between them showed a pattern of change in housing and social circumstances. The remainder of this Chapter examines three specific social contexts that changed a number of participants' lives; the death of one's mothering during childhood, one's parent's splitting up during childhood, and living in social care settings during childhood. Participants' experiences are summarised first then individual stories are used to illustrate how hard it was to find 'home' in the midst of a life of housing and social instability.

8.2.1   The death of one's mother during childhood

Three participants (one female, two male) experienced the death of their mother in childhood (two were aged between 8-10 years old, and the other was aged between 14-16 years old). All were living with their mother and father, or a step-father or similar. Only one had siblings and step-siblings. Whilst living with their mother only one of the three had experienced moving-house. All housing episodes were experienced as 'home'; 'positive relationships' featured in all these episodes. The family situation changed significantly for all three participants after the death of their mother. All three were 'parentless', i.e. infrequent or no contact with their father or father figure, and went to live with extended family (one did so after a six month stay in a social care setting). For two of them, this was with an aunt and her family, and the third went to live with grandparents. For the participant who was the oldest when his mother died (14-16 years old) but the youngest at the time of interview (18-20 years

old), living with extended family only lasted a short time (up to six months), after which he resided in formal homeless accommodation (two episodes) and then in sole tenancies (two). For the other two, their stays with their extended families lasted much longer, almost 10 years. One left in her late teens and the other in his twenties. This may be due to the fact that both were under 10 years old when their mother died. Upon leaving, frequent moving around different housing situations characterised both their housing histories, with homelessness first occurring in their twenties.

Thus, after living with extended family members, all three experienced housing mobility. At the same time all three faced further social upheaval and challenges with virtually all housing episodes after the death of their mother being experienced as 'not-home', with 'not permanent' a consistent theme in all these episodes. One participant experienced one out of five housing episodes after the death of his mother as 'home' (a sole tenancy characterised by personal control, consistent place, positive selfhood and personalised space), another experienced two out of eighteen episodes (after the death of her mother) as 'home', with 'positive relationships' featuring in both (living with extended family during childhood and formal homeless accommodation). Thus 'home' was rooted in their childhood when living with their mother; the positive relationship they had with their mother was their reference point for 'home'. After the death of their mother any sense of 'home' was hard to find; instead any emotions they had towards dwelling places were overwhelmingly negative (expressed as 'not home').

For these three, unemployment was more common than employment, with only one participant having experienced prolonged periods of employment (twelve months or longer), and two having engaged in tertiary education.

In addition to the detailed case study presented below, 'brief lives' E and J, present brief life histories of the other two individuals who experienced the death of their mother during childhood.

CASE STUDY: Clare, aged between 25 and 30 years old at the time of interview, 19 housing episodes

Clare's 'home life'

Clare's earliest housing memory was living with her mother and her mother's boyfriend. Clare did not disclose the whereabouts of her biological father. Clare liked school, had friends, used to go on holiday and had regular contact with her maternal extended family.

Living with her mother was 'home' because of the 'positive relationship' they had, her mother made it 'homely' and it's where all her friends were (positive relationships):

> I only lived there until eight year olds so…I don't know, she made it home 'cause it were mum who lived there, it were just homely. It was where all my friends were.

Clare described living with her mum as 'good'. Later on, however, this experience was overshadowed by having to watch her mother die of a terminal condition over several long months which meant it wasn't Clare's 'best' housing experience. Clare was between eight to ten years old when her mother passed away, after which she never saw her mother's boyfriend again. Clare moved in with her auntie Liz (her mother's sister) and her family (uncle and cousin), this involved moving between five to ten miles away and a new school; here she made new friends. It was more or less like living with her mother, but a bit different, because Liz was older than Clare's mother. This housing episode lasted less than two years as Clare's auntie split-up with her husband.

Clare and her auntie (Liz) went to live with her auntie's sister (Gill), who had a husband and children. This meant moving just under ten miles away to an area where other family members and friends lived. Clare attended the local school. Clare didn't experience either episode of living with her aunt(s) as 'home'; they weren't permanent and she didn't feel great in herself (lack of positive selfhood). There was nothing there, she felt unsettled. After a year at her auntie Gill's, Clare's auntie Liz moved in with her boyfriend and Clare went to live with them, this involved moving less than five miles away. Clare liked school, had friends and used to go on holiday. She had used drugs by the age of twelve and had had a couple of boyfriends. For Clare this housing episode was 'home', because of the 'positive relationship' she had with her aunt and it felt like the 'norm':

> It were just where I went to school, friends again, she made it a nice home, it's what you called your home, I had me dinners there. Like when I was at home with me mum.

So, for the first seventeen years of her life Clare lived with her immediate and extended family. Clare was close to her auntie Liz, but as she got older, she felt that she was a bit strict, and after ongoing disagreements Clare, aged just under 18 years old, left and moved in with her boyfriend, with whom she'd been having a long distance relationship writing to each other after meeting him locally. This involved moving over fifty miles away. After two months Clare and her boyfriend moved into accommodation that came with his job, meaning a moved of over 200 miles. They had a house to themselves which Clare liked. They stayed

there for over a year and got married when Clare was eighteen years old. Clare worked and made friends, she remained in touch with her family and they visited her.

In the following two years Clare moved twice with her husband's work; once involved moving over four hundred miles and the second over two hundred miles. Clare made friends; in the first location she looked after the house and in the second she got a job and really liked her house. Moving around meant she was forever unsettled however; she found moving around stressful. By the time she was twenty years old, Clare had had two children with her husband. Although she found being a mother good, Clare reported that moving around with her husband's job was also stressful for their children, so both children went to live with their paternal family (grandparents), over 80 miles away, and Clare visited them. Clare and her husband split up after less than six years together. She'd had enough and 'couldn't be arsed' anymore, although she stated it was a mutual decision. She remained in the 'family home' on her own for less than three months.

Clare had already known another man for a few months and decided to move in with him (in his parent's house), which involved moving eighty miles, back to near where she grew up. She worked for a short time and she and her partner moved into a joint tenancy in the same area and had a child. After less than twelve months in the house, Clare and her partner split up and their child, who was under a year old, went to live with the partner's extended family; Clare did not give an explanation as to why.

So, by her early twenties, Clare had moved several times, been married, had a new partner, and had three children, all of whom went to live with their paternal family (grandparents). Upon leaving her husband and moving away Clare said that she, 'moved back altogether', and when she left her next partner and moved away, she said that she, 'left altogether again'. This suggests that Clare wanted and/or needed to leave everything behind and move on.

Next, Clare went to live in a flat for a very brief period which was one of her worst housing experiences, as it wasn't stable. She didn't know whether she was going to be there the next day or whether she was going to be on the streets. Clare wanted to leave the area. Friends who lived eighty miles away offered her a place to stay, in a shared house; she got a job and made friends. She liked sharing a house; she stayed there for less than six months until the house was sold, after which she became formally homeless for the first time. Via a voluntary organisation, Clare managed to secure accommodation in a homeless hostel, here she made a few friends and stayed a few months. During this period Clare went to see her aunties a few times but only had phone contact with her children; the reasons for this were not given and

the level of frequency was not disclosed. Clare was given just over one year's probation for violent behaviour.

Clare decided that she wanted to start again and go 'home', back to the area where she grew up; she knew about a night shelter there. She stayed there for under three months, at which time she made new friends; her old friends were using drugs. She got a job and told her family she was back but still only had phone contact with her children; the level of frequency was not disclosed. This was one of her 'worst' housing experiences, as she wasn't used to being around drug addicts (i.e. the other residents), and bed occupancy was often altered. So Clare arranged an interview with a formal homeless accommodation provider in the same area and moved into one of their supported housing projects; a shared house with support workers onsite twenty-four hours a day. Living there Clare felt she had more freedom to go out when she wanted; she liked having her own room; it was a lot friendlier and she made friends with everyone. She also found that having a support worker was good for her as it got her into a routine and made her a lot better:

> You know where you're going, you know what you're doing, you know what your goals are and how to move on. It's like they help you get a job, sort your benefits out they don't just leave you to do it on your own. At **** ***** [night shelter] they just leave you.

Clare had several jobs whilst living at the project and for a brief time, less than three months, used Class A drugs. Her motivation for using drugs was to fit in; everyone else was on that wave length so she joined in. Clare didn't feel she had a drug problem as she only used for a short time and accessed support to get 'clean', this involved taking prescribed medication to help with withdrawal symptoms. Clare also rekindled a relationship with an ex-partner. After less than twelve months Clare felt ready to leave the project and move into her own tenancy.

Clare was resettled into her first sole tenancy in the same area as the supported housing project, and her boyfriend moved in soon after. Clare didn't cope very well managing the household bills and didn't want to get into loads of debt. Her relationship wasn't going very well either and she didn't want to live with her boyfriend anymore. It was all too much; she knew it wasn't going to work out. Clare gave up her tenancy and referred herself back to the supported housing project she had left a month previous; she knew she needed their help.

Clare settled back into the supported housing project (i.e. formal homeless accommodation) and classed it as 'home' for several reasons: 'positive relationships' with staff; 'personal control' of her room, which she was allowed to 'personalise' and there weren't lots of rules. The house was 'homely' with a proper living room. This was Clare's 'best' housing experience; the staff were like family and she got on with them really well. Clare didn't look

for a job as she felt her criminal record counted against her. She had no contact with her extended family or her children. At the time of our interview, Clare had been living at the project for over twelve months, had a partner and was expecting her fourth child.

Reflecting on her housing history, Clare was asked to sum up her housing experiences in five words or less:

> hard (night shelter)
> not good
> crap
> brilliant (supported housing)
> unsettling

Clare had got used to moving on a regular basis, this apparently didn't bother her, as she knew she couldn't settle; she never had time to settle. As a result of her housing experiences Clare felt that she had become more street-wise and independent; she had learnt how to look after herself:

> It doesn't bother me [moving around] at all. I've done it that much it really doesn't bother me.

> You always know in the back of your head you can't settle down I suppose.

At the time of interviewing, Clare felt that she wanted to settle down. But the impending move out of her supported accommodation, due to the imminent birth of her fourth child, bothered her because she liked living there:

> I just want to get on with me own life and get settled for once and do what I want. I'm a lot older and I've got a baby on the way so I don't want it to have a life like I've had; unsettled and moving round all the time. Stay in one place.

Clare's preferred housing situation was a council house with a garden in a 'nicer' area a few miles away. She felt a council house would be *hers* and more secure than having to continually renew a private rented tenancy:

> It's what you picture as a family home 'init, partner, kids.

Having a 'home' was important to Clare because a 'home' has love in it:

> A home has got love in it hasn't it, so it is important to call a place home, it is to me anyway. This place [supported housing] I think is home. All the staff love you, they actually care about you. There are a few [staff] that probably don't, that are just here for the money, but you see more of the nicer ones.

Looking to the future? Clare just wanted a 'normal' life; to be living in her own place, working or going to college:

> A normal life is going to work, having a nice home, just family life, nowt with drugs in it or 'owt like that, and that's why I'm not staying in ****** [the area that she currently lived in], it's full of muppets and idiots. They don't want to move on though and I do.

Clare also planned on looking into becoming a support worker:

> 'Cause I've had loads of experience at this end so I know how to 'elp someone in my situation.

Comment

After the traumatic experience of the death of her mother when she was between eight to ten years old, the subsequent loss of her 'home' rooted in the 'positive relationship' she had with her mother, Clare lived with extended family until her late teens. She then moved around different housing situations, living in different parts of the UK. Clare had only lived on her own twice, for very short periods (one to two weeks), and had only been homeless for a total of eighteen months (four episodes in her early to mid-twenties). Clare had responsibilities (children and a husband) from a young age and received very limited, if any family support. Other than one episode of living with her aunt for six years, Clare didn't stay in one place for very long (her longest housing episode was for just over a year). Similarly, the relationships that Clare formed, for example with her husband, partners and her children didn't last very long either, although Clare felt she always made friends quite easily:

> Some of 'em [relationships with partners] were all right. Some of 'em you just knew it weren't right.

So Clare experienced a number of other, often significant changes in her social circumstances after the death of her mother; her life didn't stand still for very long.

What is clear from Clare's 'home-life' is that 'home' was based around 'positive relationships'. However, when Clare had 'close' relationships in a dwelling place, i.e. with a partner or her children, she seemed unable or unwilling to sustain them, which may account for so few experiences of 'home'. In these instances, Clare had a 'caring' role (mother and wife/partner) whereas in her three experiences of 'home' she was being 'cared' for (by her mother, her auntie, or project staff). Thus it could be suggested that Clare struggled with her responsibility of caring for others; perhaps she still needed to be cared for herself, something she didn't experience with any of her partners.

Nevertheless, Clare's housing history suggests very strongly that she did not want to be alone. Relationships with partners were usually short, and after they had ended Clare soon moved on to a new relationship. Apart from three to four weeks, in just over twenty-five years, Clare always lived with other people. This suggests that Clare needed and/or wanted to be around other people, although she knew she couldn't settle. Perhaps she always thought that it wouldn't last long, and that moving on was easier (emotionally) than staying? Clare's housing history also suggests that the frequent changes in her social circumstances since the death of her mother may have disrupted her version of 'home', leaving her both emotionally and physically unsettled, detached. Clare only found 'home' again when 'positive relationships' were experienced; living with her aunt and with staff in supported accommodation. Was Clare's initial experience of 'home' with her mother what she was looking for in other dwelling places in order to experience them as 'home'? 'Home' was about feeling looked after and cared for, feeling loved. So Clare only experienced three out of nineteen housing episodes as 'home', all the others were experienced as 'not-home' for the same reasons; they were 'not permanent' and made her feel a 'lack of positive selfhood':

> They were just stopping places, staying places, they weren't your home. Obviously, you say everywhere is your home, you say you're going home but they just weren't, there were nothing there. I were just too unsettled to feel 'owt.

It should be noted that in the interview Clare had to be prompted to talk about her first two children; it was known she had children from the information she had provided in her previous FOR-HOME study interviews. Clare did not talk about them during her discussion of the relevant housing episodes. After prompting, Clare was left to talk about her children in the level of detail she felt comfortable with. The subject was obviously sensitive and difficult for her, so only very limited probing was deemed to be appropriate. Thus there is, unfortunately, little detail about Clare's relationship with her children and why they went to live with their extended paternal family (grandparents). Clare did mention her third child when talking about the relevant housing episode, but again she offered very limited detail.

8.2.2 One's parents splitting up during childhood

Twelve participants' first housing memories were of living with both their parents. Half of these (two females, four males) experienced their parents splitting up, and for four of them this was in early childhood; between the ages of three and ten years old. Some had siblings at the time and/or had siblings later (half-brothers or sisters). For four of these six, living with both parents was experienced as 'home', where 'positive relationships' were a feature for all. The remaining two had 'no strong feelings' about living with their parents. Three of the six had only lived in one dwelling place whilst their parents were together.

Parents splitting up triggered a range of events; four participants moved to a new dwelling place; the mother left in three cases. For three participants a step-parent/figure moved into their dwelling place, which all still experienced as 'home' because it was the 'norm'; there was variable contact with the non-resident parent. In late childhood (eleven to eighteen years old) four went to live with the other parent, of which two lived between their mother's and their father's houses.

All six of these participants went on to experience a range of other social issues throughout late childhood; four experienced 'school disruption' in their teens, including irregular attendance and expulsion; three lived with a parent who engaged in negative behaviour (drug or alcohol misuse, violent behaviour); and four had a 'disagreement or issue with their parent and/or step-parent/figure', which contributed to them moving out by the age of sixteen. Family conflict, such as rows or violence, is often cited as the main reason for leaving the family 'home' early (see Jones, 1995) and, as noted earlier, it is the main cause of youth homelessness.

After leaving, each of the two females spent around three years in different 'social care settings'. Stays in other dwelling places including sole tenancies and owner occupation, tended to be short (shortest one week) to medium term (longest four years). Frequent moving between different housing situations was common, characterised by regular moves into and out of homelessness. For two the initial experience of homelessness was between twelve and fourteen years of age; for three it was at sixteen years; and for one it was at twenty years. For all but one, 'informal/hidden homelessness' was their first experience of homelessness. All went on to experience numerous episodes (nine on average) of homelessness (informal/hidden homelessness and formal homeless accommodation), it being the most frequent housing situation for all but two. 'Informal/hidden homelessness' was twice as common and episodes were much shorter, than 'formal homeless accommodation'. All six participants had lived in at least one 'sole tenancy'. For those who experienced two or more sole tenancies they tended to be fairly short-term, twelve months or less. Two males also experienced living in a joint tenancy or an owner-occupied dwelling with a partner; both relationships were long-term and intermittent. Five of the six had experienced 'living with a partner'.

For all but one participant 'home' was pretty elusive after leaving the parental dwelling place, with four experiencing only one housing episode as 'home'. A variety of housing situations were experienced as 'home'; living in a social care setting (foster care); living with a partner; living in a sole tenancy; living in formal homelessness accommodation and living in an informal/hidden homelessness situation (staying with family). 'Positive

selfhood' and 'positive relationships' were common features of 'home'. For four of the six, having 'no strong feelings' towards a dwelling place was a much more common experience than 'not-home'. This suggests that participants struggled to form any emotional attachment (positive or negative) to dwelling places after their parent's split-up.

Engaging in 'negative' behaviour was common place (five out of six participants); five were involved in criminal behaviour, leading to prison detention for four, of which two had repeated detentions (five each); four started misusing drugs by the age of sixteen, resulting in regular and prolonged drug misuse into adulthood for three. Other (to differing degrees less negative) social contexts were also experienced; two went on to have one or more children; five experienced both employment and unemployment, with the latter being more frequent; both females engaged in tertiary education courses whilst they were homeless (via their formal homeless accommodation provider) and one male participated in tertiary education whilst in prison.

In addition to the detailed case study presented below, 'brief lives' A, D, H, M and N, present brief life histories of the other five individuals who experienced their parents splitting-up during childhood.

CASE STUDY: Stephen, aged between 40 and 45 years old at the time of interview, 28 housing episodes

Stephen's 'home life'

Stephen's first housing memory was living with his parents (who were married) and numerous siblings in an owner-occupied dwelling. His mother made everything nice and his father had his own business but was often involved in criminal behaviour (i.e. violence and fighting) resulting in the family being well known in the area. Stephen enjoyed school, had friends and used to go on holiday. Overall, he remembers it as a good time in his life; everything was alright, they were the best times as a family. At the same time, however, it wasn't *great*. Much changed when Stephen's parents split-up when he was just over six years old. Stephen's mother moved over eighty miles away to live with another man. His father won full custody of the children, and Stephen didn't see his mother for three years, after which they saw each other infrequently but kept in regular contact via phone calls.

With his father and siblings, Stephen moved less than twenty miles away to a much quieter area. For Stephen everything went downhill after his mother left. The split hit his father hard and Stephen felt his father took it out on him. Stephen didn't feel like they were a family anymore, and he didn't always get on with his siblings (there was fighting). What's more, he

no longer had his mother to go to. Other aspects of Stephen's life weren't going very well either; he didn't feel comfortable in the house; he never really settled in the area; never made any 'proper' friends, and after a while, he didn't attend school regularly and got into fights at school. In fact, he remembers that he hated school. This behaviour (fighting) continued in secondary school, this got him into trouble with the police. Stephen's whole family (father, siblings and himself) had a reputation for violence and fighting. Things got really bad between Stephen and his father; arguments would lead to 'pushing' and 'shoving' and his father would threaten him. There was no love between Stephen and his father, and he came to hate his father. During this time Stephen managed to maintain several hobbies (outdoor and musical) which continued into adulthood. Stephen expressed 'no strong feelings' towards living with his father, even though it was his 'worst' housing experience:

> That was just hell. I can't explain it. If you didn't live it and you didn't see it you can't explain it. Me dad, where I lived, the whole lot it was just a no go from the beginning. I mean if I would have got taken into care I would have been a hell of a lot better off.

Stephen had had enough, and just before his fifteenth birthday a family member helped him move to his mother's and step-father's (an owner-occupied dwelling over eighty miles away). He really liked the house and had his own room for the first time. His mother and step-father worked. Stephen was meant to be home–schooled but it never happened. He made friends and continued with his hobbies and took up some new ones.

> Just didn't have to worry any more. It was like a huge weight off me shoulders, never looking behind us all the time. Yeah it was great, no worries whatsoever and everything was like new so, it was brilliant.

A couple of years later, Stephen's step-father's health declined, meaning a move to more suitable accommodation less than five miles away. They hadn't been there long when Stephen got into trouble with the police because of violent behaviour (fighting) and was sentenced to over eighteen months in a young offender's institution. Upon release, Stephen experienced homelessness (informal/hidden) for the first time; temporarily living with his mother and step-father for a few months. When Stephen's friend got a flat, Stephen went to stay with him temporarily (informal/hidden homelessness). Stephen got a part-time job and was in a serious relationship for a very brief period.

After a year Stephen moved into his own tenancy for the first time and lived there for less than four years. He really liked the flat, the area and the three jobs he had; one day job, two night jobs, meaning he was easily able to manage the bills. Stephen made a lot of friends through work.

Violence and fighting saw Stephen spend over four years in a number of different prisons. They were all over two hundred miles away (South East England). Upon release, Stephen moved over forty miles away from the last prison he was in ('area 1'), got his own place (sole tenancy), and a job, and made friends. Stephen really liked the area; it was a lot better than where his mother and step-father lived ('area 2'). He would regularly travel over two hundred miles to visit his mother and step-father, which is where, just short of his thirtieth birthday he met a woman. She used to visit Stephen in area 1. After a while, Stephen bought a business in area 1, and commuted between areas 1 and 2 for over two years. Stephen got married, had two children and bought a house in area 2, where his wife and children lived.

Stephen's business was doing really well so in his early thirties he sold up and bought a house with some land, in area 1, and set up another business. He loved having a family and being a father, and was able to afford a very comfortable lifestyle. This was the first housing episode that Stephen experienced as 'home', because of 'positive relationships' and 'positive selfhood':

> 'Cause everything was there. That's when everything in my life was at its perfect. I mean everybody in their life has one bit of it when everything runs a hundred per cent and that's when it did. Emh, probably in the rest of me life I'll probably never get back to that. We had everything so there was just no worries whatsoever.

This was also Stephen's 'best' housing experience, because he had no worries and had everything he wanted:

> It just was [the best]. Me kids were young, I was in a happy relationship in a lovely house, emh, and just no worries, no worries, none whatsoever literally no worries whatsoever. I could do whatever I wanted whenever I wanted. The kids had whatever they wanted. The missus she had whatever.

Unfortunately, the good times didn't last long. Before he turned thirty-five, Stephen went to prison for a third time, again due to violence and fighting. Upon release, over a year later, Stephen went back to live in area 2 at a friend's (informal/hidden homelessness). His wife and children had also moved back to the area. The property in area 1 had been sold and Stephen and his wife split-up, but soon got back together. They moved into a house Stephen bought in area 2 and Stephen had a job for a while. After a few months Stephen and his wife split-up again and he moved into a flat close by. His children weren't happy so he moved back in to the family home a few months later but, again, it didn't work out.

Stephen moved into a shared house and after four months he moved into his own tenancy. Stephen set up another business and after a year he moved into another tenancy. However, things got too much for him and he started drinking.

The business was doing well but I was starting to drink quite a bit and that's when the problems started occurring. 'Cause of everything that was going on. Drinking helps you stop feeling and that was it. I used to think about the business and this that and the other but it was just…when you're not working you start thinking about things and you start thinking I'm gonna do this, you know what I mean and I…I used drink as an excuse basically so…at first it was alright but the more money I was making the more I seemed to be spending.

After more than three years in the flat, Stephen was evicted (due to violence and fighting) and went to prison for the fourth time (for the same reason), serving over six months. Upon release, Stephen moved into his own tenancy and his girlfriend moved in soon after. His tenancy ended less than a year later, after which he lived in formal homeless accommodation for the first time. He was soon asked to leave (violence and fighting). Stephen then slept rough (informal/hidden homelessness) for a few weeks until he went to prison for the fifth time (violence and fighting). His sentence was cut short after agreeing to undertake alcohol detox in formal homeless accommodation. This detox lasted just under six months. After detox, Stephen was resettled into his own tenancy, where he received social security benefits. He only stayed there for about a year, as health issues regarding his mobility meant that Stephen required ground floor accommodation or accommodation with lift access.

At the time of the interview, Stephen had been in his new flat (with lift access) for over six months. He was deemed unfit to work and was receiving health-related social security benefits. Stephen was abstaining from alcohol, had hobbies and friends, and was seeing his children occasionally, although he never saw any of his siblings. This was the only housing episode that Stephen described as 'not-home' because it wasn't permanent:

I have no intention of staying here. It's like I told you I mean when I've been on the list 12 month I *will* bid to go back to ***** [area 1]. Basically until I get back there I will never have a place that I can truly call a home. It's just I'm so relaxed there and that's basically what you call home, you know what I mean.

Stephen viewed his resettlement tenancy and his current tenancy as positive steps to building himself back up:

You need your home to, it's the first step to you know building yourself back. When you've been like in detox and this, that and the other and you've been on the street and gone through all that you'll never get out of it if you don't have the first step. I mean the first step can be just a tiny little place like my last place [resettlement tenancy]. Ehh but you need that first step to take the second step and then just never go back. That's my way of looking at things. I moved there [resettlement tenancy], my flat was lovely. Ehh then I've moved to here, a bigger place, you know what I mean. I want to eventually move on. To me, living here there is no hurry for me to move on 'cause I'm alright here, so it's not as though…I mean if it took me five year to get offered a

place in ***** [area 1] it doesn't matter, so I can live her five year very comfortable. I've been like this six months and it's flown by, you know what I mean, so….

Reflecting on his housing history, Stephen summed up his housing experiences in one word: 'hard'. Stephen felt that his housing experiences had had quite a significant impact on his life; hindering his ability to trust people:

It's made me only trust me self, I don't trust anybody else. Emh…and that's it really. I wouldn't trust anybody.

In general, 'home' for Stephen is:

…where you plan to stay and what you make comfortable, you close the door and then that's it you're in your own private castle sort of thing, and that's it.

Looking to the future, Stephen wanted to sort out seeing his children on a regular basis and for him to move back to area 1:

You never know what's on the next page, you just take life as it comes and take whatever it throws at ya.

Comment

Stephen had an unsettled and unhappy childhood; a negative relationship with his father, estranged from his mother, disagreements with siblings, criminal behaviour (violence, i.e. getting into fights with other males) and a lack of schooling. His formative years were spent living with his father and siblings where there was a culture of violence and fighting, in and outside the family 'home'. Unsettledness went on to characterise Stephen's adult life, with his pattern of violent behaviour continuing as an adult. Stephen didn't divulge much detail about his criminal behaviour, other than it was always related to 'fighting' (with males). Asked where this behaviour stemmed from, Stephen replied 'I just don't like being told what to do and when to do it'. As a result, prison detention was a regular occurrence, usually followed by relatively short periods of homelessness; six episodes of homelessness covering just over two years.

After leaving his father's house in his early teens, Stephen's longest housing episode was a prison detention of just short of five years. Stephen lived with his wife and children for over eight years in four different dwelling places, and after he and his wife split-up, he moved fairly frequently, experiencing sixteen different housing episodes in nine years; mainly short term sole tenancies (seven episodes), although one lasted for four years. During this time Stephen used alcohol to numb his feelings.

Stephen expressed 'no strong feelings' about any of his housing experiences, apart from two in adulthood, one 'home' and one 'not-home'. He had no intention of staying in any of the dwellings places, he always had the intention of moving, so he didn't experience them as 'home'. It could be suggested that this lack of emotional attachment towards dwelling places stemmed from having no reference point of 'home' during his childhood i.e. he didn't know what 'home' was. Stephen said that he was too young to compare living with his mother and father to anything else, so he couldn't say whether it was 'home'. Only in his early thirties, when he had everything he wanted; a family; money; a comfortable lifestyle; a nice house in a nice town, was Stephen sure that he had found 'home'; nothing else compared to that, nothing else came close to being 'home'. This suggests that all these elements, when they came together, created a strong emotional connection between Stephen and that particular dwelling place. That housing episode became Stephen's reference point for 'home', with an increasing emphasis on the county (area 1) that the dwelling place was located in:

> The thing is I'd always class ***** [county in the UK] as my home because I always look back to ***** [county in the UK]. It wouldn't matter where I moved in ***** [county in the UK] I would be comfortable, so, you know what I mean. I could be in a high rise flat in the middle of ******* [town] or in the sticks. It's just where I feel at my comfortablist. It's where I can get on with people whereas up here I can't. Basically until I get back there I will never have a place that I can truly call a home.

8.2.3 Living in social care settings during childhood

Over a third (seven) of the participants experienced living in a 'social care setting'. This was particularly common for females; eighty per cent of females (four) had this experience compared to a quarter of males (three). Two participants were taken into care soon after birth and later adopted (one was under a year old and the other was just over two years old). For one, the adoption broke down when he was thirteen years old and he went back into care; the second went back into care (a teenage pregnancy unit) in her late teens. In comparison, the remaining five participants were first taken into care at an average age of twelve years old, mirroring the national trend; the highest proportion (thirty-six per cent) of looked after children were aged ten to fifteen years old (DoE, 2012, p. 16). Challenging circumstances were experienced before going into care including; issue with a step-father; disagreement with parents; family moving frequently; homelessness, and parental neglect. For three of these participants, going into care or returning to care, was characterised by moving around different 'social care settings' or different foster care placements, before settling into a 'long term' foster care placement lasting two or more years.

Individual stays in social care settings were fairly short-term, eight months on average, but were generally much shorter; nearly three quarters (twenty-five) lasted six months or less, most of which (eighteen) lasted less than three months. This resonates with the characteristically short placements for looked-after-children nationally for the year 2006-07[24] (interviews for this study were conducted in 2008-09). A 'foster care' placement was usually more long-term than other social care settings, with an average stay of fourteen months. Foster care placements were much more common among females, accounting for nearly two thirds of their episodes (nine), with the longest placement being for five years. For males, stays in 'other social care settings'; children's homes; school hostel; supported housing/move-on accommodation, were more common and were generally short stays. All but two episodes (eighteen in total) lasted six months or less, of which nearly three-quarters (fourteen) lasted three months or less. It is unknown why 'foster care' was more common for females; it may be that they were classed as particularly vulnerable, or their needs were perceived as more long term than was the case for males. They may have been assessed as having fewer social or behavioural issues and were therefore easier to place.

For some participants being in care meant they were separated from their siblings. During their time in care, all but one participant maintained contact with family members; including siblings (where relevant). Only limited information on frequency of contact was provided in the interviews, but for most it was not on a regular basis, more *ad hoc*, because relationships with parents or a parent were often strained or complex. For some participants positive new relationships were forged whilst in care, including with other children and parental figures, with some of the relationships being maintained long after leaving care.

All but one of the participants who lived in a 'social care setting' did so until their late teens, leaving between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Nationally, around two-thirds of young people in 'care' have left by the age of eighteen[25]; by comparison, in 2013 in the UK, fifty per cent of young people were still living with their parents at the age of twenty-two (NAO, 2015, p. 6). Thus, for these participants the transition to independence was at a much younger age than for young people living with their parents. Their destinations on leaving 'care' varied; four became homeless (two informal/hidden homelessness; two formal homeless accommodation); one moved into their 'partner's tenancy'; one got a 'sole tenancy' and the last moved in with 'extended family' (at the age of ten). For most of the participants, frequent moving in and out of different housing situations followed leaving care (a total of

---

[24] During the year 2006-2007, in 108 out of 150 English local authorities , looked-after children faced more than 10 placement moves http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2008/09/16/serial-placements-afflict-children-in-care-in-most-authorities/

[25] http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/transitionsleaving-an-institution.html

seventy-three housing episodes between them). After leaving care, and up to the time of interviewing, participants had moved ten times on average. Two of these had moved very frequently in a short space of time; eleven times in two years (at sixteen to eighteen years old), and ten times in three years (at eighteen to twenty-one years old). Nearly all these episodes (sixteen) were homelessness (informal/hidden homelessness and formal homeless accommodation). Overall, homelessness accounted for over half (40) of housing episodes after leaving care, with 'informal/hidden homelessness' being most dominant (twenty-four episodes).

After leaving care, only one participant experienced a long-term housing episode (seven years); two had a single episode lasting three years, and another three had an episode lasting between eight to twelve months.   It seems that this pattern of housing mobility is not unusual among care leavers. Biehal and Wade found that care leavers' entry into the housing market was characterised by a high degree of mobility in their early housing careers and high rates of homelessness (1999, p. 84). In 2010, 25 per cent of those who were homeless had been in care at some point in their lives (NAO, 2015, p. 6).

During their time in care, and after leaving care, the participants in question experienced further social change and challenges in their lives. All but two of the participants began employment (being no longer in education) from a relatively early age; between sixteen and eighteen years old, with two starting work while they were still in care. All but one had experienced unemployment, and all but one had engaged in tertiary education or a government training scheme; mainly between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. By eighteen to nineteen years old all but one were engaged in education, employment or training; this does not reflect the national trend, as in 2013-14, forty-one per cent of nineteen year-old care leavers were not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared with fifteen per cent for all nineteen year olds (NAO, 2015, p. 7). At the time of interviewing one participant was engaged in tertiary education, three were employed, two were unemployed and one was caring for her small child.

Substance misuse was an issue for four participants, with first use as early as fourteen years old and as late as nineteen years old. All four were involved in drug misuse and three in alcohol misuse. In all cases substance misuse was prolonged. By the time they were sixteen years old, all four females had engaged in a 'serious' relationship with a partner, three of whom had co-habited with a partner by the age of eighteen. In contrast, males engaged in a serious relationship much later; two males had a 'serious' relationship in their mid-twenties

and both cohabited with a partner; one cohabited with the same partner on several different occasions, in an on/off relationship.

All but two participants had experienced a housing episode as 'home' before they went into care; in all cases this was whilst living with parents or adoptive parents. Of thirty-five different episodes of living in a 'social care setting', less than a third (eleven) had strong feelings attached to them. Four episodes (two in 'foster care' and two in a 'teenage pregnancy unit') were experienced as 'home' by three females; all were characterised by 'positive relationships', and three by senses of 'positive selfhood' and 'personal control'. Only a fifth of these episodes (seven) were experienced as 'not home', mainly due to a 'lack of control' (four episodes). The picture after leaving care was quite different. Emotional attachment to a dwelling place was overwhelmingly negative; out of seventy-three housing episodes after leaving care, over half (thirty-eight) were experienced as 'not-home' and only six were experienced as 'home' (six episodes, among three participants).

In addition to the detailed case study presented below, 'brief lives' A, B, C, G, J and N, present brief life histories of the other six individuals who lived in social care settings during childhood.

CASE STUDY: James, aged between 30 and 35 years old at the time of interview, 31 housing episodes

James' 'home life'

James started life in an adoption home. It is unknown why he was given up for adoption. James was adopted before he was twelve months old. His adoptive mother and father had an owner-occupied house and already had another adopted son. James' father worked full-time and his mother worked part-time. His mother suffered from alcoholism and often left James to fend for himself. Some of James' adoptive relatives lived nearby and tried to support him. During this period James suffered from mental health problems; he felt that the adoption never really worked:

> It wasn't an ideal home. I don't think it was them or me. I think it was through personalities even though I was still a child it was not meant to be. There were problems from day one.

Before he was ten years old there were attempts to save the adoption by giving James and his adoptive family a break from each other. James was sometimes placed in a children's home or foster care for a weekend or a week. This lasted several months and the whole situation

affected James' schooling. Before the age of fourteen the adoptive relationship had completely broken down:

> At first they thought it might just be teething problems and stuff so they'd take me out and put me in a children's home for a weekend or a week then put me back in. This carried on and we were getting nowhere. My schooling was getting affected. It didn't help because it was quite a violent house as well. Something kicked off and the police ended up getting phoned, me and my step-dad were fighting and that was it, social services refused to have me back in that house. And they [the adoptive parents] refused to have me back in that house and I refused to go back.
>
> Nothing worked. It was writ down by social services as a 'family breakdown' that's the only way they could think of wording it. It was a total disaster with everyone.

The negativity James experienced when living with his adoptive family meant it was his 'worst' housing experience:

> I would say it is the cause of a lot of the problems that have gone on in my life and stuff. It was a disgrace. The mum used to go out and buy more alcohol and leave me. I was told that. The people, the environment, it just didn't work.

The housing and other disruptions James experienced in the last couple of years living with his adoptive family intensified when he left. James was back in care, and for just over a year was moved between children's homes, foster care placements and a school hostel. He didn't make any friends. He feels that he has always been his own person; that he has kept himself to himself. James found foster care preferable to children's homes; foster carers, he said, treated him better, it was a better living environment and he felt better:

> Foster carers are a hell of a lot better. Children's homes are disgraceful. It's basically just a shared room. If you don't like someone, you're in a children's home you're knackered. It's just going to be grief all the time 'cause everyone is trying to be the alpha male. Being in children's homes is hard, you are always constantly fighting not necessarily physically but emotionally, with other males. So even if you are trying to get down and get on with it, it's hard.
>
> Some of them [foster carers] would treat you like a human. You are treated so much differently in a children's home, because a lot of people look at children's homes because you are only in there for a number of reasons, so people automatically look on you different. They feel sympathy for you and it's just, like, I don't want sympathy. With foster homes, you could eat when you wanted to, you had your own room, it was in a home. It wasn't just one room and a shared living room with people bickering and arguing all the time. It's more settled and relaxed in foster homes.

James linked his unsettled childhood to his 'wild' behaviour as a child; continuous movement between different social care settings, often at very short notice, fuelled his behaviour, making it harder and harder to find him longer term placements:

Where I've had such an unsettled childhood it didn't do me no favours, so I was a bit of a wild child, loose cannon, so that made it harder for foster carers to get on with me and relate to me. They'd put me in the foster care and after a couple of days the foster carer would be like, 'No we can't handle him he is too much.' They'd come and get me and look for somewhere else and it would just carry on like that.

James found the constant moving annoying. He wasn't able to settle and he could only keep a few possessions with him, which meant living out of one bag:

I would say it [moving] was annoying 'cause you can't get any possessions, you can't settle, you can't do nothin' because you don't know whether you are going to get woken up the next day and be told, 'Right the next place.' You can't really afford to have anything. I was living with one bag basically because I knew there was a fair chance I'd be up and leaving and not knowing where I was going so I couldn't afford to have stuff to haul about here there and everywhere. It was awkward.

When you are younger you look at people who are older and they've got the tele, nice clothes, jewellery, it's stuff you can't really get because you haven't got the stability for it because you are always jumping from one place to the next. It's just a waste of time getting it, more than likely it will just get broke or stolen moving from one place to the next.

In his very early teens, James finally found a longer-term foster care placement with a woman who had had her own children (who had left home), had another foster child living with her, and worked full-time. They lived in an owner-occupied house in a nice area. James had his own room and was allowed a fair amount of independence. He went to school but was expelled. In James' own words, he was a 'tear away'. James had a very positive relationship with his foster carer; she listened to him, really got to know him and helped him a lot:

This lady [his foster carer] was amazing, the best by miles. She was an amazing lady. She was such a down to earth person. She didn't listen to anything that was writ' down about me, anything that was said about me she got to know me as a person before she made any judgements and she helped me out a lot.

For similar reasons, this foster care episode was James' 'best' housing experience although he didn't experience it as 'home':

I wasn't judged. I was respected. Anything that had been said or writ' about me wasn't an issue she wanted to see for herself. She wanted to be the judge of my character because it was her that was my guardian. It was just respect really.

Unfortunately, upon turning sixteen, James had to leave his foster care placement. Social Services allocated him a room in rented accommodation, resembling a boarding house with a landlady on site (so it was not a sole tenancy). James felt that Social Services just left him with no support even though he didn't think he was old enough to live independently:

> She [foster carer] kept me until Social Services came and gave me a front door key and Income Support book and said, 'you're on your own, get on with it.'

James stayed there a few months, during which time his behaviour got worse and landed him in trouble with the police (he did not disclose why):

> I was a tear-away rebel that got expelled from his last school. I was in and out of court. I was proper off the rails at this time, all over the place. I was ready to explode.

By the time James was eighteen years old, he had lived in several 'rented rooms' arranged by Social Services which were like shared houses (with shared facilities). He also experienced similar movement in and out of work. James experienced fourteen different social care placements during the four years after leaving his adoptive parents.

On leaving care, in his late teens, James moved into his first tenancy, a room in a shared house. This shared house was much better than those arranged by Social Services as it was decent, secure accommodation and the other tenants were 'workers' so they 'knew what it was all about'. After securing the accommodation, James got a job and started to get himself back on track:

> I proper buckled down, it was shift work. I was spending all my time doing shifts, working or sleeping, getting money together.

After a couple of years, James got fed up with living in shared accommodation, and had enough money saved to rent a house of his own and he rented out the spare bedrooms. This made him financially comfortable, as he continued to work. James had acquaintances but no friends, which he puts down to the bad reputation he acquired after his adoptive parents dragged his name through the mud. So James kept himself to himself, he was a bit of a loner. At the same time, he was drinking heavily and using drugs:

> By this stage I was always drinking, I was always on some sort of drug but I was still working so a lot of it was carrying on doing stuff like that. As long as my bills were paid I was alright.

James was moved to a different department at work which meant he came into contact with people from his past who he didn't want to see. This affected his work and he started to look at his life. He felt he was too young to have the responsibility of a big house and decided to sell everything and move to another town (with which he was already familiar) over thirty miles away. He was still close enough to the city where he grew up, so he could easily go back and see people he knew.

Living in a new town, James became homeless for the first time; he rented a room in a homeless hostel (formal homeless accommodation), although this was only for a short time. He managed to get himself a job, started seeing a girl and moved into her tenancy. Things weren't going great at work, however, and after less than four months James' relationship with his girlfriend broke down. A former work colleague had previously said to James, 'If you ever do want a fresh start I'll give you a roof over your head for a stepping stone', so that was it:

> One weekend bang, gone. I literally sold everything again. Got all my money together and moved up here.

James moved a hundred and fifty miles away and saw it as a fresh start to get himself back on his feet. Staying in a spare room at his friend's house was James' first experience of informal/hidden homelessness, lasting less than a month. James got himself a job, moved in with a girl, and spent his time working and going out drinking. After that relationship broke down, James secured a sole tenancy and continued working. He was drinking all the time and started getting into trouble with the police again (he did not disclose what for). James ended up losing his flat and became homeless; staying in a tent in the woods and sleeping in clubs that were open twenty-four hours a day. After a few weeks James got a bed in a homeless hostel where he stayed a few nights before he went to prison, serving nearly four years (once again, he did not disclose the offence(s) with which he was charged).

After leaving prison James got back with his former girlfriend and went to live in her flat but he found it hard adapting to living 'outside'. He couldn't get a job because of his criminal record and he was drinking all the time. All this put a strain on their relationship. James felt they jumped in too soon. This led to James being kicked out on a regular basis. For just over six months James lived between his girlfriend's flat and the streets. He would be kicked out, stay on the streets for a few nights, then his girlfriend would have him back:

> Coming here straight from prison it's a big adaptation, inside and outside. I think that played its part as well. I think I still have a few issues. The change from inside and outside was difficult as well. We had our ups and downs, get in, get out, get lost!

> I was like elastic, she'd get rid of me and then have me back, she'd miss me, she'd love me then get rid of me. It literally was a case of getting kicked out every other weekend. It wasn't doing me any good.

James wanted to save his relationship with his girlfriend so he decided to move out. He couldn't get social housing because of his criminal record, so a homeless day centre helped him secure a room in a private rented shared house. James felt that having his own tenancy would help him get back on track, i.e. get a job then move back in with his girlfriend:

It was just a stepping stone. Like I said I started off in rented rooms. I've been in so many rented rooms it's not for me. I don't want that but it's ideal for a stepping stone.

James lived in this tenancy for just over six months, although he didn't like living with other people. He got himself a job, which meant he could afford to move back in with his girlfriend and contribute. At the time of interviewing James had been living with his girlfriend, in her flat, for less than two weeks. James was working, things were going well with his girlfriend, and he liked being able to have his own things around him. This was really important to James, because he wasn't able to have many personal possessions when he was moving from one social care placement to another; he was living out of a single bag. James feels this has made him very particular about his personal appearance. He always wants to look good and well-groomed and wear nice clothes, because it makes him feel comfortable:

> The bedroom and bathroom are the most important rooms to me. The bedroom is where all my clothes and smellies are and the bathroom is where I do my hair.

> My appearance is really important to me. **** [girlfriend] hates it. I've got more hair products and smellies than her. At times she gets annoyed with it. I'm the same with clothes. When I've got some money I buy loads. It makes me feel comfortable. I've always been like it it's my thing. It's what I'm like.

> Living in a bush I was coming out of that bush and still looking a million dollars, because I've learnt one thing that will never ever change. You will always get judged by your appearance.   I get judged quite badly as it is. I don't need to look like I've stepped out of a bush as well. I always try and maintain that I've just walked out of a front door.

James had pet cats and reported a particularly close attachment to them. Unlike the people he had lived with, he had always been able to rely upon his cats to provide companionship and comfort[26]:

> When I've lived in rented rooms some of them haven't been that big so it can be quite boring just sat there with the telly. When you have got pets and they know they are loved and you participate, then they will come and sit with you when you're upset, they can tell. He knows when I'm going to work and greets me when I come in. I think that's it. You haven't got to worry about explaining how you feel, but they know and they'll come and sit with you.

> He [his cat] means the world to me. *** [girlfriend] might not like it but she understands why. Through how I was brought up, I brought myself up. I've never had or let anyone close to me but I've always had pets. Pets are the people. They are like my children. Do not mess with my pets because I would flip like any dad would.

---

[26] This is the only time during the interview, which was at the end of the interview, that James mentioned having pets. Perhaps James had his cats all the time he was living with his girlfriend intermittently, and the cats remained at his girlfriend's when he wasn't living there as he didn't have a 'secure' roof over his head. On the other hand, perhaps not mentioning them earlier was a way of not showing his feelings, something that he did talk about during the interview.

Pets mean the world to me. They are still a living thing. Just because they don't walk on two legs and can't speak don't mean you should treat them any different.

James' strong feelings about his personal possessions, his cats and his girlfriend made living with his girlfriend the closest thing to 'home' he had experienced; he had a positive relationship with his girlfriend; he had his cats; he had a sense of personal control over space and personal possessions; he was able to personalise the flat with possessions he had chosen; he liked the consistency of knowing where he was going to be sleeping every night; all this made him feel good about himself:

> Because of my age and where I am in my life I need to start thinking about security and everything. I've just been coming and going, coming and going through the years. This is the closest to me settling down at the moment and feeling comfortable where I am. Through growing up I knew I was never going to stay in one place for too long so I never wanted to class it as home. It was always leaving and going on to the next place.

> It's the fact that I don't have to answer to anyone. If I want to put my stuff in here I can. I don't have to answer to anyone. If I want to move the living room around I can.   If I want to re-decorate I can.   I haven't got to check with everything I do. I haven't got to do the paper work or make a phone call to the landlord. It's just things like that. When you know within yourself that this feels right, it's like that.

Generally, for James, 'home' was all about feeling comfortable and being able to relax which he had only felt when living with his girlfriend (at the time of interviewing):

> It's all about feeling comfortable. You've got to feel comfortable. If you don't feel comfortable somewhere then there is no way you are going to be able to go, 'This is my home', because you can't relax. Having a home is about being able to relax and feeling comfortable. If you can't do that you can't class it as a home.

However, due to James' housing history, feeling at 'home' in a dwelling place was not such a priority for him:

> It's not like a priority for me, through jumping from one address to another. Even if I don't feel at home, and it didn't feel like home, I could settle enough to carry on working, it wouldn't be a catastrophe.

James' expressed 'no strong feelings' towards any of the other thirty dwelling places he had resided in. On the other hand, however, none were experienced as 'not home'.

Reflecting on his housing history, James summed up his housing experiences in one word: 'eventful'. James felt that moving around a lot was just the way his life had gone; it was all experience, learning, living, and he wouldn't change it. Most importantly, James' housing experiences taught him about other people, which influenced his behaviour; learning how to protect himself from getting hurt:

If anything I've learnt more that I can use. It's very rare that my feelings show because that's something people can use to hurt you. I've learnt that through my experiences and everything.

Looking to the future, James and his girlfriend wanted to have a fresh start and get a new place together. James didn't want to be moving around anymore.

Comment

James' life began unsettled and remained unsettled, right up until the time of the interview. He was emotionally and physically unsettled; he experienced troublesome behaviour and housing mobility from a young age. After leaving his adoptive parents he lived in fifteen different social care placements over four years. After leaving care, he experienced another fifteen housing episodes, over a little longer than ten years; moving between sole tenancies, formal and informal/hidden homelessness situations, living in his partner's tenancy, and prison (which was his longest housing episode). James' transient housing history shows that he formed no strong attachment to any of the dwelling places he lived in, except for the last one, with his girlfriend. No reference point for 'home' was ever established. 'Home' was not a priority for James.

It seems that strong attachments to other people were also absent in James' life. He had had no relationship with his birth parents, he experienced negative relationships with his adoptive parents, he formed only one positive relationship whilst he was in care, with his foster carer, but this was cut short, and relationships with partners were volatile. Positive relationships were never really established and maintained. He was a loner. Instead, James formed strong attachments to his pets; they couldn't hurt him like people could. James protected himself from getting hurt by not showing his feelings, and it could be suggested that taking pride in his appearance gave James a protective layer under which he could hide his true feelings. These feelings may have reflected a lack of self-worth; feeling that no one wanted him or cared about him. In addition, James may have found solace in taking care of his cats and his appearance. It seems drinking was the only constant in James' life.

8.3   Participants' personal reflections

These case studies are representative, to large degree, of the whole sample, in that participant's lives were characterised by movement between different housing situations which were often experienced within a context of challenging social circumstances. Participants' reflections on their housing experiences offer a unique insight into how they viewed their experiences overall, with particular regard to how their housing experiences

impacted on different aspects of their lives (Question 10); and what, if anything, their housing experiences have taught them (Question 9b). What is clearly evident is that participants see a link between their housing and social circumstances, each shaping the other.

Wider impact of housing experiences

Fifteen participants thought that their housing experiences had impacted on different aspects of their lives. The main impact cited was on relationships (eight participants), chiefly regarding the loss of relationships with family and/or friends. For some, this loss was related to drug use, and the negative lifestyle that came with it, for example criminal behaviour. Drug use often triggered movement around different dwelling places (usually temporary):

> The whole period [homeless hostel], living in [run down housing estate], in that car, after [deprived area] that was all quite hellish, looking back on it now. Although like I said I didn't look on it that way at the time, because I was just under the influence [drugs] I suppose 24/7. Looking back now I wonder how I lived through it. You can't sustain anything in terms of, it was bad for my relationship with my family. I didn't see both my parents for 6 or 7 years. That was my choice. My life was so chaotic I didn't want them to see it. Prior to that I was working abroad, and things got worse. They did see me, but once but it got messy and I didn't want them to see that. It affected my family relationship. I didn't see my brothers and sisters, I didn't see none of them. (Richard)

> Every negative event in my adult life I can trace back to drug use either directly or indirectly. Everything in terms of criminal activity, moving, relationship breakdowns, everything. (Richard)

> Your friends who don't take drugs don't want to know 'cause they think you're gonna rob 'em [them] so the people you end up stopping with are users, and you're back in the vicious circle. (Paul)

> Not a very good relationship with family when you're on drugs. I used to pop round every now and again when I were on drugs. I go round more now. (Paul)

> It was quite bad 'cause they [family] knew I were on drugs and none of them seemed to trust me that much. And me mam and me dad didn't want me with 'em so that's why I was bouncing around everywhere. Every time I got myself clean, me dad were there, then I'd fall back and move out and that. It's only been the last couple of years that I've started coming back with me dad and got me-sen [myself] sorted out. (Rob)

> It was all from drug use really, it didn't really matter where I lived. It were drugs at the end of the day that's why they [family] didn't like me or trust me, what it can actually do to ya, what you actually do for it. (Rob)

> Relationships like family, not being able to keep in touch because they haven't known where I am until I get in touch with them, you know what I mean. (Lucas)

Some struggled losing people and not having people around them that they knew:

> Some places it has affected me… keep losing people. (Craig)

197

It's just weird because you haven't got anyone around you who you knew before. When you're growing up you've got six or seven people who are always around. But when you move into your own place adjusting to that…I think I've adjusted pretty good. (Anthony)

Several participants felt that moving around had made it harder for them to form new relationships, manifesting itself in a number of ways; being wary of who to trust; being shy and not liking to meet new people, and lose people:

I'm a lot more wary of who to trust, if you know what I mean. I used to be so trusting and trust everybody. Then when you go through a life like that and you've been shit on a few times you think…it helps your relationship a bit because you think about things before you like get into them, you know what I mean, with certain friends. I used to wear my heart on my sleeve. I used to be drunk all the time and I didn't care then, I'm not like that anymore, so it must have done something. (Nicola)

It's made me only trust me self, I don't trust anybody else. Emh…and that's it really. I wouldn't trust anybody. (Stephen)

I think I might be shy because I've moved around a lot and met a lot of new people. I think that's probably why I'm shy. I don't really like meeting new people I think that's probably because I've moved around a lot and had to go to different schools and things. (Diane)

The impact of moving around on employment was an issue for a number of participants, because prejudice was experienced when homeless, and it was hard to sustain a job whilst moving around, and whilst using drugs:

When I've been living in a hostel and trying to get a job. When you say you are living in a hostel they don't want to know, because they automatically think, 'What's she done wrong to be kicked out of home?', and stuff like that. It does make life harder when you live in a hostel to find a job. (Amy)

I've not been settled down and that. I think if I settled somewhere long enough I would get back into work. Emmh, when I get somewhere comfortable I wanna make the effort and do things properly. (Lucas)

If you've got nowhere to live you can't get a job. You've got no means of waken [waking] your-sen [yourself] up in the morning to go to work. If you've got a drug habit you can't go to work. You're obviously not going to go to work when you're rattling your bollocks off, it's not good. (Paul)

I had two interviews and if I'd have said I lived in [homeless hostel] they would have thought I was a druggy. Yes, I did lie [by putting down his sister's address], which is wrong, 'cause it's not my fault and some of the guys in there [homeless hostel], it's not their fault either. Some of 'em, we wouldn't employ would we? Emmh, it wasn't until I moved up here [sole tenancy] that I got the job. (Clive)

One participant felt that her housing experiences had resulted in a lack of education because she moved schools a lot, subsequently restricting her employment opportunities:

My education, yeah, 'cause I haven't got any GCSE's. When I do try and get a job all I've got is a placement. That's all I've got so I'm not very good at anything else, that's all I really know. (Julie)

Some participants felt that their housing experiences had meant that they had to grow up fast, changing their outlook on life, and giving them a different view of 'normal' life:

It's made my life difficult a lot harder. When you are filling out applications you have to think of everything because they always want to know everything, it takes forever. But it's what you have to do, I've been here, there and everywhere. (Amy)

It's [moving] opened my eyes quite a bit. It's made me grow up quite fast. I mean definitely views of other people, people that take drugs and stuff, I have a different view towards them, and with my brother being like that…and realising what's important, bills and things that need paying before anything else. I don't know, just my outlook on life. When I was little and you saw someone homeless, kipping on the streets we used to give him grief. But nowadays and I see someone on the street and they have no money, I'd probably chuck them a quid if I had it, because I know what it's like I've been through it as well. I suppose it opens your eyes quite a bit. (Scott)

Say I meet someone new and if we're talking about family, they're talking about their and I'm talking about mine, I'll ask them if their mum and dad are still together and they laugh. I expect other people to be like me. I'm like saying things and they're quite shocked about what I say. I don't know, I've got a different attitude to things than other people have I think. Well I think I'm a bit too down to earth, if you get me. Some of the things I say, I can't think. People are shocked in what I say sometimes. (Julie)

Health, both physical and/or mental, was affected by housing experiences, mainly as result of frequent moving and the instability it created:

I'm very unhealthy now. I think I was before I had Sophie [daughter], taking drugs, not eating. When I do eat it's crap anyway. Before, I wasn't really eating cooked meals, I just snacked from the chippie or crisps. I was smoking a lot as well. (Julie)

It's made me feel pretty bad [mentally] sometimes. Some places it's affected me. (Craig)

Me health I suppose, being signed off with depression for quite a while, having to move around for quite a while, I suppose that's one of the reasons. But yeah, things are getting better all the time. I'm in an area where I want to be, a nice flat, around my family and stuff. (Scott)

Lessons learnt

When asked whether their housing experiences had taught them anything, the main message from participants was that their housing experiences had been a learning experience. Reflection helped them look at the overall picture, often realising that they had learnt quite a lot from their experiences; especially the negative ones. Positive lessons had been learnt that

they felt might help them deal with any further challenges, for example learning how to deal with authorities, services and the housing market:

> Pay the rent, more than anything. Most of them [sole tenancies] I've lost really due to me not paying my rent. At the end of the day if your rents paid you've got a roof over your head. (Lucas)

> Next time I get somewhere I need to think a bit more carefully about where I do go [to stay away from]. I should learn from my mistakes. (Lucas)

> Be careful, it's hard to pick somewhere nowadays, somewhere bright, a good area. (Craig)

> You learn what you're entitled to and things you're not entitled to, how the system works. (Ian)

> I just want to stay in one place now, get a job and stay here. That's it, over and done with. I'm not moving again. It's chuffing expensive to move, it costs a bomb, I'd have to pay for all the carpets again, you can't take the wall paper off the walls and take it with you. It's expensive, it does my head in. I can't be doing with it again. (Diane)

> Get a second opinion from someone else in the Council, don't take one person's word, make sure that what everyone else is saying is the same thing, otherwise it's bound to be a load of crap. (Scott)

> I've just come more street wise. I'm independent, I know how to look after me-self and that and me 'ouse, money and everything. (Clare)

Life lessons had been learnt that had often got them to a better place as a person, which would hopefully equip them, both emotionally and practically, to make positive choices in the future:

> It is experience, it is living. It's a bit of everything. I wouldn't change it. I've missed out on load's but I wouldn't change a thing. It's learning, experience. (James)

> Just appreciate what you've got now type of thing. Definitely. When you're in those places [with family] you take it for granted don't you ? But when you are here [his sole tenancy] you don't, so you keep your noise a bit down. Not that I was noisy before, but you just appreciate it. (Anthony)

> I've turned into a better person than I used to be. I used to be nasty to my mum, I never hurt her or anything, but I was so horrible. I used to come in drunk and she used to argue with me and I'd say something, and I'd go too far and last time I realised and stopped myself, I shouted, 'You're not my mum you can't tell me what to do.' [She was adopted]. Then to see my mums face so hurt that's when it stopped [the behaviour]. She could have kicked me out so many times with the way I was. I was just a nasty cow but I'm not as nasty anymore. (Nicola)

When I lived at my mums house I had everything. I used to take it for granted, but now I don't take things for granted no more because if I've got it I've got it, if I ain't, I ain't. (Nicola)

It's taught me a lot really. How there is people out there who will just use you for what they want and stuff like that, for what they can get. Basically**,** it has made me a bit stronger**,** I know to say no to it now. It's made be a better person really. It's made who I am today, going through all that experience. It's like some people will not know what I've been through, and not really want to know, but really**,** it's made me think really, what I can lose again and how I could turn out if I hit rock bottom. Now the only way really is to try and make it back and work my way upwards. I mean some people don't even experience that. It has done me good really. (Rob)

I think it's helped me along in life, if you get what I mean. Like I'm more wise than I would have been if I didn't have all these experiences, do you get me? I think I'm a lot more wiser and I know a lot of things compared to other people my age. Everyone knows quite a lot about what goes on in life, but I've seen and done a lot of things. Drugs for a start. Me mum [who was a drug user], like what it's like to come off drugs and all that stuff. Having nowhere to live.   If I got everything took off me right now, no money, I'd be able to look after myself because I've done it before. (Julie)

8.4   Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the 'home life' histories of Clare, Stephen, James and the other participants, in which the emotional relationships they had with dwelling places and other people in their lives were framed by housing and social upheaval.

'Home'

Clare's, Stephen's and James' home lives show that, whether 'home' is experienced in childhood or not, if a significant disruption in personal social context is experienced in childhood, triggering a move to a new dwelling place, 'home' is rarely found again, if it is found or sought, at all. This agrees with Henderson *et al*. (2007, p. 126), who found that young people whose family was fragmented through parental divorce, separation, or death, and who also experienced the loss of their physical family space, found themselves reconfiguring the meaning of 'home'. For all but three of the participants in the present study, i.e. fourteen of the people I interviewed, the sense of 'home' had its roots in childhood, and for all but one, in early childhood (under five years old). Many went on to experience a dwelling place as 'home' in adulthood; for nine participants a particular feature, or particular features, characterised 'home', no matter what the housing situation or when it was experienced. Thus, it can be suggested that these participants have a blueprint of 'home', a recipe of essential ingredients, or essential ingredients that can make a dwelling 'home' for them. In different housing situations and social contexts, that one feature(s) could make a dwelling place 'home'. The essence of 'home' travelled with the individual over time,

appearing in different dwelling places at different times in their lives. As other studies have found, powerful memories of 'home', whether consciously or subconsciously acknowledged, are carried through life and may be imprinted on new homes (Cooper Marcus, 2006, p. 41). For all but two of these nine participants, their consistent feature(s) of 'home' derived from their experiences of living in a familial situation; 'living with parents or a parent during childhood', 'living with adopted family during childhood', or 'foster care' - suggesting that these established their foundational template of 'home'. As previously noted, 'psychological supports to home begin at birth and result from the caring relationships that surround a child. This foundation offers a person grounds for developing a sense of home, the meanings of home, and some idea of what its ingredients encompass' (Rivlin and Moore, 2001, p. 330).

This initial experience of 'home' provided a reference point for future 'home' experiences, replicated and/or found in different housing situations and social circumstances in the future. So their ideas of 'home' survived through housing and social instability. A personal version of 'home' was created. In contrast, Stephen and James didn't experience 'home' in childhood, and only had one 'home' experience during adulthood in which, instead, their 'blueprint' was 'no strong feelings'. Tognoli suggests that memories of childhood home tap into rich associations that place memory provides (1987, p. 659), where a connection can form between childhood experiences and the environmental attitudes and preferences later expressed in adult life (Cooper Marcus, 2006, p. 41). As the case studies of Clare, Stephen and James' show however, a personal version of 'home' can be hard to find during childhood while dealing with changing and challenging social circumstances, and marked by having to move between different and often temporary housing situations.

Leaving the parental 'home' early

The fifteen participants who started life 'living with parents or a parent' left the parental 'home' relatively early (at an average age of fifteen), meaning that any 'security in childhood' (an intermediate need) that the situation might have provided was lost, and for those experiencing their dwelling place as 'home', that experience of 'home' was severed. Fond memories however of 'living with parents or a parent during childhood' were often still recalled. Females left at a particularly young age; an average age of eleven, compared to sixteen for males. So the transition into adulthood was accelerated for many participants, suddenly going from the familiar to the totally unfamiliar. Early in their lives, Clare, Stephen, James and a number of other participants were suddenly living in 'temporary' housing situations, often having to live fairly independently with limited access to emotional, financial and practical support; a steep learning curve. A number of studies stress the importance of

families, family relationships and support for young people when moving to independent living, and that their absence can have negative consequences in terms of life experiences, including homelessness and exclusion (Jones and Wallace, 1992; Morrow and Richards, 1996; Gillies *et al.*, 2001). Participants often had to rely on professional support, for example from staff at formal homeless accommodation, rather than familial support, although many did remain in contact with parents or a parent, and/or siblings, albeit on a sporadic basis. Even though many care leavers in their study were in contact with their parents, Biehal and Wade also found that very few had positive relationships with them or received a great deal of support from them, so they were obliged to rely on professional support (1999, p. 90). Formal sources of support have been found to be particularly important when economic, practical and emotional support is not available from family (Jones, 1995, p. 4).

So for many participants, a dwelling place suddenly became quite a different experience. Participants were having to negotiate a 'youth housing market', as Ford *et al*. describe, characterised by shared housing, precarious housing, temporary housing and frequent mobility (2002, p. 2456), involving shifts from dependence to independence and back again (Biehal and Wade, 1999, p. 90). For many participants, this meant frequent periods of homelessness. By the age of eighteen, two-thirds (12), of participants had had their first experience of homelessness. As Ford *et al*. (2002, p. 2462) found, the odds of experiencing homelessness increase due to a number of risk factors, many of which participants experienced; leaving home young; living with a step-parent at age fourteen; being were in care/foster care at age fourteen; and experiencing frequent moving.

Early moves out of the family 'home' triggered other changes in the personal circumstances of many participants. Leaving the parental 'home' early, or leaving a 'social care setting', can be particularly difficult, because the transition to independent adulthood be artificially compressed or accelerated, unplanned or crisis-driven, and problems may present (ECOTEC, 2008, p. 17). Equally, 'transitions that are accelerated and, in many cases, compressed, can bring with them a concentration of difficulties that can make it hard for many young people to manage independent living' (Biehal and Wade (1999, p. 84). Garthwaite (2012, pp. 75-78) argues that young people can face a multitude of barriers in their complex journeys into adulthood, such as rising youth unemployment and fragmented housing markets, making them at particular risk of facing relative poverty and social exclusion during the transition to independent living; becoming fractured and challenging. In effect, the childhood of many participants was cut-short, their period of adolescence was short-lived.

Of particular relevance to this study is how the pathway taken out of the parental/childhood home, whether chosen or imposed, can often play a crucial part in how young people, and their past, present and future homes are identified and defined (Jones, 1995 and Wardaugh, 1999, cited in Mallett, 2004, p. 78). Henderson *et al*. found that young people whose family was fragmented through parental divorce, separation, or death, and who also experienced the loss of their physical family space, found themselves reconfiguring the meaning of 'home' (2007, p. 126), suggesting that 'the salience of past experiences and memory runs through young people's understanding of home, and lies at the heart of their lives' (*ibid*., p. 125). Memories, history, and emotion, (personal, familial and community), all come to play a significant role in the meaning of a 'home' (*ibid*., p. 128). As many of the participants' housing histories show, after leaving the parental 'home', in itself an experience of significant personal and social upheaval, 'home' was seldom experienced again. For young people the meaning of 'home' is continually in flux as they 'experience, construct and revise housing pathways in response to changing realities of their home circumstances and the turning tides of life' (Henderson *et al*., 2007, p. 125).

Close relationships

A particular characteristic of Clare's, Stephen's, James', and some other participants lives was that 'close' relationships were often not maintained for very long, for whatever reasons. This meant limited, if any, access to support or the feeling that someone cared about them. Frequent moving between different dwelling places, particularly temporary homeless situations, undoubtedly made the establishment and maintenance of supportive and caring relationships difficult, as participants highlighted earlier in this Chapter. Similarly, Caplow *et al*. note that 'homelessness is a condition of detachment from society characterised by the absence or attenuation of the affiliative bonds that link settled persons to a network of interconnected social structures' (1968, p. 494). As Wolch and Rowe found, 'housing options for the homeless created conflict with the maintenance of support networks through visitation rules, occupancy restrictions, and so on' (1993, p. 138); so does having to move to wherever formal homeless accommodation, such as a hostel, is located (Wolch and Rahimian, 1993, p. 165). Forced mobility may create coping difficulties. Moving away from where you grew up can mean childhood friendships and family ties are lost. In some cases friendships maybe deliberately severed in order to move-on from a negative lifestyle, such as substance misuse, and certain behaviour may have alienated family.

For some participants, then, it seems that such relationships were not always desired. For others, however, there was no reference point for such relationships, for example in

childhood. There may have been limited experience of such relationships, because familial and friendship relationships were negative, or had been cut short or severed, whether out of choice or not. Not forming such relationships may also have been a strategy for coping with the insecurity and transience of their lives. As discussed in Chapter Two, childhood impacts on the formation of needs; the cognitive aptitudes and bases for emotionality that are rooted in childhood shape many other needs, for example supportive and close relationships with others (Doyal and Gough (1991, p. 37). And in childhood, motivational structures are created which thereafter, and not necessarily self-consciously, influence everyday activities and thought processes (*ibid*., pp. 37-38). For whatever reason, many participants struggled to form and maintain caring and supportive relationships. Such relationships were, for them, not the 'norm'. 'Significant primary relationships' is an intermediate need that enhances emotional autonomy, but it was not being fulfilled, hindering the fulfilment of other basic needs. So for participants', the absence of 'home' was a barrier to fulfilling needs as 'home' is 'the locus per excellence for maintaining interpersonal relationships, answering the human need for social intercourse' (Werner, 1987). 'Home is a crucial setting through which basic patterns of social relations are constituted and reproduced' (Saunders, 1989, p. 178).

For young people the path to setting up a 'home' will not always be straight forward. As has been noted above, research into the transition to adulthood in general emphasises the importance of family support. At this critical point of transition, many young people feel ill-prepared or unready for independent living and lack support from others, making it even more difficult to achieve a successful housing experience (Garthwaite, 2012, p. 82).

So a support network, whether familial or formally sourced, such as a tenancy support worker, is vital in aiding the transition to independent living (ECOTEC, 2008, p. 6) and adult life (Jones, 1995, p. 4). Among their sample of young people, Henderson *et al*. found two models of adulthood between which young people moved: independence and autonomy, and interdependence and care (2007, p. 130). Formal sources of support are particularly important when economic, practical and emotional support is not available from family (Jones, 1995, p. 4). Giddens (1992) argued that traditional supports for transitions to adulthood, and indeed for adulthood itself, are eroding, leaving individuals even more responsible for creating their own biographies and projects of self. Particularly for young people such as the participants in the present research, these projects can only be becoming more fragile and vulnerable, given that state funding for such support has been cumulatively reducing further, towards basic and limited provision, due to the global financial crisis of 2008 and ensuing austerity policies, which is discussed further in Chapter Nine.

Frequent moving seems to have resulted in a lack of emotional attachment to dwelling places, although when an emotional attachment was reported it was most likely to be negative ('not-home'). Participants' housing histories suggest that dwelling places fulfilled the basic physiological need for shelter, but did not really satisfy psychological needs, such as emotional well being derived from a feeling of 'home'. Having no emotional attachment to a dwelling place could suggest that participants were simply 'moving'[27] to the next dwelling place rather than 'leaving'[28], as leaving implies you are leaving something behind, that there is an emotional connection. Participants had got used to moving on, it became their 'norm', and if they happened to feel at 'home' in a dwelling place, that was a bonus. Feeling at 'home' wasn't really a priority, it wasn't expected:

> I'm used to just getting up and going really. I'm used to it getting up and finding somewhere else to go. I think not for a long time will I find somewhere I can call a home of my own. I've got too many issues to deal with before I can think about settling down properly. (Amy)

It is relevant here to consider the concept of housing stability, which is central to housing and homelessness policy, research and service provision. Stability is also seen as a continuum: 'at one end is no access to housing or reasonable quality (complete instability), and at the other is access to housing of reasonable quality in the absence of threats (complete stability) (Frederick *et al.,* 2014, p. 965). Frederick *et al's* longitudinal study of young people transitioning away from homelessness, identified central factors associated with housing stability and instability; 'housing type; recent housing history; current housing tenure; financial status; standing in the legal system; education and employment status; harmful substance use, and subjective assessments of housing satisfaction and stability' (*ibid.*). The availability of interpersonal and social service supports and supported housing have also been identified as factors influencing housing stability, in that support structures easing the transition into a mainstream life can act to reinforce the 'housing' side of stability (*ibid.*, p. 967).

It seems that having to deal with challenging social circumstances, often out of their control, became the 'norm' for many participants. Things didn't stand still for very long, and stability, in many aspects of their lives was rarely established: it was one thing after another, that was life and they got used to it, they effectively became desensitised:

---

[27] A change of place (www.oed.com, OED Third Edition March 2003)
[28] Something remaining (www.oed.com, OED Third Edition September 2016)

> It's all just another page of my life story, just another day. I'm used to everything going wrong, I've had it for so long now I just get used to it. It just comes and goes. (Amy)

Thomson *et al.* (2002) suggest that young people's experiences during their transitions into adulthood can have lasting consequences, as they progress throughout the life course. The part particular life experiences/events can play in determining an individual's future, has been examined by a number of scholars, as outlined in Chapter Four. Gurney identifies 'climatic events' or 'turning points' in an individual's life which can be viewed as an episode in a much longer oral history (1997, p. 375). Denzin (1989) identifies 'epiphanies' which represent interactional moments and experiences that leave marks on people's lives by altering their fundamental meaning structures. And Giddens identifies 'fateful moments': 'times when events come together in such a way that an individual stands at a crossroads in their existence or where a person learns of information with fateful consequences' (1991, p. 113).

In this vein, it can be suggested that participants' often complex housing and social histories illustrate 'path dependency', in which outcomes are the results of an extended series of events and conditions (Little, 2012). Mahoney (2000, pp. 507-508) argues that 'path dependence characterizes specifically those historical sequences in which contingent events set into motion institutional patterns or event chains that have deterministic properties…. involving tracing a given outcome back to a particular set of historical events, and showing how these historical events are themselves contingent occurrences that cannot be explained on the basis of prior historical conditions'. Path dependency is not, however, solely a property of very long chronological sequences. It can, for example, be suggested that for many participants in the present study, 'path-dependency' was a matter of 'reactive sequences': 'chains of temporally ordered and causally connected events, where each event in the sequence is both a reaction to antecedent events and a cause of subsequent events' (*ibid.,* p. 526):

> Early events in the sequence are especially important to final outcomes because a small change in one of these events can accumulate over time and make a great deal of difference by the end of the sequence (*ibid.*).

In individual terms, Sprott notes that:

> The development of personality can only be understood if one traces particular emotional relationships, the pressures and strains, to which is has been subjected to from infancy…'what happens in infancy will determine its [a child's] attitude, its substitute satisfactions, and, perhaps, its breakdown in the future years' (1970, p. 64).

Similarly, May documents a homeless individual tracing his sense of homelessness back to his childhood, his early relationship with his family, and his 'psycho' father, who did not

accept him for what he was (2000, p. 751). That man understood his movements, his extreme mobility as a response to a deep rooted and profound sense of homelessness, which provided the connecting thread throughout his adult life. As noted in Chapter Four, the homeless charity Shelter argues that for many people there is no single event that results in homelessness, instead homelessness is often due to a number of unresolved problems building up over time (Shelter, 2018).

For many participants, therefore, the experience of a significant change in social context in childhood set them on a path of persistent instability; socially, emotionally, economically and physically (i.e. with respect to housing). Continuity of people and place was lacking. For many participants, the steps they took along their path were often not their choices; things happened to them that were often out of their control, leading to yet more change and upheaval. Nor did they have the opportunity to establish control over their lives; public authorities controlled their lives, placing them in social care settings, into formal homeless accommodation or into a correctional setting, and making them reliant on social security benefits. Perhaps the most remarkable and admirable thing, as revealed in their life histories, is the persistence with which some, if not many, of the participants in this study continued to believe that some control over their lives was still possible.

The next, and final Chapter will discuss key messages that the participants' stories tell us, highlighting how the aims and objectives of this study have been met, and the main contributions this research makes to the existing body of knowledge about 'home'. The participant's stories also provide a clear message for housing and social policy makers and practitioners; homeless and vulnerable individuals, in childhood and/or adulthood, need to be *supported* in their progression to a future where having a dwelling place they can call 'home' can be a realistic possibility.

Chapter Nine: Discussion and conclusions

9.0   Introduction

The overall aims and objectives of this study, as detailed in Chapter One, were, first, to explore the meanings of 'home' for people who had experienced homelessness, and second, to explore substantively the factors that influenced and contributed to their experiences and perceptions of 'home'. In finer-grained detail, these translated into the following empirical questions. What does 'home' mean to people, what are its common characteristics and social and personal roles? What makes different housing situations and experiences 'home' or 'not-home'? What does 'home' mean for different people? How does the meaning and experience of 'home' change in different contexts and over time? And, finally, how does 'home' fulfil human needs?

The above questions and topics were addressed in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. They interpreted and presented participants' life stories, showing how the meaning of 'home' evolves over time in relation to influences of social context and needs, where meanings can be either shared or idiosyncratic, with some patterns according to gender and different housing situations. A persistent context of housing and social instability often meant that participants had few consistent 'positive relationships' in their lives and lacked social capital; hindering the fulfilment of needs, including the need for 'home'. Within this context, participants were quite specific about what could make different housing situations 'home' or 'not-home', challenging social constructions of 'home'. After childhood, 'home' was a rare experience, with negative feelings much more common than positive ones, if any emotional connection was made at all, where *emotional security* was the basis of 'home', and *physical insecurity* was the basis of 'not-home'.

This Chapter looks across the participants' stories and discusses the key messages that they convey. It highlights how the aims and objectives of this study have been met, and the main contributions this research makes to the existing body of knowledge about 'home'. The Chapter reflects on how the participants stories can inform and direct future policy and practice to help make 'home' a routine reality for vulnerable children and adults, rather than an insecure and unhappy transience. The Chapter ends with suggestions on how future research could help present a more realistic picture of the meaning of 'home'.

9.1   Discussion

The participants' stories have highlighted several key themes relating to the aims and objectives of this study. They show how the role and meaning of 'home', across different housing situations, was shaped, over time, by the context of participants' lives; these themes will now be reflected on and discussed. Particular attention is given to how 'home' and 'not-home' fit into the lives of vulnerable children and adults; what 'home' really is; how it can realised, and how contexts of housing and social instability hinder the fulfilment of needs, including the need for 'home'.

The meaning of 'home': social and personal constructions of 'home'

In examining the meaning and common characteristics of 'home', many of the participants' common features of 'home' mirror the general picture found in the literature (see Table 9.1). This suggests that participants were exposed to, and influenced by, the cultural and societal 'norm' of 'home', i.e. the social construction of the idea of 'home'. Individuals are exposed to different sources of information and ideas about 'home', which can conjure up a generalised view of what 'home' ought to be via the media, social and cultural norms, public policy, and familial and other social relationships. For example, Blunt and Dowling (2006, pp. 100-101) argue that 'public discourse - in the media, in popular culture, in public policy – presents a dominant or ideal version of house-as-home, which typically portrays belonging and intimacy amongst members of a heterosexual family, living in a detached, owner-occupied dwelling, in a suburban location'. So the definition of 'home' may come from one segment of society and be internalised by others even though it may not mesh with their individual realities of 'home' (*ibid*., p. 128), and 'there may be people for whom a general understanding of home will not apply, nor match their own personal experience or desire for home' (Rivlin and Moore, 2001, p. 328).

Table 9.1   Main features of 'home' in the literature and among participants

Main features of 'home' in the literature	Main features of 'home' among participants
family, social relationships	positive relationships
familiarity, routine, continuity	'the norm'
privacy, autonomy, freedom and control	personal control
personalisation	personalised space

Even though the participants' common features of 'home' mirrored those portrayed in the literature, their experiences were unique, in that they were individually interpreted through the prism of personal social contexts they experienced whilst living in a dwelling place and in particular housing situations. 'Home' is 'a bonding of person and place and a set of connections between the experience of dwelling and the wider spatial, temporal and sociocultural context within which it emerges' (Dovey, 1985, p.44). Context provides the essential clues as to how a dwelling place does, or does not, become 'home'. Thus the *actual* experience and meaning of 'home' is different for different people. As Després (1991, p. 108) notes, 'home' can be understood as a combination of material, perceived and experienced realities; a societal entity influenced by ideological, political and economic forces, in which 'personal, shared or societal-wide values, attitudes and meanings, and experiences about 'home' are rooted in the inter-play of individual, spatial and societal forces as they emerge in individual actions and practices'.

'Home life': social context, needs and the role of 'home' over time

As well as mirroring the general picture of 'home' in the literature, participants' common features of 'home' also mirror human needs. Doyal and Gough describe protective housing as an 'intermediate need' (1991, pp. 191-193), Maslow describes shelter as a 'physiological need' (1987, pp. 15-23), and Alderfer describes shelter as an 'existence need' (1972, pp 6-13). When an individual sustains an emotional relationship with a dwelling place, a sense of attachment can be formed, which in turn, can develop into a sense of 'home'; shelter/housing/a dwelling place can become 'home'. So even though the focus of 'home' for participants was emotional, 'home', as a physical dwelling place, in whatever form, fulfilled the basic need for shelter; a catalyst for fulfilling a variety of other needs, both physiological and psychological. Shelter meets the need for physical security and health, and provides psychological comfort in the shape of quietness, light, cleanliness, thermal conditions, and eased movements (Després, 1991, p. 100). An experience of 'home' fulfils deep-rooted psychological needs for identity, control, privacy, security, intimacy and social status (Somerville, 1997, p. 229). Maslow's theory of personality identifies 'home' as fulfilling a hierarchy of human needs necessary to psychological well-being (Després, 1991, p. 100). 'Home' can provide an arena for social relationships with family and friends and fulfil the human need for social intercourse; the need for privacy can also be fulfilled at 'home', a place where intrusions can be controlled and thus solitude and refuge can be enjoyed (*ibid.*, p. 100).

As illustrated in the previous Chapters, participants' common experiences of 'home' mirror human needs, and all promote psychological well-being:

- the 'norm' → physiological/safety/existence/psychological security

- personal control, personalisation → autonomy/freedom

- positive relationships → social/relatedness/emotional autonomy

- positive selfhood → self esteem/self actualisation/growth

For participants, 'home' was therefore an environment in which certain needs could be fulfilled, i.e. 'home' played a central role in fulfilling needs. However, different housing situations can play different roles and influence actual needs (since needs are relative). For example, in the context of homelessness, a homeless person's most basic need is often shelter, which aids the fulfilment of other physiological needs of the human body. The nature/context of particular housing situations can also influence whether a person's needs can be fulfilled by that dwelling place. For example, having to live by someone else's rule, such as parents' rules or rules at a homeless hostel, can reduce the basic psychological need for autonomy (Doyal and Gough, 1991, p. 59).

People also differ in how they can tolerate or adjust to being deprived of the fulfilment of their needs; 'those individuals in whom a certain need has always been satisfied are best equipped to tolerate deprivation of that need in the future…and those who have been deprived in the past will react differently to current satisfactions from the one who has never been deprived' (Maslow, 1987, pp. 18). So 'people who have been made secure and strong in the earliest years tend to remain secure and strong thereafter in the face of whatever threatens' (*ibid.,* pp. 27). From an early age, many participants' circumstances meant that certain needs were not always fulfilled. In some cases, a deprivation of needs became their 'norm', with the basic physiological need of survival (physical health), and thus survival chances, greatly influenced by social and economic circumstances (context). Many participants, for example, started life with some sense of security, mainly whilst living with their biological parents or a parent. However, this was often diminished, or in some cases completely severed, due to a significant change in social context, such that the intermediate need of 'emotional autonomy', which encompasses security in childhood (Doyal and Gough, 1991, pp. 191-193), was no longer fulfilled. So from a young age changes in social context became common-place for these individuals; something they had to live with, and learn to cope with.

As their testimonies show, a majority of participants in this study spent their childhoods moving around different dwelling places, experiencing different housing situations, with many going on to have equally diverse housing experiences in adulthood. As participants' rates of homelessness show, a context of transience meant moving became the 'norm', in which fulfilling the need for shelter was often precarious. Participants' lacked

continuity of place. Frequent moving between dwelling places, and its influence, is not a specific topic for investigation in the 'home' literature. The participants' stories indicate that it is a line of inquiry that clearly warrants further investigation. As May (2000, pp. 738-756) also suggests, in circumstances of homelessness 'moving within, between and through places, sometimes by necessity, sometimes by choice, must have an impact upon any subsequent articulations of a wider sense of home, not only as a residence, but as place', where a sense of homelessness may be more deep rooted than a sense of 'home', if 'home' has ever been experienced at all. Lessons can be learnt from other disciplines which have documented the detrimental effect of moving, particularly in childhood; here the social and psychological impacts are clear. The looked-after children literature shows that constant change can have a major impact on children's and young people's patterns of attachment and emotional wellbeing (e.g. Ward, Munro and Dearden, 2006). Such findings reflect the experience of participants in this study. Levels of support, whether financial, practical or emotional, were also precarious, often inconsistent, for many participants. This frequently meant that the context of participants' lives was dependence; an over-reliance or dependence on others to fulfil their needs; for example, homelessness meant relying on a friend, family member or the state to provide temporary/short-term shelter and relying on the state to provide an income (in the shape of social security benefits). In such circumstances, it could be said that participants were being 'helped out', in some cases through obligation or duty, for example under homelessness legislation, rather than being 'cared' for, which has psychological connotations.

As participants' stories show, young people's experiences in their transitions into adulthood can have lasting consequences as they progress throughout the life course (Thomson *et al.*, 2002). It is 'in the environments of childhood that the person we are today began to take shape' (Copper Marcus, 2006, p. 18). 'Climatic events' or 'turning points' in an individual's life can be viewed as episodes in a much longer oral history (Gurney, 1997, p. 375). 'Epiphanies', i.e. interactional moments and experiences, can leave marks on people's lives by altering their fundamental meaning structures (Denzin, 1989). 'Fateful moments' leave an individual standing at a crossroads in their existence (Giddens, 1991, p. 113). Participants' often complex housing and social histories seem to illustrate 'path dependency', where the outcome that occurs is the result of an extended series of events and conditions (Little, 2012). Participants were set on a path of persistent instability: socially, emotionally, economically and physically (with respect to housing). Their paths were characterised by 'reactive sequences': 'chains of temporally ordered and causally connected events, where each event in the sequence is both a reaction to antecedent events and a cause of subsequent events' (Mahoney, 2000, p. 526). Similarly, Shelter argues that reasons given for homelessness are only the catalysts that trigger people into seeking assistance, and not the

underlying issues that have caused the crisis to build up in the first place. For many people, there is no single event that results in sudden homelessness (Shelter, 2018). Instead, homelessness is due to a number of unresolved problems building up over time (*ibid.)*

In essence, participants' testimonies show that a context of housing instability often did little to promote social stability and/or emotional security. Thus, contexts of housing and social instability impacted on the fulfilment of basic and intermediate needs, including the experience of 'home'. The fulfilment of the needs that could help foster a sense of 'home', i.e. autonomy, freedom, social relationships, privacy and security, was harder to realise, and in some cases completely out of reach. The contexts of participants' lives were often the reverse. Doyal and Gough (1991, pp. 64-66) warn of impairments of autonomy: anxiety about the unpredictability of life, feeling helpless, worthless, defeated, losing control of life and being denied of freedom and autonomy. All constrain a person's capacity to live a life characterised by choices.

Low social capital: obstacles to finding 'home' and fulfilling needs

For the participants it is clear; the central focus of 'home' was 'positive relationships'. Everyone, albeit to differing degrees, needed other people to help fulfil their needs. The absence of 'home' was a barrier to fulfilling needs as 'home' is, 'the locus per excellence for maintaining interpersonal relationships, answering the human need for social intercourse' (Werner, 1987). 'Home is a crucial setting through which basic patterns of social relations are constituted and reproduced' (Saunders, 1989, p. 178). Consistent, positive and supportive relationships, however, were pretty much absent in the day-to-day lives of the participants; their context was not one of support. For some this had been the case from a young age, impacting on all aspects of their lives. As noted earlier, relationships were often functional and impersonal/formal; heavily reliant on services and the state to fulfil their needs, in a position of low power and high dependency. Such relationships are characteristically intermittent and lack continuity; remote rather than 'hands on' support. For the most part, participants lives were contextualised by no, or low, 'social capital'; 'a shorthand way of talking about social connections and the character of social life as resources upon which people draw' (Jenkins 2009, p. 148). This includes personal relationships, social network support, civic engagement, and trust and cooperative norms (Scrivens and Smith, 2013). Networks refer to real-world links between groups or individuals such as networks of friends, family, colleagues and so on.

It seems that, from a young age, many of the participants were not part of a consistent (positive) network; hindering the fulfilment of their needs. In some cases, they hadn't learnt

or been taught how to be part of a positive network, for example by their parents, as participants' case studies and 'brief life' accounts illustrate. As Sprott (1970, p. 35) notes, 'from the child's experience of its parents it acquires a set of expectations about the way other people in the future are likely to behave which will determine its own behaviour'. Families characterised by a lack of cohesion, neglect, or abuse, are more likely to damage children. This results in weak self-identities and poor coping skills, and possible over dependence on individuals and institutions later in life since they missed necessary maturational steps (Hill, 1991, pp. 304-305). Doyal and Gough suggest that childhood experiences impact on subsequent life, in that motivational structures are created, which thereafter, and not necessarily self-consciously, influence everyday activities and thought processes (1991, pp. 37-38). As such, networks of support, for example family or friends, were often precarious, unreliable and inconsistent. This is borne out in the short stays and frequent movement between different informal/hidden homeless situations (primarily staying with family or friends).

Testimonies show that participants were characteristically 'poor' in physical (housing), economic and social terms, meaning for the most part, that they were reliant on the state for housing and/or financial support; part of a network made up of chains of dependence (De Swaan, 2001, pp. 33-34). This support could also be precarious; if for example hostel rules were broken or you turned up late for signing on at the job centre, support could be withdrawn. Medical and/or welfare support could also be withdrawn if participants weren't consistent in attending appointments, for example with a mental health worker, tenancy support worker or drugs worker. Relationships needed to be maintained to regulate the fulfilment of needs, with no guarantee that relationships would bear fruit indefinitely. Reciprocity is said to work better if positive relationships are formed through frequent meeting, providing an arena for trust to be built (De Swaan, 2001, pp. 86-89). Being consistent in attending appointments can however be difficult to achieve when you are having to deal with lots of issues. Being reliant upon on the good will of other people and services to fulfil your needs can be stressful.

For some participants, networks were more likely to be actually negative. Being part of a homelessness network, drugs and/or alcohol scene, or network of unemployed people, meant that 'acquaintances' were often more common than friends, and reciprocity was often lacking; for example, someone might be your 'friend' on pay day, or because you have alcohol. Resources can be limited in such networks as everyone is in a similar position. As such, participants could be said to have been part of a 'network of poverty'. Being part of these networks however, may limit access to other support networks such as supported

housing projects and health treatment programmes which can have strict policies on drug or alcohol misuse. However, in such circumstances, being part of any network or group might well be preferable to being on your own; something is often better than nothing. And such networks can be a source of support, for example, sharing resources and information, and empathising with each other (Fitzpatrick, 2000; Wolch and Rowe, 1993).

Networks can also have other sides. A number of participants did adjust their lifestyles or get drawn into a particular lifestyle in order to stay part of a support network that helped fulfil their physiological and/or psychological needs. Shop lifting or begging for example, were resorted to in order to pay bills, buy food, buy clothing, purchase alcohol or drugs, and buy gifts for children. 'Keeping up with the Joneses' takes many forms and is inherent in participation in social networks.

Thus, the networks' participants were part of, and any relationships they had, were not usually balanced in their favour; power was not in their hands. They rarely had the means to reciprocate anything of similar or equal value. It should be noted that for a variety of reasons some participants were reluctant to exploit support networks, and did not want to ask for support; wanting to prove that they could do it on their own; feeling ashamed; not wanting to worry family or friends; not wanting to be judged and/or labelled, and because they had been let down in the past.

Participants' lives were generally characterised by low levels of social capital, which, at its core is a matter of networks of relationships. Given that positive relationships were the basis of 'home' for many participants, it is therefore not surprising that a feeling of 'home' was rarely a reality for them. A lack of, or low social capital, and the presence or absence of 'positive relationships' clearly influenced and contributed to participant's experiences and perceptions of 'home', and the fulfilment of their needs. Participants' testimonies show that continuity of people and place was not common place for them.

The reality of 'home' and 'not-home': emotional security and physical insecurity, or no feelings at all

Participants' testimonies have shown that the experience of a dwelling place can conjure up a complex myriad of emotional responses, particularly when the context of your day-to-day reality is housing and social instability.

The impact of such realities resulted in quite stark and focused feelings of 'home' and 'not-home' amongst the participants. This has not really been found to be the case in other studies of 'home'. The overwhelming negative experience of dwelling places as 'not-home'

was clear, although not an initial line of enquiry in the study, it was one which participants themselves brought to the fore. To date, 'not-home' has only been a minimal line of enquiry in the 'home' literature. The participants' message is clear; transience and temporary housing situations contribute to the creation of negative dwelling environments and generate feelings of 'not-home'. This could be a consequence of the transient and temporary nature of homelessness for example, and the subsequent impact on access to support and only being able to afford accommodation at the lowest end of the rental market. At the same time, the social context of participants' lives often meant it was hard for them to cope with maintaining their accommodation. Affording bills and household essentials such as kitchen equipment and furniture, for example, and lacking confidence and knowledge in dealing with housing providers and the benefits agency when there were any issues. Again, the 'home' literature is lacking in this area. It does not make a clear link between 'not-home' and homelessness, or, perhaps more to the point, 'not-home' and transience, nor does it raise questions about such possible connections. Similarly, no substantive connection is made between 'not-home' and the social context of housing situations. This may, in part, be attributable to the minimal focus it places on 'not-home' as an issue.

A feeling of 'home' for participants, as born out in the literature, is based on personal emotions; where an individual experiences 'home' via an emotional process connecting themselves and a place (Gurney, 1997, p. 384). It is particularly interesting then, but perhaps not surprising, given the participants' histories, that a *lack* of any emotion toward dwelling places was nearly as common as positive and negative emotions. Overall, strong emotions, whether feelings of 'home' or 'not-home', were experienced in just over half of all housing episodes. With all other episodes being classified as 'no strong feelings'. The social context of participants' lives and their high numbers of housing episodes and the ensuing transience, helps to explain their apparent lack of emotion toward many of their dwelling places; they were mere shelter; functional. Participants either did not, or could not, make much of an emotional investment in those dwelling places or may just have felt ambivalent; participants often lacked an emotional connection to people (lack of social capital/positive relationships) and/or place. This lack of feeling adds a new and interesting dimension to the 'home' debate, which usually focuses on the positive emotions of 'home' and gives little consideration to the absence of *any* emotions toward dwelling places. In attempting to understand how the meaning of 'home' is constructed, it is clear from these participants' experiences at least, that the complete housing trajectory needs to be considered.

As outlined in Chapter Six, several features of 'home' were common amongst participants (where more than half the participants described at least one 'home' experience in

similar terms). With the seventeen participants experiencing such a high number of housing episodes, what, in particular, out of the common features, made a dwelling place 'home' or 'not-home' for them was clear to see. Across all housing episodes experienced as 'home', 'positive relationships' was the most prominent feature (experienced by all participants and featuring in over half of all 'home' episodes). 'Not permanent' was the most prominent description of episodes experienced as 'not-home' and the only common feature of 'not-home' (experienced by nine participants and featuring in just under half of all 'not-home' episodes). As a result, participants' constructions of 'home' and 'not-home' tended to focus on a singular feature, unlike the more general social construction of 'home', and to a lesser extent 'not-home' found in the literature, which encompass several features (see Mallet, 2004; and Smith, 1984).

While my data about participants' feelings confirm the literature's assertion that the meaning and experience of 'home' is subjective, such polarisation of feelings around a single feature, is not identified in the existing 'home' literature, nor is there much discussion of the specific factors that promote or hinder the creation of 'home'. One exception is Hayward, who found that the most important meaning of 'home' was related to a person's relations with others within the 'home' (1977, p. 10). And when analysing by gender, the participants' stories do resonate with other studies (see Gurney, 1997, for example); female experiences of dwelling places focused on emotional elements ('positive relationships' and 'a lack of positive selfhood'), whereas male experiences were focused on less emotional elements (such as the 'norm' and 'not permanent'). Different people have different experiences of 'home'. As the participants stories clearly illustrate, factors such as gender and social context, influenced and contributed to their interpretations and perceptions of 'home'.

Primary feelings of 'not-home' were about the physicality and functionality of a dwelling place in terms of its lack of permanence. This adds another new dimension to the 'home' debate, in that the participants' common experiences of 'not-home' do not mirror the 'not-home' presented in the literature; it focuses on negative emotional feelings toward a dwelling place. It seems that for the participants in this study, feelings of 'not-home' were more simple and clear cut. In the same vein, 'home' as a feeling of *emotional security* and 'not-home' as a feeling of *physical insecurity*, are not direct opposites. This is in contrast to studies which found that they were oppositional positive and negative emotions. Smith, for example found the main qualities of 'not-home' to be primarily based around (negative) emotional feelings towards place, dealing with undesirable internal relationships, the lack of freedom or privacy, negative atmosphere, and dissatisfaction with the physical features of the domestic environment (1984, pp. 40-41). These feelings were the direct opposite to

descriptions of the essential qualities of 'home'; continuity, privacy, self-expression, social relationships, warmth and physical structure (*ibid*., pp. 43-45). Similarly, Tognoli (1987, p. 677) suggests that 'when residents experience deficiencies in rootedness, place attachment, continuity, privacy, identity and family relations in conjunction with home, negative states result such as alienation, dislocation, vulnerability, discontinuity, disunity and insecurity'. It should however also be remembered that other studies found no consistent physical or social dimensions to either 'home' or 'not-home' (e.g. Horwitz and Tognoli, 1982).

'Home' and 'not-home' in different housing situations

Having already shown that the participants' feelings of 'home' and 'not-home' buck the trend to a certain degree, of those presented in the existing literature, it should not be surprising that participants experienced 'home' and 'not-home' in housing situations where such feelings might not be usually expected. People live out their lives in dwelling places which brings together the context of a particular housing situation, social care for example, and personal social contexts, thus creating individual experiences.

Overall, the main feature of 'home' and 'not-home' varied according to the particular housing situation, indicating that experiences of 'home' and 'not-home' are situation specific, differing in accordance with housing and social circumstance. 'Home' was experienced in a variety of housing situations with very different levels of security and consistency, defined in terms of the dweller's ability or right to remain in the dwelling place in question. This illustrates that the experience and understanding of 'home' is fundamentally individual; the dweller themselves is central to the experience of 'home'; it's about how that person feels in, and about, a dwelling place, and about how a dwelling place makes them feel in their self. 'Home' is relative to the individual dweller; it's about their life in a particular dwelling place, where subjective reality finds individuals negotiating meanings within social situations (Cuncliffe, 2008, p. 126). So 'the meanings and associations evoked by the word [home] vary from one person to the next' (Peled and Muzicant, 2008, p. 434).

Any physical dwelling place had the potential to be experienced as 'home' or 'not-home', particularly amongst females. Apart from 'living with parents or a parent during childhood', all housing situations were more likely to be experienced as 'not-home'. In addition, housing situations commonly perceived as negative were not necessarily experienced as 'not-home', if any emotions were expressed at all. This reaffirms earlier assertions about participants' strong emotional sentiments towards 'home' and their lack of reference to physical elements/characteristics. 'Home' had very little to do with the physical structure of a dwelling place; it just provided a physical environment in which an emotional

'home' could be created, and where emotional needs could be fulfilled. Emotional needs were greater. 'Home' was personally and emotionally constructed; in other words, 'home is where the heart is'. It also reaffirms assertions made earlier, that participants needs could be highly subjective and individual, as identified in the literature (see Maslow, 1987 and Alderfer,1972). A focus on the emotional experience of 'home' resonates with a number of studies which found that physical aspects were not the most important, with 'home' being thought of in very personal and subjective ways (e.g. Young and Wilmott, 1962; Hayward, 1975; May, 2000). This could be seen as ironic, given that all participants had experienced the physical insecurity of transience and living in temporary housing situations; should physical security/consistency not have become a key feature of 'home'? It could be that their past and present experiences of a dwelling place were influential in adjusting their expectations to a more 'realistic' idea of 'home', any element of which could be seized upon, as appropriate.

So even though participants' lives were characterised by contexts of housing and social instability, occasionally, and perhaps against the odds, a feeling of 'home' could be found. This suggests that there was still a need and/or desire for 'home'; 'home' wasn't given up on. Physical security may have been out of reach, but a degree of emotional attachment, i.e. positive emotional feelings toward a dwelling place, was achievable, even in the most challenging of circumstances; formal homeless accommodation and social care settings were 'home' because of 'positive relationships' with hostel staff and foster carers. Again, it was about people rather than place. This suggests that certain features of 'home' didn't have to be experienced or fulfilled in any particular order, i.e. secure shelter didn't have to come before emotional security.

Again, the fulfilment of needs comes into play. It has been shown that needs are relative, where the suggestion that intermediate needs must first be satisfied if fundamental basic needs are to be satisfied (Doyal and Gough, 1991), did not necessarily apply to all participants in all situations. A good example of this is the intermediate need of 'security in childhood'. This is held to enhance emotional autonomy but did not feature frequently, if at all, in many participants' life stories. Nonetheless they still managed to experience a dwelling place as 'home'. This suggests that they managed to hold onto a level of autonomy, in that they were able to choose how to feel about a dwelling place. Maslow states that the hierarchical nature of needs does not mean that lower needs have to be fully satisfied before higher needs can be gratified; it is routine for people to be 'partially satisfied in all their basic needs and partially unsatisfied in all their basic needs at the same time' (*ibid*., pp. 27-28). Similarly, Alderfer suggests that needs may operate at different levels simultaneously (1972,

pp. 6-29). This being said, at the heart of Maslow's hierarchical concept, remains the belief that a lower need is stronger than a higher need, for example 'the safety need is stronger than the love need' (Maslow, 1987, pp. 56-57), which wasn't necessarily the case for participants in this study. Meeting all intermediate needs simultaneously, in the context of one individual's life, is hard to achieve because not all needs may require fulfilment or satisfaction simultaneously. Needs are both personal in their perception and fulfilment, so surely the aim should be to fulfil all situationally and personally relevant needs to the optimum?

9.2   Conclusions

The participants' stories show that, for them, their greatest need was 'positive relationships', the key to fulfilling other needs and finding 'home'. Their need was for relationships beyond those within a network; their need was for caring and supportive relationships. Psychological, emotional needs were their primary needs, categorised by Doyal and Gough (1991, pp. 191-193) as the intermediate need to enhance emotional autonomy through significant primary relationships, by Maslow as 'social needs' (1987, pp. 15-23), and by Alderfer as 'relatedness needs' (1972, pp. 6-13). As this thesis has shown, participants' emotional needs were often not fulfilled. I therefore want to suggest that focusing on the absence of (consistent) positive relationships in participants' lives might serve to define a new narrative of disadvantage: 'relationship poverty'. By 'relationship poverty' I mean a lack of (consistent) positive relationships, which may include an absence of people:

- who are willing and able to support you, materially and/or emotionally;
- who you can turn to for impartial advice and guidance, even with respect to simple day to day tasks of living, such as moving furniture or understanding a utility bill;
- who you know will be there for you in times of need, and will listen and try and help; and
- who you feel care about you, show you kindness and love, and who you may feel the same about, in return.

'Relationship poverty' characterised many participants' lives from a young age; they struggled to form, and maintain relationships with other people, and they held back. Possible reasons for this might be that they had never experienced such relationships themselves. Their learning of how to socially interact was inhibited in childhood and they were afraid of forming such relationships because they had been hurt in the past. They had been let down by people, and/or had been made to feel bad about themselves. Transience and episodes of homelessness undoubtedly hindered participants' ability to establish and maintain relationships and access support networks, as illustrated in Chapter Eight. And it is the

absence of such relationships that made 'home' so hard to find; a double-edged sword as 'home' is the 'setting through which basic forms of social relations and social institutions are constituted and reproduced' (Saunders and Williams, 1988, p. 82). It is the experience of continuity, whether it be of activities or relationships, that differentiates homes from houses (Tognoli, 1987, pp. 659-660). As such, I would suggest that to varying degrees, and at certain points in their lives, many participants were emotionally isolated, solitary figures, even when surrounded by people, when living in a homeless hostel for example, or with a partner or family. Few positive connections were made and/or maintained with other people, suggesting they also experienced social isolation. The most important relationship for participants was often the formal, functional one they had with the state characterised by remote and intermittent contact as prescribed by policy and practice. As such, participants may not have viewed their contact with the state as a 'relationship' but more as a requirement/obligation/necessity to meet their needs where no emotional investment was made on either side.

A fundamental consequence of a lack of 'positive relationships' is that it becomes harder to fulfil one's needs. As noted earlier, human needs cannot be fulfilled in isolation; there is always a necessary connection with other humans. Relationships need to be maintained for the fulfilment of needs, although relationships do change over time, as do needs. In addition, switching from a reliance on a face-to-face community to depending on the more abstract interactions of an impersonal 'outside world' is a threat to personal autonomy, as economic and social change increases (Doyal and Gough, 1991, p. 254). So as societies expand, direct individual relationships and networks, for example with family and friends, seem to diminish, and more generic, impersonal associations form with the state, non-governmental agencies, and even consumer products. As participants' testimonies show, reliance on such indirect and often impersonal relationships did little to fulfil their emotional needs; so important to them. As Sprott (1970, p. 24) notes, 'for a full sense of 'I' social interaction is required'.

Unsurprising then that 'home' was rarely found after leaving the parental dwelling place; 'home' was based on, and in, emotional security (psychological need), and participants' personal circumstances were, more often than not, insecure. This may have been particularly true regarding their housing situations, where it could be hard to make an emotional connection. For example, having to live with strangers in formal homeless accommodation, and not knowing when you will be asked to leave, is not really a sound basis upon which to form positive relationships. There was a lack of continuity of people and

place. The participants' stories therefore suggest that their experiences of 'home' were temporal.

Only one piece of published work could be found that used the expression 'relationship poverty'. Journalist Sheila Wray Gregorie, of Ontario, Canada, identifies a similar narrative among the homeless people she encountered (Wray Gregorie, 2011). She talks about the continuing existence of poverty and homelessness even though resources are directed into alleviating such problems. She highlights the work of Tim Huff[29], of Toronto, Canada, who has found, through his work with homeless people, that homeless people suffer far less from 'poverty of resources' than from 'poverty of relationship'. Seeing poverty as a money issue means you are dealing with the symptom, and not the root of the (*ibid.*). The real issue is a breakdown of family and of community (*ibid.*). It is suggested that those with a close family and a close community are not harmed by occasional financial setbacks, whereas those with chaotic families are, as everybody is too busy dealing with their own issues to help you with yours, so a relatively minor setback could cause them to lose their home (*ibid.*). Poverty can impact on relationships, as analysis of the UK household longitudinal study, Understanding Society, has found: people with lower incomes are at more risk of social isolation and of strained relationships within families than those on higher incomes (see https://www.jrf.org.uk/data/impact-poverty-relationships).

So with their lives often in flux, whether technically homeless or not (and most often not), participants must have found it hard to consistently fulfil their key needs. What's more, participants' needs changed over time, in accordance with their individual social circumstances (context) and the particular situation of a dwelling place. People had different motivations or drives in fulfilling what they perceived to be their needs, this lay at the root of their personal needs journey, of which 'home' may be only a part. Homes fit differently in people's lives at different times, as connections with residential environments shift in relation to current needs for independence and well-being, altering the physical and psychological significance of being 'home' (Horwitz and Tognoli, 1982, pp. 335-340). As such, the fulfilment of needs and experiences of 'home' for participants were often far from straightforward or typical. The often relentless interplay between contexts of housing and social instability is what made 'home' such an individual experience, even when such circumstances weren't really a recipe for feeling at 'home' at all.

---

[29] For Tim Huffs work see http://compassionseries.com/about/tim-huff/.

There is an interplay, a coming together of different contextual factors: the social construction of 'home', individual context (needs), the particular housing situation (objective) and the experience of housing (subjective). All play a part in the individual construction of 'home' as it evolves over time in accordance with changes in these contextual factors. 'Home' is 'a bonding of person and place and a set of connections between the experience of dwelling and the wider spatial, temporal and sociocultural context within which it emerges' (Dovey, 1985, p.44). 'An emotionally based and meaningful relationship between dwellers and their dwelling places' which is 'created and evolved over time' (*ibid.*, 1985, pp. 34 and 54). Personal circumstances can be shared or unique, but the interpretation is solely down to the individual experiencing them, thus creating individual contexts of 'home'. For example, 'positive relationships' characterised 'home' for many participants, but the meaning of each 'positive relationship' was individual, whether that relationship be with siblings, parents and/or a partner, as was the nature of each relationship.

9.3   Messages for policy and practice

Housing and support

Although this thesis is not a study of homelessness in itself, it is a study of the understandings of, and attitudes towards, 'home' and 'not-home' expressed by a small sample of people who, among other housing experiences, have experienced significant homelessness and domestic instability and transience. In this respect, the findings from this study are pertinent to housing and homelessness policy and practice. Current housing and homelessness policy does not prioritise emotional needs or consider the promotion of 'home'. Nor is much attention paid to the impact of frequent moving on vulnerable groups, and how it could be reduced. Instead, the onus is on the practical provision of physical shelter. Some relevant concerns can be found in the Homelessness Act 2002, which stipulates that housing authority districts are required to produce a homelessness strategy, with guidance encouraging local authorities to provide mediation or reconciliation services with respect to relationship breakdown (DCLG, 2006a).

In recent years local and national government austerity measures have meant that support for vulnerable groups, including homeless individuals, has changed. This has meant that the emotional needs of those in need have slipped even further down the agenda. The Supporting People Programme, launched in 2003, was a ring-fenced grant to local authorities intended to fund services to help vulnerable people live independently. The ring-fence provision was removed in April 2009, meaning that all local authorities were able to choose

how to allocate funding. This led to a report that across 152 local authorities, Supporting People funding had been withdrawn entirely from 305 services, and reduced for a further 685 services (House of Commons Library, 2012). In the 2010 Spending Review the Government announced that the Supporting People national funding levels would decrease from £1.64 billion in 2010/11 to £1.59 billion in 2014/15 (*ibid.*). Since April 2011, the Supporting People allocation has been subsumed into the Formula Grant paid to local authorities, meaning that the allocation is no longer separately identified (*ibid.*).

These funding changes have led to changes in housing support for vulnerable groups. For example, there has been a move away from the 'housing readiness' model, whereby homeless people progressively moved through emergency and transitional housing to independent accommodation, as problems such as alcohol and drug misuse were addressed, and the skills to live independently were acquired (Sahlin, 2005). The focus has moved towards providing a 'roof' rather than a 'roof' and support. The 'housing first' model, or versions of it, is often the model of choice. Its premise is centred around stable housing being the key factor in tackling homelessness which needs to be secured before other problems such as substance misuse and mental illness can be addressed (Stefancic and Tsemberis, 2007; and McNaughton and Atherton, 2011). It is too early to assess the outcomes of the model in the UK, which had its first pilot in Glasgow in 2010. Other countries have had mixed outcomes (Padgett *et al.*, 2006; Stergiopoulos *et al.,* 2014). This change has meant that stays in 'supported' accommodation are for much shorter periods, around six months, which reduces the time for support and resettlement preparation input.

In comparing the premise of the 'housing readiness' and 'housing first' models, studies have found that individuals who stayed in hostels or temporary accommodation for more than 12 months before resettlement, had a higher rate of tenancy sustainment, whereas stays of less than six months in temporary accommodation were particularly likely to have resulted in a return to homelessness (Crane *et al.*, 2016, p. 177). In addition, resettlement has increasingly been into private rented accommodation, often due to social housing shortages, and is generally less secure, i.e. short-term tenancies, and of inferior quality, which fuels transience (Crane *et al.*, 2011; Crane *et al.*, 2016).

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into force in April 2018, offers an opportunity to address transience and homelessness among vulnerable groups, such as the participants in this study. The Act places a duty on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas (MHCLG, 2018). It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have

'priority need' (*ibid.*). The Act places a duty on certain public authorities, such as social services, to refer service users, with their consent, who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to a housing authority (*ibid.*). Assistance is provided by the housing authority under either a 'prevention' or 'relief' duty, which lasts 56 days and includes an assessment to identify what has caused the homelessness or threat of homelessness, the housing needs of the applicant, and any support they need in order to be able to secure and retain accommodation (*ibid.*). Following the assessment, the housing authority must work with the person to develop a personalised housing plan which will include actions (or 'reasonable steps') to be taken by the authority and the applicant to try and prevent or relieve homelessness (*ibid.*). Hopefully, housing plans will take a holistic approach and consider the housing and social histories of service users, address individual needs, and include the provision of, or referral to, relevant support services. The government will provide £72.7 million to local authorities to meet the new burdens associated with the additional duties contained within the Act. No further funding is scheduled to be provided, however, as it is anticipated that the new duties to prevent homelessness will lead to savings for local authorities thereafter[30].

Emotional needs and 'home'

However, the evidence of this study is that, even, or perhaps especially, after periods of frequent moving and/or homelessness, there remains a need for 'home', not just a house/shelter. As noted earlier, for many participants, it is arguable that there was a greater need for emotional security than for physical (housing) security; the opposite of the 'housing first' model. This evidence suggests that statutory and voluntary services which cover housing, homelessness and/or social care needs, need to invest in more than a 'roof' in their quest to tackle, alleviate and prevent the consequences of insecure housing, frequent moving and homelessness. Definitions of homelessness focus on a lack of control and privacy and poor living conditions but neglect the emotional aspects of homelessness; an issue of human misery is reduced to a problem that is technical and legal (Somerville, 1992, p. 530). Meeting emotional needs should be on their radar and put on a more equal footing with housing needs. Services should initially look to themselves and examine the nature of their relationships with homeless and vulnerable individuals; are relationships caring, flexible and productive, as well as practical and functional? When needing to access state support, people should be treated as a person and not just a number. They should not just be viewed as a 'problem' or a drain on scarce resources.

---

[30] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-reduction-act-new-burdens-funding

Austerity however, has led to the reduction in other housing related support services, such as resettlement, tenancy and floating support, which are often able to address multiple needs and reduce the incidence of transience and homelessness. Such reductions also hinder the development of relationships between services and their service-users. Spending on such services fell by 45.3 per cent between 2010-11 and 2014-15, which has resulted in cuts to tenancy support services, pressures on how long support can be provided and the ending of some housing support services (Crane *et al.*, 2016, p. 29). For vulnerable people, a lack of investment in housing and support services is not a recipe for housing and social stability. Person and place need to be invested in, and not just in the short-term. Continuity should also be at the heart of provision. It has been found that investing time in supportive relationships with service-users has been effective in reducing transience and the risk of homelessness; Crane *et al.,* for example found that some formerly homeless people require intermittent or regular long-term support to manage a tenancy after they are resettled, which can help avoid further homelessness (2016, p. 173). The resettlement phase and the role of skilled workers in preventing relapse (a return to homelessness) and achieving lasting stability are valued by service users, especially those with experience of multiple exclusion (Bowpitt *et al.,* 2011; Johnson, 2011).

An example of the value of support workers building up a close relationship with service users is the 'intensive key worker' model, found to be effective in work with individuals and families identified as having multiple and complex needs, such as the 'troubled families' programme in England (Parr, 2016, p. 25). The key worker works on a one-to-one basis with individuals, helping form effective relationships, allowing the worker to assess an individual's needs, carry out support planning, provide and/or co-ordinate the delivery of supportive interventions and complete care plan reviews (*op cit.)*. Intensive interventions are designed to provide flexible and 'holistic' solutions that take account of a range of problems and issues and usually over a prolonged period, as opposed to time-limited interventions and those provided by individual services that tend to focus on one particular need, substance misuse, for example. Having the time and patience to commit to repeated attempts to make a connection with the individual and make them feel comfortable, safe and understood is important, as is not judging them and taking their concerns seriously (*ibid.,* p. 30). Developing a bond and level of trust so clients feel safe to open up is key, as is listening, consistency and reliability (*ibid.*, pp. 32-37). It is suggested that while intensive key workers might not be trained therapists or counsellors, they might be equipped to address some emotional challenges that individuals with complex needs face and build therapeutic relationships with them (*ibid.*, p. 39). Parr found that intensive key workers had been 'like a lifeline', 'like a godsend' to service users, making them feel good about themselves (*ibid.*, p.

40).   This model, which adopts a holistic approach to addressing needs, is relevant to housing, homelessness, social care, mental health, education and employment services.

It is also important for services to consider the factors that could hinder, and enhance the experience of 'home', and understand the role 'home' plays in fulfilling needs. The provision of shelter, in particular, needs to be coupled with supporting vulnerable young people and adults to develop their social capital, and in particular, to help them maintain and develop positive relationships in order to enhance their emotional well-being. Through positive relationships people are more likely to feel emotionally secure and be more able to cope in their accommodation because they have people to turn to for help and guidance before things get out of control. Surely this is more preferable than having to resort to state support. The FOR-HOME project found that family and social network members played an important part in helping many of the respondents cope with the practicalities of running a 'home' and adjusting to living independently and rebuilding their lives (Crane *et al.,* 2011). Having a place of their own and housing stability also contributed to improved relationships with relatives, partners and children (Crane *et al.,* 2016, p. 125).

Services should tackle 'relationship poverty' by promoting and encouraging the establishment and maintenance of social capital and positive relationships. Examples might include providing training on relationship building; education on the most helpful relationships; befriending; relationship mediation; putting on events that encourage social interaction, for example, activity programmes; meeting the wider community; local interest groups; mentoring; intensive key worker support. Such programmes should consider individual needs and thus be invested in long term and be viewed as providing social value to individuals and wider society, as well as economic value in terms of reducing reliance on state services. There is value in offering the right services to support people who have experienced homelessness to live their full potential, which in turn benefits communities (Daly *et al.,* 2012, p. 118). Ideally, such programmes should be a core function not an 'add on', and should be made available to children, young people, and adults alike.

Vulnerable young people and adults, often on the margins of society, as the participants in this study were, are affected by many areas of policy and service provision: housing and homelessness, social care (child and adult), mental health and social security. All the interaction participants experienced with such services over the years had done little to break the cycle of housing and social instability, indicating that a different approach needs to be considered. All these services need to promote positive 'home' realities through investing in and nurturing positive relationships and social capital, thus aiding in the fulfilment of both

physiological and psychological needs. Feeling at 'home' in a dwelling place is surely preferable to transience, instability and insecurity.

9.4   Future research

Participants' housing and social trajectories have provided valuable insights into how their meanings of 'home' were constructed, which in turn provides direction for future research. In studying 'home', consideration needs to be given to how 'home' evolves over time. Particular attention should be paid to how a significant change in social context during childhood can have far reaching repercussions, and lead to a later life of housing and social instability and 'relationship poverty', where negative or no feelings toward dwelling places are prevalent. Overall, it is reassuring to know, that 'home' could be found even in the most challenging of circumstances, and the desire and need for 'home' was not given up on.

This research shows that social context plays a central role in shaping the experience and the meanings of 'home'. I would suggest that further research needs to be conducted into the relationship between social context and 'home', particularly regarding the role of personal relationships and social capital. For participants', 'positive relationships', were at the heart of 'home', even for those in the study who had had only limited experience of such relationships. Other factors may help turn a dwelling place into 'home', but 'positive relationships' are what made even the most unlikely of places 'home'. Throughout participants' lives, 'positive relationships' made all the difference in the experience of 'home' and in the fulfilment of needs. Integral to studies of 'home' should be the consideration of negative feelings, of 'not-home', and of a lack of feeling toward dwelling places. Examining the full context of people's lives is key to making the 'home' debate a more realistic one, and one that is more reflective of different parts of society. Life and 'home' evolve and shape each other, where, over time, the resident is 'someone who is affected by, and who changes, those places described as housing and home' (Tognoli, 1986, p. 656).

References

Abbot, P. and Tyler, M. (2005) *An introduction to sociology: feminist perspectives,* Oxon: Routledge.

Ahrentzen, S. B. (1992) 'Home as a workplace in the lives of women', in I. Altman and S. M. Low (eds.) *Human behaviour and environment: advances in theory and research*, 12, New York: Plenum Press.

Alderfer, C. P. (1972) *Existence, relatedness and growth: human needs in organisational settings*, New York: Free Press.

Altman, I. (1993) 'Homes, housing in the 21st century: prospects and challenges', in E. Arias (ed.) *The reason and use of housing?*, Aldershot: Ethnoscapes, Gower.

Anderson, I. (1994) *Access to housing for low income single people: a review of recent research and current policy issues*, York: Centre for Housing Policy, University of York.

Annison, J. E. (2000) 'Towards a clearer understanding of the meaning of "home"', *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 25(4), pp. 251-262.

Antonovsky, A. (1974) 'Conceptual and methodological problems in the study of resistance resources and stressful life events', in B. S. Dohrenwend (ed.) *Stressful life events: their nature and effects,* New York: Wiley.

Bahr, N. (1973) *Skid row – an introduction to disaffiliation,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barnett, E. and Casper M. (2001) 'A definition of social environment', *American Journal of Public Health*, 91(3), p. 465.

Barrett, M. (1980) *Women's oppression today*, London: Verso.

Becker, F. D. (1977) *Housing messages*, Stroudsbury, PA: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross.

Bernardes, J. (1987) 'Doing things with words: sociology and family policy debates', *Sociological Review,* 35(4), pp. 679-702.

Biehal, N. and Wade, J. (1999) 'I thought it would be easier: the early housing careers of young people leaving care', in Rugg, J. (ed.) *Young people, housing and social policy*, London: Routledge.

Blunt, A. and Dowling, R. (2006) *Home,* Oxon: Routledge.

Bowpitt, G., Dwyer, P., Sundin, E. and Weinstein, M. (2011) 'The support priorities of multiply excluded homeless people and their compatibility with support agency agendas – new research into multiple exclusion homelessness', *Housing Care and Support,* 14(1), pp. 31-32.

Brandon, D. (1974) *Guidelines to research in homelessness*, London: Christian Action.

Brandon, D. (1973) *Homeless in London*, London: Christian Action.

Braybrooke, D. (1978) *Meeting needs,* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Brewer, J. D. (2004) 'Ethnography', in C. Cassell. and G. Symon. (eds.) *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organisational research*, London: Sage

Brewer, J. D. (2000) *Ethnography*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Brown, B. B. and Perkins, D. D. (1992) 'Disruptions in place attachment', in I. Altman and S. Low (eds.) *Human behaviour and environment: advances in theory and research*, 12, New York: Plenum Press.

Burrows, R., Pleace, N. and Quilgers, D. (eds.) (1992) *Homelessness and social policy,* London: Routledge.

Bynner, J. and Pan, H. (2002) 'Changes in pathways to employment and adult life', in J. Bynner, P. Elias, A. McKnight, H. Pan and G. Pierre (eds.), *Young people's changing routes to independence*, York: York Publishing Services Ltd.

Canter, D., and Moore, J. (1992) *Varieties of transitional home experience and their significance for homeless people*, ESRC end of award report Ref: R000 233029.

Caplow, T., Bahr, H. M. and Sternberg, D. (1968) 'Homelessness', in D. L. Sills (ed.) *International encyclopaedia of the social ciences*, 6, New York: Crowell Collier and Macmillan.

Christensen, P. and James, A. (2000) 'Childhood diversity and commonality: some methodological insights', in P. Christensen and A. James (eds.) *Research with children: perspectives and practices*, London: Falmer.

Frederick, T. J., Chwalek, M., Hughes, J., Karabanow, J. and Kidd, S. (2014) 'How stable is stable? Defining and measuring housing stability', *Journal of Community Psychology,* 42(8), pp. 964-979.

Comer, L. (1974) *Wedlocked women*, Leeds: Feminist Books.

Cooper Marcus, C. (2006) *House as a mirror of self: exploring the deeper meaning of home*, Florida: Nicholas-Hays Inc.

Crane, M., Joly, L. and Manthorpe, J. (2016) *Rebuilding lives: formerly homeless people's experiences of independent living and their longer-term outcomes,* London: King's College London.

Crane, M., Warnes, T., and Coward, S. (2011) *Moves to independent living: single people's experiences and outcomes of resettlement*, Sheffield: Sheffield Institute of Studies in Aging, University of Sheffield.

Creswell, J. W. (1994) *Research design: qualitative and quantitative approaches*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crotty, M. (2003) *The foundations of social research*, London: Sage.

Crow, G. (1989) 'The post-war development of the modern domestic ideal', in G. Allan and G. Crow (eds.) *Home and family: creating a new domestic sphere,* London: Macmillan.

Cuncliffe, A. L. (2008) 'Reflexive inquiry in organisational research: questions and possibilities', *Human Relations*, 56(8), pp. 983-1003.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. and Rochberg-Halton, E. (1981) *The meaning of things: domestic symbols and the self*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Daly, A., Anderson, J., O'Driscoll, D. and Pitt, K. (2012) 'From home to home: homelessness during austere times', *Housing, Care and Support,* 15(3), pp. 109-119.

Daly, M. (1994) *The right to a home, the right to a future*: *the third report of the European Observatory on Homelessness*, Brussels: FEANTSA.

Darke, J. (1994) 'Women and the meaning of home', in R. Gilroy and R. Woods (eds.) *Housing women,* London: Routledge.

Davis, K. (1948) *Human society,* New York: Macmillan.

DCLGa. (2015) Statutory Homelessness: January to March Quarter 2015 England**.** https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/437273/201503_Statutory_Homelessness.pdf

DCLGb. (2015) Detailed Local Authority Level Figures: October to December 2014. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness#live-tables

DCLG (2008) Statutory Homeless Statistics (sourced from http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns_/why_we_campaign/tackling_homelessness/What_causes_homelessness)

Denzin, N.K. (1989) *Interpretative biography*, Qualitative Research Methods Series no. 17, Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Department for Children Schools & Families (2008) *Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2007* (SFR27/2007), London: Department for Children, Schools & Families.

Després, C. (1991) 'The meaning of home: literature review and directions for future research and theoretical development', *Journal of Architectural & Planning Research*, 8(2), pp. 94-115.

De Swaan, A. (2001) *Human societies: an introduction*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Dickens, P. (1989) 'Human nature: society and the home', *Housing Studies*, 4(4), pp. 227-37.

DoE (2012) *Statistical first release: children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2012* (SFR 20/2012), London: Department of the Environment. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/219210/sfr20-2012v2.pdf

Douglas, M. (1991) 'The idea of a home: a kind of space', *Social Research,* 58(1), pp. 287-307.

Dovey, K. (1985) 'Home and homelessness', in I. Altman and C. M. Werner (eds.) *Human behaviour and environment: advances in theory and research*, 8(2), New York: Plenum Press.

Dowling, R. and Mee, K (2000) 'Tales of the city: western Sydney at the end of the millennium', in J. Connell (ed.) *Sydney: the emergence of a world city*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Doyle, K. O. (1992) 'The symbolic meaning of house and home', *American Behavioural Scientist*, 35(6), pp. 790-802.

Doyal, L. and Gough, I. (1991) *A theory of human need*, Hampshire: Macmillan Press Ltd.

Duncan, J. S. (ed.) (1981) *Housing and identity: cross-cultural perspectives,* London: Croom Helm.

Dupuis, A. and Thorns, D. C. (1998) 'Home, homeownership and the search for ontological security', *The Sociological Review*, 46(1), pp. 24-47.

ECOTEC (2008) *Young people's housing transitions*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Ehrenreich, B. (1992) 'Life without a father: reconsidering socialist feminist theory', in L. McDowell and R. Pringle (eds.) *Defining women: social intentions and gender division*, Cambridge: Policy Press in association with the Open University.

Fitzpatrick, S. (2000) *Young homeless people,* Hampshire: Macmillan Press Ltd.

Fitzpatrick, S., Kemp, P. and Klinker, S. (2000) *Single homelessness: an overview of research in Britain,* Bristol: The Policy Press.

Fontana, A. and Frey, J. H. (2005) 'The Interview: from neutral stance to political involvement', in N. K. Denzin, and Y. S, Lincoln (eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, London: Sage.

Ford, J., Rugg, J. and Burrows, R. (2002) 'Conceptualising the contemporary role of housing in the transition to adult life in England', *Urban Studies*, 39(13), pp. 2455-67.

Franklin, A. (1986) *Owner occupation, privatism and ontological security: a critical reformulation*, working paper, Bristol: School of Advanced Urban Studies, University of Bristol.

Garside, P L., Grimshaw, R W. and Ward, F. J. (1990) *No place like home: the hostels experience*, London: Department of the Environment, Her Majesty's Stationary Office.

Garthwaite, K. (2012) 'Home alone? Practitioners' reflections on the implications of young people living alone', *Youth and Policy*, 108, pp. 73-87.

Geertz, C. (1973) *The interpretation of cultures*, New York: Basic Books.

George, V. and Wilding, P. (1976) *Ideology and social welfare*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Giddens, A. (1992) *The transformation of intimacy: sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and self identity: self and society in the late modern age*, Cambridge: Polity.

Gillies, V., Ribbens McCarthy, J., and Holland, J. (2001) *Pulling together, pulling apart: the family lives of young people*, London: Families Policy Studies Centre/Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Gilman, C. P. (1980) 'The home: its work and influence', in E. Malos (ed.) *The politics of housework,* London: Allison and Busby.

Ginsberg. R. (1999) 'Mediations on homelessness and being at home: in the form of a dialogue', in G. John and M. Abbarno (eds.) *The ethics of homelessness: philosophical perspectives*, 86, Amsterdam – Atlanta, GA: Rodopi.

Gurney, C. M. (1997) '...half of me was satisfied: making sense of home through episodic ethnographies', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 20(3), pp. 373-386.

Gurney, C. M. (1996) *Meanings of home and home ownership: myths, histories and experiences* (PhD thesis), Bristol: University of Bristol Library, Special Collections.

Gurney, C. M. (1991) 'Ontological security, home ownership and the meaning of home: a theoretical and empirical critique', paper presented at the '*Beyond a nation of home owners'* conference, Sheffield City Polytechnic.

Gurney, C. M. (1990) 'The meaning of home in the decade of owner occupation'*,* working paper 88, University of Bristol: School for Advanced Urban Studies.

Hall, T. A. (2006) 'Out of work and house and home: contested youth in an English homeless hostel', *Ethnos,* 71(2), pp. 143-163.

Hall, T. A. (2003) *Better times than this: youth homelessness in Britain*, London: Pluto.

Hareven, T. (1986) 'Historical changes in the family and the life course: implications for child development', *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 50(4/5), pp.8-23.

Hayward, D. G. (1977) 'Housing research and the concept of home,' *Housing Educators Journal,* 4(3), pp. 7-12.

Hayward, D. G. (1975) 'Home as an environmental and psychological concept', *Landscape,* 20, pp. 2-9.

Heath, S. (2008) *Housing choices and issues for young people in the UK*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Heath, S. and Cleaver, E. (2003) *Young, free and single: twenty somethings and household change*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Henderson, S., Holland, J., McGrellis, S., Sharpe, S. and Thomson, R. (2007) *Inventing adulthoods: a biographical approach to youth transitions*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hill, R. P. (1991) 'Homeless women, special possessions, and the meaning of home: an ethnographic case study', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18(3), pp. 298-310.

Hockey, J. and James, A. (2003) *Social identities across the life course*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Homeless Link (2014) *Homeless watch: young and homeless 2013*, London: Homeless Link. (http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Youth%20and%20Homeless%202013%20Full%20Report.pdf)

Horwitz, J. and Tognoli, J. (1982) 'Role of home in adult development: women and men living alone describe their residential histories', *Family Relations*, 31(3), pp. 335-341.

House of Commons Library (2012) *The Supporting People programme: research paper 12/40*, London: House of Commons Library. http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/RP12-40/RP12-40.pdf

Hutson, S. and Liddiard, M. (1994) *Youth homelessness: the construction of a social issue*, London: Palgrave.

Ignatieff, M. (1984) *The needs of strangers,* New York: Picador.

Jackson, E. (2015) *Young homeless people and urban space: fixed in mobility,* New York: Routledge.

Jackson, M. (ed.) (1995) *At home in the World*, Sydney: Harper Perennial.

Jamieson, L. (1987) 'Theories of family development and the experience of being brought up', *Sociology,* 21(4), pp. 591-607.

Janeway, E. (1971) *Man's world, women's place*, New York: Dell.

Jencks, C. (1994) *The homeless*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Jenkins, R. (2009) 'The ways and means of power: efficacy and resources', in S. R. Clegg and M. Haugaard (eds.), *The SAGE handbook of power*, London: Sage.

Jenkins, R. (2014), *Social identity*, London: Routledge.

Jenkins, R. (2008) *Social identity,* London: Routledge

Johnson, P., Buehring, A., Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (2006) 'Evaluating qualitative management research: towards a contingent criteriology', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 8(3), pp. 131-156.

Johnson, R. (2011) 'Public health and social housing: a natural alliance', *Housing Care and Support,* 14(1), pp. 6-14.

Jones, G. (1995) *Leaving home,* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Jones, G., and Wallace, C. (1992) *Youth, family and citizenship*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Jones, G. (1987) 'Leaving the parental home: an analysis of early housing careers', *Journal of Social Policy*, 16(1), pp. 49-74

JRF https://www.jrf.org.uk/data/impact-poverty-relationships

Kalmus, D. and Seltzer, J. A. (1989) 'A framework for studying family socialization over the lifecycle: the case of family violence, *Journal of Family Issues,* 10(3), pp. 339-358.

Kaye, K. (1982) *The mental and social life of babies: how parents create persons*, Brighton: Harvester.

Kellett, P. and. Moore, J. (2003) 'Routes to home: homelessness and home-making in contrasting societies', *Habitat International,* 27(1), pp. 123-141.

Kenkel, W. F. (1966) *The family in perspective,* New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

King, N. (2004) 'Using interviews in qualitative research', in C. Cassell and G. Symon (eds.) *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organisational research*, London: Sage.

Layder, D. (1993) *New strategies in social research,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lee, R. (2005) 'Reconstructing "home" in apartheid Cape Town: African women and the process of settlement', *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 31(3), pp. 611-30.

Legard, R., Keegan, J. and Ward, K. (2003) 'In-depth interviews', in J. Ritchie, and J. Lewis (eds.) *Qualitative research practice*, London: Sage.

Leonard, D. (1980) *Sex and generation: a study of courtship and weddings,* London: Tavistock.

Lewis, J. (2003) 'Design issues', in J. Ritchie, and J. Lewis (eds.) *Qualitative research practice*, London: Sage.

Liddiard, M. and Hutson, S. (1991) 'Homeless young people and runaways: agency definitions and processes', *Journal of Social Policy*, 20(3), pp. 365-388.

Little, D. (2012) http://understandingsociety.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/path-dependency-and-contingency.html

Madigan, R., Munro, M. and Smith S. J. (1990) 'Gender and the meaning of home', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 14(4), pp. 625-647.

Mahoney, J. (2000) 'Path dependence', *Historical Sociology, Theory and Society*, 29(4), pp. 507-548.

Mair, A. (1986) 'The homeless and the post-industrial city', *Political Geography,* 5(4), pp. 351-368.

Mallett, S. (2004) 'Understanding home: a critical review of the literature', *The Sociological Review*, 52(1), pp. 62-89.

Mandelbaum, D.G. (1973) 'The study of life history: Ghandi', *Current Anthropology*, 14(3), pp. 177-93.

Manzo, L. (2003) 'Beyond house and haven: toward a reconceptualisation of place attachment', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 23(1), pp. 47-61.

Marris, P. (1986) *The politics of uncertainty: attachment in private and public life,* London and New York: Routledge.

Marsh, A. and Kennett, P. (1999) 'Exploring the new terrain' in P. Kennett and A. Marsh (eds.) *Homelessness: exploring the new terrain*, Bristol: The Policy Press.

Maslow, A. H. (1987) *Motivation and personality,* New York: HarperCollins.

Maslow, A. H. (1954) *Motivation and personality*, New York: Harper Row.

Maslow, A. H. (1943) 'A theory of human motivation', *Psychological Review*, 50, pp. 370-396.

Mason, J. (2002) *Qualitative researching,* London: SAGE.

Matrix (1984) *Making space: women and the man-made environment*, London: Pluto Press.

May, J. (2000) 'Of nomads and vagrants: single homelessness and narratives of home as place', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 18(6), pp. 737-759.

May (1999) *The care and accommodation of homeless street drinkers*, London: Providence Row Housing Association.

Maycock, P., Coor M. L., and O'Sullivan, E. (2008) *Young people's homeless pathways*, Dublin: Homeless Agency.

McNaughton Nicholls, C. and Atherton, I. (2011) 'Housing First: considering components for successful resettlement of homeless people with multiple needs', *Housing Studies*, 26(5), pp. 767-777.

McNaughton, C. (2008) *Transitions through homelessness: lives on the edge*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*, London: Sage.

Miller, D. (1988) 'Appropriating the state on the council estate', *Man,* 23(2), pp. 353-372.

Mitchell, D. (1997) 'The annihilation of space by law: the roots and implications of the anti-homeless laws in the United States', *Antipode,* 29(3), pp. 303-336.

MHCLG (2018) *Homelessness code of guidance for Local Authorities*, London: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a969da940f0b67aa5087b93/Homelessness_code_of_guidance.pdf

Moore, J. (2007) 'Polarity or integration? Towards a fuller understanding of home and homelessness', *Journal of Architectural and Panning Research,* 24(2), pp. 143-159.

Moore, J. (2000) 'Placing home in context', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 20(3), pp. 207-217.

Moore, J. and Canter, D. (1993) 'Home and homelessness', in M. Bulos and N. Teymur (eds.) *Housing, design, research, education*, London: Avebury Press.

Moore, J., Canter, D., Stockley, D. and Drake, M. (1995) *Faces of homelessness in London,* England: Dartmouth Publishing.

Morrow, V. and Richards, M. (1996) *Transitions to adulthood: a family matter?,* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Moyers, S. and Mason, A. (1995) 'Identifying standards of parenting' in H. Ward (ed.) *Looking after children: research into practice*, London: The Stationery Office.

NAO (2015) *Care leavers' transition toaAdulthood*, London: National Audit Office.

Neale, J. (1997) 'Theorising homelessness: contemporary sociological and feminist perspectives', in R. Burrows, N. Pleace and D. Quilgars (eds.) *Homelessness and social polic*y, London: Routledge.

Neuman, W. L. (2003) *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Oakley, A. (1974) *The sociology of housework,* Oxford: Martin Robinson.

OECD (2007) 'Human capital: how what you know shapes your life', *OECD insights.* https://www.oecd.org/insights/humancapitalhowwhatyouknowshapesyourlife.htm

OECD (2001) *The well-being of nations: the role of human and social capital*, Paris: OECD.

Oishi, S. and Schimmack, U. (2010) 'Residential mobility, well-being, and mortality', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98(6), pp. 980 –994.

ONS (2016) *Statistical bulletin: personal well-being in the UK 2015 to 2016*, London: Office of National Statistics. http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015to2016

ONS (2015) *Statistical bulletin: families and households, 2015*, London: Office of National Statistics. http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_422175.pdf

ONS (2013a.) *General Lifestyle Survey overview - a report on the 2011 General Lifestyle Survey: Chapter 5 - Marriage and cohabitation*, London: Office of National Statistics. www.ons.gov.uk

ONS (2013b.) *Women in the labour market*, London: Office of National Statistics. http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_328352.pdf

Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd edition, http://www.oed.com

Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd edition, http://www.oed.com

Oxford English Dictionary (2012) http://www.oed.com

Padgett, D., Gulcur, L. and Tsemberis, S. (2006) 'Housing First services for people who are homeless with co-occurring serious mental illness and substance abuse', *Research on Social Work Practice*, 16(1), pp. 74-83.

Parr, S. (2016) 'Conceptualising 'the relationship' in intensive key worker support as a therapeutic medium', *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 30(1), pp. 25-42.

Peled, E. and Muzicent, A. (2008) 'The meaning of home for runaway girls', *Journal of Community Psychology,* 36(4), pp. 434-451.

Pennartz, P. J. J. (1986) 'Atmosphere at home: a qualitative approach', *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 6(2), pp. 135-153.

Perla, K. S. (1985) 'Experience and use of the dwelling', in I. Altman and C. M. Werner (eds.) *Human behaviour and environment: advances in theory and research*, 8(2), New York: Plenum Press.

Peterson, A. (2000) 'A locked door: the meaning of home for punitively homeless young people in Sweden', *Young,* 8(2), pp. 24-44.

Phillips, D. (2006) *Quality of life: concept, policy and practice*, London: Routledge.

Pleace, N., Burrows, R. and Quilgars, D. (1997) 'Homelessness in contemporary Britain: conceptualisation and measurement', in R. Burrows, N. Pleace and D. Quilgars (eds.) *Homelessness and social policy*, London: Routledge.

Poole, F. J. P. (1994) 'Socialization, enculturation and the development of personal identity', in T. Ingold (ed.) *Companion encyclopaedia and anthropology,* London: Routledge.

Putman, T. (1990) 'Introduction: design, consumption and domestic ideals', in T. Putman and C. Newton (eds.) *Household choices,* London: Future Publications.

Qizilbash, M. (1998) 'The concept of well-being', *Economics and Philosophy,* 14(1), pp. 51-73.

Qizilbash, M. (1997) 'Needs, incommensurability and well-being', *Review of Political Economy,* 9(3), pp. 261-276.

Rakoff, R. M. (1977) 'Ideology in everyday life: the meaning of the house', *Politics and Society*, 7(1), pp. 85-104.

Rapoport, A. (1995) 'A critical look at the concept home' in D. Benjamin, D. Stea and E. Arén (eds.) *The home: interpretations, meanings and environments*, Aldershot: Avebury.

Rapport, N. and Dawson, A. (1998) *Migrants of identity: perceptions of home in a world of movement,* Oxford: Berg.

Ravenhill, M. (2012) *The culture of homelessness*, England: Ashgate Publishing.

Reeve, K. and Batty, E. (2011) *The hidden truth about homelessness: experiences of single homeless people in England*, London: CRISIS.

Ritchie, J. (2003) 'The application of qualitative methods to social research', in J. Ritchie and J. Lewis (eds.) *Qualitative research practice*, London: Sage.

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J. and Elam, G. (2003) 'Designing and selecting samples', in J. Ritchie and J. Lewis (eds.) *Qualitative research practice*, London: Sage.

Rivlin, L. G. and. Moore, J. (2001) 'Home-making: supports and barriers to the process of home', *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless,* 10(4), pp. 323-336.

Robinson, C. (2001) 'House or home?: the difference belonging could make', paper presented at the *Australian Sociological Association Annual Conference*, Sydney, Australia.

Robson, P. and Poustie, M. (1996) *Homelessness and the law in Britain*, London: Butterworths/Planning Exchange.

Rugg, J. and Burrows, R. (1999) 'Setting the context: young people, housing and social policy', in J. Rugg (ed.) *Young people, housing and social policy*, London: Routledge.

Saegert, S. (1985) 'The role of housing in the experience of dwelling', in I. Altman and C. Werner (eds.), *Home environment*, New York: Plenum Press.

Sahlin, I. (2005) 'The staircase of transition: survival through failure', *Innovation: European Journal of Social Science Research,* 18(2), pp. 115-135.

Saunders, P. (1989) 'The meaning of home in contemporary English culture', *Housing Studies,* 4(3), pp. 177-192.

Saunders, P. and Williams, P. (1988) 'The constitution of the home: towards a research agenda', *Housing studies*, 3(2), pp. 81-93.

Schein, E. (1980) *Organisational psychology,* New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.

Scrivens, K. and C. Smith (2013) 'Four interpretations of social capital: an agenda for measurement', *OECD statistics working papers*, Paris: OECD Publishing. http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/four-interpretations-of-social-capital_5jzbcx010wmt-en

Sebba, R. and Churchman, A. (1986) 'The uniqueness of the home', *Architectural Behaviour,* 1(3), pp. 7-24.

Shelter (2018) http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns_/why_we_campaign/tackling_homelessness/What_causes_homelessness

Shotter, J. (1974) 'The development of personal powers', in M. P. M. Richards (ed.) *The integration of a child into a social world,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sixsmith, J. (1986) 'The meaning of home: an exploratory study of environmental experience', *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 6(4), pp. 281-298.

Sixsmith, J. and Sixsmith, A. J. (1990) 'Places in transition: the impact of life events on the experience of home', in T. Putnam and C. Newton (eds.) *Household choices,* London: Futures Publication.

Skuse, T. and Ward, H. (2003) *Outcomes for looked after children: children's views of care and accommodation*, interim report to the Department of Health, Loughborough: Centre for Child and Family Research.

Smith, R. J. and Hall, T. (2017) 'Everyday territories: homelessness, outreach work and city space', *British Journal of Sociology*, DOI:10.1111/1468-4446.12280.

Smith, S G. (1994) 'The essential qualities of home', *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 14(1), pp. 31-46.

Snape, D. and Spencer, L. (2003) 'The foundations of qualitative research', in J. Ritchie and J. Lewis (eds.) *Qualitative research practice*, London: Sage.

Social Exclusion Unit (2003) *A better education for children in care*, London: The Stationery Office.

Somerville, P. (1997) 'The social construction of home', *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 14(3), pp. 226-245.

Somerville, P. (1992) 'Homelessness and the meaning of home: rooflessness or rootlessness?', *International Journal or Urban and Regional Research,* 16(4), pp. 529-539

Somerville, P. (1989) 'Home sweet home: a critical comment on Saunders and Williams', *Housing Studies*, vol. 4(2), pp. 113–118.

Spencer, L., Ritchie, J. and O'Conner, W. (2003) 'Analysis: practices, principles and processes', in J. Ritchie and J. Lewis (eds.) *Qualitative research practice*, London: Sage.

Springer, S. (2000) 'Homelessness: a proposal for a global definition and classification', *Habitat International*, 24(4), pp. 475-484.

Sprott, W. J. H. (1970) *Human groups,* Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Stefancic, A. and Tsemberis, S. (2007) 'Housing First for long-term shelter dwellers with psychiatric disabilities in a suburban county: a four-year study of housing outcomes and retention', *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 28(3), pp. 265-279.

Stergiopoulos, V., Gozdzik, A., O'Campo, P., Holtby, A.R., Jeyaratnam, J. and Tsemberis, S. (2014) 'Housing First: exploring participants' early support needs', *BMC Health Services Research*, 14: 167, http://www.biomedcentral.com/14726963/14/167

Tesch, R. (1990) *Qualitative research: analysis types and software tools*, London: Routledge Falmer.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990), Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Thompson, P. (2000) *Voice of the past: oral history*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thomson, R., Bell, R., Holland, J., Henderson, S., McGrellis, S. and Sharpe, M. S. (2002) 'Critical moments: choice, chance and opportunity in young people's narratives of transition', *Sociology*, 36(2), pp. 335-54.

Tognoli, J. (1987) 'Residential environments', in D. Stokols. and I. Altman (eds.) *Handbook of environmental psychology*, New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Tomas, A. and Dittmar, H. (1995) 'The experience of homeless women: an exploration of housing histories and the meaning of home', *Housing Studies*, 10(4), pp. 493-515.

Trevarthan, C. (1987) 'Infancy, mind in', in R. L. Gregory (ed.) *The Oxford companion to the mind*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tucker, A., (1994) 'In search of home', *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 11(2), pp. 181-187.

UNCHS/Habitat (2000) *Strategies to combat homelessness*, Nairobi: United Nations Centre for Human Settlements.

Unrau, Y. A. (2007) 'Research on placement moves: seeking the perspective of foster children', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 29(1), pp. 122-137.

Valentine, G. (2001) *Social geographies: society and space*, Harlow: Longman.

Veness, A. R. (1993) 'Neither homed or homeless: contested definitions and the personal worlds of the poor', *Political Geography,* 12(4), pp. 319-340.

Walsh, C. A., Rutherford, G E., and Kuzmak, N. (2009) 'Characteristics of home: perspectives of women who are homeless', *The Qualitative Report,* 14(2), pp. 299-317.

Ward, H. (2009) 'Patterns of instability: moves within the care system, their reasons, contexts and consequences', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(10), pp. 1113 - 1118.

Ward, H., Munro, E.R. and Dearden, C. (2006) *Babies and young children in care: life pathways, decision-making and practice*, London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Wardhaugh, J. (1999) 'The un-accommodated woman: home, homelessness and identity', *The Sociological Review,* 47(1), pp. 91–109.

Watson, S. (1999) 'A home is where the heart is: engendering notions of homelessness', in P. Kennett and A. Marsh (eds.) *Homelessness: exploring the new terrain*, Bristol: The Policy Press.

Watson, S. and Austerberry, H. (1986) *Housing and homelessness: a feminist perspective*, London: Routledge.

Werner, C. M. (1987) 'Home interiors: a time and place for interpersonal relationships', *Environment and Behavior,* 19(2), pp. 169-79.

Wiggins, D. (1998) *Need, values, truth,* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Williams, P. (1987) 'Constituting class and gender: a social history of the home, 1700-1901' in N. Thrift and P. Williams (eds.) *Class and space,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Winstanley, A., Thorns, D. C. and H. C. Perkins (2002) 'Moving house, creating home: exploring residential mobility, *Housing Studies*, 17(6), pp. 813-832.

Wolch, J., Rahimian, A. and Koegel, P. (1993) 'Daily and periodic mobility patterns of the urban homeless', *Professional Geographer,* 45(2), pp. 159-169.

Wolch. J. and Rowe, S. (1993) 'Mobility paths of the urban homeless', *City and Society,* 6(2), pp. 115-140.

Wray Gregorie, S. (2011) *Poverty of relationship*, USA: to Love, Honor and Vacuum blog
https://tolovehonorandvacuum.com/2011/07/poverty-of-relationship/

Young, M. and Willmott, P. (1962) *Family and kinship in East London,* Middlesex: Penguin.

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview schedule

Sheffield Institute for Studies on Ageing, University of Sheffield, England

Housing Histories and the Meaning of HOME

Interview Schedule

VERSION – 11.3.2008

_____

Sarah Coward, Sheffield Institute for Studies on Ageing, The University of Sheffield, Samuel Fox House,
Northern General Hospital NHS Trust, Herries Road, Sheffield S5 7AU, England

☎ 0114 226 9839   Email: S.E.Coward@sheffield.ac.uk

_____

Respondent's name …………………………………………………………………………..

Date of interview: …………………...………

Length of time since rehoused

……………………………………………………...…………………..

My PhD degree is focusing on exploring housing histories and the meaning of 'home' among people with experiences of homelessness. The study will help further my education and career.

I'd like to ask you about your housing experiences and what 'home' and 'feeling at home' means to you.

CURRENT ACCOMMODATION

I'd like to ask you a few questions about your current accommodation.

1. **Where are you currently staying?**
    (Probe: landlord, housing type, location, household type)

2. **When did you move into your current accommodation?**

    ………………………………….*(month)* ………………*(year)* DK ☐

3. **How is it going in your current accommodation?**
    (Probe: pro's, con's)

4. **Do you have plans to move?**   Yes ☐   No ☐   DK ☐
    (Probe: **If yes**, why is this, what plans do you have? **If no**, why not, how long do you plan on staying?)

REFLECTING ON HOUSING EXPERIENCES

I'd now like to ask you few questions about your housing experiences – past and present, as far back as you can remember, from your childhood through to adulthood.

5. **You've previously told us about some of your housing experiences and you've told me today about your current housing circumstances. Could you briefly tell me about your previous housing experiences as far back as you can remember starting with your childhood through to the first place you told us about [refer to history details and complete table as much as possible beforehand]. I understand that it might be difficult to be accurate with dates, lets try and get the sequence right.**

1 (first place you lived)	2	3	4
From: To: Length of residence:	From: To: Length of residence:	From: To: Length of residence:	From: To: Length of residence:
Type of accommodation: Household type: How found accommodation: Location: Like neighbourhood: Yes No Experience (positive/negative): Life at the time: Reason left: Home: Yes No Why / why not? Felt at home: Yes No	Type of accommodation: Household type: How found accommodation: Location: Like neighbourhood: Yes No Experience (positive/negative): Life at the time: Reason left: Home: Yes No Why / why not? Felt at home: Yes No	Type of accommodation: Household type: How found accommodation: Location: Like neighbourhood: Yes No Experience (positive/negative): Life at the time: Reason left: Home: Yes No Why / why not? Felt at home: Yes No	Type of accommodation: Household type: How found accommodation: Location: Like neighbourhood: Yes No Experience (positive/negative): Life at the time: Reason left: Home: Yes No Why / why not? Felt at home: Yes No

5	6	7	8
From:	**From:**	**From:**	**From:**
To:	**To:**	**To:**	**To:**
Length of residence:	**Length of residence:**	**Length of residence:**	**Length of residence:**
Type of accommodation:	**Type of accommodation:**	**Type of accommodation:**	**Type of accommodation:**
Household type:	**Household type:**	**Household type:**	**Household type:**
How found accommodation:	**How found accommodation:**	**How found accommodation:**	**How found accommodation:**
Location:	**Location:**	**Location:**	**Location:**
Like neighbourhood: Yes No	**Like neighbourhood: Yes No**	**Like neighbourhood: Yes No**	**Like neighbourhood: Yes No**
Experience (positive/negative):	**Experience (positive/negative):**	**Experience (positive/negative):**	**Experience (positive/negative):**
Life at the time:	**Life at the time:**	**Life at the time:**	**Life at the time:**
Reason left:	**Reason left:**	**Reason left:**	**Reason left:**
Home: Yes No **Why / why not?**	**Home: Yes No** **Why / why not?**	**Home: Yes No** **Why / why not?**	**Home: Yes No** **Why / why not?**
Felt at home: Yes No	**Felt at home: Yes No**	**Felt at home: Yes No**	**Felt at home: Yes No**

9	10	11	12
From:	**From:**	**From:**	**From:**
To:	**To:**	**To:**	**To:**
Length of residence:	**Length of residence:**	**Length of residence:**	**Length of residence:**
Type of accommodation:	**Type of accommodation:**	**Type of accommodation:**	**Type of accommodation:**
Household type:	**Household type:**	**Household type:**	**Household type:**
How found accommodation:	**How found accommodation:**	**How found accommodation:**	**How found accommodation:**
Location:	**Location:**	**Location:**	**Location:**
Like neighbourhood: Yes No	**Like neighbourhood: Yes No**	**Like neighbourhood: Yes No**	**Like neighbourhood: Yes No**
Experience (positive/negative):	**Experience (positive/negative):**	**Experience (positive/negative):**	**Experience (positive/negative):**
Life at the time:	**Life at the time:**	**Life at the time:**	**Life at the time:**
Reason left:	**Reason left:**	**Reason left:**	**Reason left:**
Home: Yes No **Why / why not?**	**Home: Yes No** **Why / why not?**	**Home: Yes No** **Why / why not?**	**Home: Yes No** **Why / why not?**
Felt at home: Yes No	**Felt at home: Yes No**	**Felt at home: Yes No**	**Felt at home: Yes No**

13	14	15	16
From:	**From:**	**From:**	**From:**
To:	**To:**	**To:**	**To:**
Length of residence:	**Length of residence:**	**Length of residence:**	**Length of residence:**
Type of accommodation:	**Type of accommodation:**	**Type of accommodation:**	**Type of accommodation:**
Household type:	**Household type:**	**Household type:**	**Household type:**
How found accommodation:	**How found accommodation:**	**How found accommodation:**	**How found accommodation:**
Location:	**Location:**	**Location:**	**Location:**
Like neighbourhood: Yes　　No	**Like neighbourhood: Yes　　No**	**Like neighbourhood: Yes　　No**	**Like neighbourhood: Yes　　No**
Experience (positive/negative):	**Experience (positive/negative):**	**Experience (positive/negative):**	**Experience (positive/negative):**
Life at the time:	**Life at the time:**	**Life at the time:**	**Life at the time:**
Reason left:	**Reason left:**	**Reason left:**	**Reason left:**
Home:　Yes　　No **Why / why not?**	**Home:　Yes　　No** **Why / why not?**	**Home:　Yes　　No** **Why / why not?**	**Home:　Yes　　No** **Why / why not?**
Felt at home: Yes　　No	**Felt at home: Yes　　No**	**Felt at home: Yes　　No**	**Felt at home: Yes　　No**

17	18	19	20
From:	From:	From:	From:
To:	To:	To:	To:
Length of residence:	Length of residence:	Length of residence:	Length of residence:
Type of accommodation:	Type of accommodation:	Type of accommodation:	Type of accommodation:
Household type:	Household type:	Household type:	Household type:
How found accommodation:	How found accommodation:	How found accommodation:	How found accommodation:
Location:	Location:	Location:	Location:
Like neighbourhood: Yes No	Like neighbourhood: Yes No	Like neighbourhood: Yes No	Like neighbourhood: Yes No
Experience (positive/negative):	Experience (positive/negative):	Experience (positive/negative):	Experience (positive/negative):
Life at the time:	Life at the time:	Life at the time:	Life at the time:
Reason left:	Reason left:	Reason left:	Reason left:
Home: Yes No Why / why not?	Home: Yes No Why / why not?	Home: Yes No Why / why not?	Home: Yes No Why / why not?
Felt at home: Yes No	Felt at home: Yes No	Felt at home: Yes No	Felt at home: Yes No

Thinking about your housing experiences …………………

6. **What has been your best housing experience? Why?**
   (Probe: housing type, landlord, tenure, location, household type)

7. **What has been your worst housing experience? Why?**
   (Probe: housing type, landlord, tenure, location, household type)

8. **You had a tenancy that ended recently [state address, and if applicable, other tenancies ending in the past for various reasons (refer to housing history table Q5)]. How do you view your tenancy(ies) ending?**
   (Probe: was it your choice?)

9. a. **Thinking about your housing experiences over the last few months…….you were homeless living at [name of temporary accommodation] then you moved into your own tenancy [address of resettlement accommodation] you left that accommodation and now you are living [address present accommodation, refer to Q1, how do you feel about that experience?**

   b. **Has your experience taught you anything?**
      (Probe: budgeting, how to look after accommodation, how to be independent, happen to anyone, don't take things for granted)

10. **Your housing experiences have been a bit up and down [as applicable (refer to housing history table Q5) – own tenancy, lived parents / partner / friends, homeless, temporary accommodation, sleeping rough], do you think your housing experiences have had an impact on other aspects of your life?**
    (Probe: health, relationships, employment, education, well-being)

11. **Can you sum up your housing experiences in five words?**

12. a. **Realistically, what would your preferred housing situation be?**

    b. **Why, what makes it your preferred housing situation?**
       (Probe: what expect - housing type, landlord, tenure, location, household type, support)

13. a. **If you were currently looking for a new place to live, what would you want it to be like, and how would you go about obtaining it?**

    b. **Are there any housing options you wouldn't consider? Why?**
       (Probe: private rented too expensive, excluded council due rent arrears, family)

I've asked you about your housing experiences. Still thinking about those experiences I'd like to ask you a few questions about your ideas of 'home' - what 'home' and 'feeling at home' mean to you.

14. **What would you say is the difference, if any, between a 'house' and a 'home'?**

15. **What would you say is the difference, if any, between accommodation and home?**

16. **If you heard someone talking about a person being homeless, how would you interpret that? What kind of situation would you think that person was in?**
(Probe: on the streets, no shelter, in temporary accommodation, no permanent accommodation)

17. **When you were living at [name of temporary accommodation before resettled, refer to housing history table]** **you were defined as homeless, how did being defined as homeless make you feel?**

18. **Going back to your housing history that we went through earlier, can you tell me whether you thought of any of those accommodation situations as home? [NOTE can be a homeless situation. Complete housing history table Q5 and, if applicable, refer to 6 month FOR-HOME study questionnaire Q26]**
(Probe: even if in a small way felt like home)

    IF VIEWED ANY ACCOMMODATION AS HOME, ASK QUESTIONS 19-20 FOR EACH ACCOMMODATION VIEWED AS HOME THEN GO TO Q24

    IF NOT VIEWED ANY ACCOMMODATION AS HOME, ASK QUESTIONS 21-23 THEN GO TO Q24

19. a. **How was that accommodation different from other accommodation you have lived in?**

    b. **In that home, what was the most important room or space for you? Why?**

    c. **In that home, what was the most important thing for you? Why?**
    (Probe: possession, family member, quiet, laughter, all eating at the table)

    d. **Did you personally do anything to the accommodation to make it your home?** (Probe: possessions, plants, pets, photos)

20. **How did it / does it feel living in accommodation you could / can call home?**
(Probe: security, stability, privacy)

IF NOT VIEWED ANY ACCOMMODATION AS HOME,

21. **Why do you think you have never regarded any accommodation as 'home'?**

22. **What, if anything, would make you regard accommodation where you were living as 'home?**

23. **How does it make you feel having never regarded any accommodation as 'home'?**

ASK ALL

24. **How important, to you, is having accommodation you can call 'home'?**
(Probe: part of society)

25. **What would your ideal home be like?**
(Probe: location, housing type, tenure, household type, material possessions)

26. a. **It is possible to feel at home somewhere but for that place not to be your home, do you think there is a difference between the two – having a home and feeling at home?**

    b. **What makes somewhere feel like home and somewhere not feel like home?**

27. **It is recognised that people can feel at home in different places, have you ever felt at home anywhere?**

    Yes ☐ **ASK Q28 THEN GO TO Q32**

    No ☐ **ASK QUESTIONS 29-31 THEN GO TO Q32**

    DK ☐ **GO TO Q32**

IF YES, FELT AT HOME SOMEWHERE

28. **Can you give me examples of where you have felt at home and tell me why you felt at home there? [can be multiple places and not just accommodation e.g. a city]**
(Probe: household type, tenure, location, family & friends, possessions, secure, privacy, familiarity, how long took to feel at home)

    NOTE: If felt at home in accommodation complete relevant column in housing history table Q5

IF NOT FELT AT HOME ANYWHERE

29. **Why do you think you have never felt at home anywhere?**

30. **What, if anything, would make you feel at home somewhere?**
(Probe: household type, tenure, location, family & friends, privacy, possessions, secure, having people round, familiarity)

31. **How does it make you feel never having felt at home anywhere?**

ASK ALL

32. **How important, to you, is feeling at home somewhere?**

HOPES AND PLANS

33. **What would be the most positive thing that could happen to you over the next 12 months?**
(Probe: housing, employment, health, relationships, employment, economics, education)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

34. **Would you like to make any other comments about your housing experience that we've not already discussed?**

35. **Are there any other comments you'd like to make?**

Thank you for answering the questions and sharing your experiences with me. You have been very patient and helpful.

Appendix B: Information leaflet

Housing Histories and the Meaning of

I am currently studying for my PhD degree at The University of Sheffield. The focus of my study is exploring housing histories and the meaning of 'home' among people with experiences of homelessness.

Your involvement in the study

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the study. Your participation in the study will involve taking part in an interview that will last about 1 hour when I will ask you about your housing experiences and what 'home' and feeling at home' means to you.

PLEASE REMEMBER that your participation is voluntary and the information you give will be **strictly confidential.** No details will be released that will enable you to be recognised. Please understand, however, that if I become aware of a situation in which you, I or another person is in imminent danger I will take appropriate action.

If you have any queries or comments about the study and your participation, please feel free to contact Sarah Coward or her PhD supervisor Richard Jenkins at any time on:

- Sarah Coward   0114 226 9839   s.e.coward@sheffield.ac.uk

- Richard Jenkins 0114 222 6443   r.p.jenkins@sheffield.ac.uk

---

Thank you for taking part in the study

Sarah Coward

Appendix C: Consent form

Sheffield Institute for Studies on Ageing, University of Sheffield, England
PhD Study, Sarah Coward (student number)

Housing Histories and the Meaning of HOME

Name of Participant:

	Please initial each box
1. I have read and understood the Information Sheet, have had the opportunity to ask questions, and agree to take part in the study.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary.	
3. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis, will be treated as confidential to Sarah Coward and her supervisory team, and that no details will be released that enable me to be identified*.	

* Please understand, however, that if an interviewer becomes aware of a situation in which you, the interviewer or another person is in imminent danger, they will take appropriate action.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
 Interviewer   Date   Signature

To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant

Appendix D: History of 'home' template (example)

HISTORY OF HOME

Key:

------ = family   ------ = homeless accommodation   ------ = friends

------ = own tenancy   ------ = social services care / foster care / adopted

------ = partner   ------ = tent / streets / car / squat   ------ = prison

------ = accommodation with job/education/temporary e.g. B&B   ------ = rehab

------ = significant event (Sig. event)   ------ = HOME   ------ = NOT HOME

ID	01 FEMALE Interview date:
Profile	• DOB • Age resettled, age interviewed • Area • Reported substance misuse problems • Reported mental health problems • Education/employment • FOR-HOME ID:
1. **Age 0-4** **June 1986-1990** **4 years** **Leeds**	**Housing** • Mum and dad together • Reason left – mum and dad split up **Life** • Ed./emp. – none **Sig. event** • Relationships – mum and dad split up, not see father **HOME** – mum and dad together

Appendix E: Temporal profile grid (example from the study)

KEY	Parents/parent childhood	Sole tenancy	Living with a partner	Adoptive family	Other family as a child	Formal homelessness	Informal/hidden homelessness	Job/education	Social care setting	Correctional setting	Rehab/ hospital

ID06	HSG EPISODE LENGTH TIME	1 (14yr)	2 (12M)	3 (6M)	4 (3M)	5 (26M)	6 (12M)	7 (5M ongoing)
	AGE	0--14	15--16	16	16	16--18	18--19	19
HOME	Home context	The 'norm' Positive relationships Consistent place	Consistent place Positive relationships					Personal control Consistent place Positive selfhood Personalised space
	Social context	School Step-parent/figure Parents split-up	School Mother died					Unemployed
NO STRONG FEELINGS				Aunt Move within 30 miles No school Disagreement with family/carer				
NOT HOME	Social context				Move within 30 miles 16+ education	16+ education Unemployed	Employment training programme Unemployed	
	Not-home context				Lack of control Not permanent	Lack of control Not permanent	Not permanent	

259

Appendix F: 'Brief life' accounts

A.   Amy (16-18 years old)

Amy's mum and dad split-up before she turned four. She remained living with her mother and sister; later her mother remarried. Just before she became a teenager, 'something' happened with her step-father. After that, Amy had minimal contact and received minimal support from her mother. Even though Amy had not seen her biological father for several years, she went to live with him and her half-siblings for a short period, which meant moving over a hundred miles away (two housing episodes). Amy's step-father was reported to the police and she was placed in social services care which meant moving area again, back to near where she grew up. She was housed with carers for a short time then lived in a children's home for several months. During this period of movement, Amy reported that she received no schooling (age 12-14).   Amy was eventually placed in foster care. The placement was a very positive experience and she attended school. After just over two years in the placement, Amy had a disagreement with her foster carer and she left, seeking shelter with her sister for a few nights. This was her first experience of homelessness (informal/hidden), she was in her mid-teens.

Amy made a homeless application with the local authority and was housed in an emergency all-female hostel for several weeks, before residing in three different supported housing projects (formal homeless accommodation) over a fifteen-month period (the longest episode was eight months). Amy began a relationship and in her mid-teens she went to live with her boyfriend, in his flat. After a few months, arguments led to Amy self-harming and moving-out. She moved back to one of the supported housing projects, and after a few months felt ready to move to her own tenancy. Amy was just over eighteen years old. After only a month in the tenancy, Amy was burgled, and was taken advantage of by friends; she felt unable to cope. Amy was homeless again (informal/hidden). She stayed with her sister for a few nights then moved round a couple of friends, staying for only a few days and a few weeks.   At the time of interviewing Amy had been staying with a friend and her friend's parents for over five months and had infrequent contact with her biological family. During this two-year period of moving around several different housing situations (eleven housing episodes in total), Amy managed to continue with her schooling and went on to tertiary education.

B.   Diane (18-20 years old)

Diane lived with her mum, siblings, and later her step-father, until she was around ten years old. During this time, they lived in ten different dwelling places in the same city, and later in a nearby town. Diane didn't like moving around and there was always arguing in the house. Diane was placed in social services care and after a very short foster care placement, she lived in two more placements; one for just less than a year, and the other for just under six months. This meant moving to a town twenty miles away. Diane's next placement became long term, lasting five years. Here she felt that she was part of the foster carer's existing family, and she had her own bedroom for the first time. In the last year of her placement, before she turned sixteen, Diane began a relationship and got engaged. The placement came to an end when the foster carers moved to another country, and Diane didn't want to go with them. She did remain in regular contact with them. Diane was homeless for the first time and was placed in supported accommodation (for under eighteens), where she stayed for a year.   She hated the accommodation, how it was run, and the lifestyle of the other residents. During her stay, Diane went to college, got a job and remained in her relationship.

Diane was in her late teens when she moved into her first sole tenancy (private rented). Her boyfriend moved in, but he was physically abusive towards her and they split up. Diane then started a new relationship. She stayed in the tenancy less than a year; she felt she couldn't cope and she didn't like the property.   During this time Diane was in full-time employment. At the time of interviewing, Diane had been living in her second sole tenancy (social housing) for just over a month.   She had recently become unemployed, was with the same partner, and was in touch with her biological siblings and her foster family.

C.   David (30-35 years old)

For the first fifteen years of his life, David lived with his parents and sibling, having two housing episodes less than a mile apart. School was okay until he started secondary school. Here he was bullied and started to hang around with pupils who truanted. Before he turned sixteen, David was placed in social services care (children's home) but he didn't know why. He remained in touch with his family. David had to get used to the rules and didn't always attend school. Towards the end of his year there he got a job. After three further social care placements in move-on accommodation over a twelve-month period (shared houses), David was evicted and became homeless for the first time, sleeping on the streets for a night. He then secured his first sole tenancy of a room in a shared house (private rented) where he stayed for a few weeks, before he became homeless again, this time staying with two different friends for a few weeks each (informal/hidden homelessness). During this time David

remained employed. After leaving his friends, David was 'formally' homeless for the first time, and secured a place in a homeless hostel; staying for less than a year. David moved to his second sole tenancy (social housing) before he turned twenty and stayed there for over six years. He attended a training course and was employed for most of the time, regularly used class B drugs and partied a lot.   Fancying a change, David got a new job and moved to his second sole tenancy, closer to his parents. He only stayed there for just over a year owing to his dislike of the area and people.

Over the next seven years, David had eleven different housing episodes. During which he was homeless for over three years (eight episodes); he stayed with friends for a few weeks (five episodes); his parents on one occasion; slept rough, and lived in a homeless hostel for just under a year.   David sustained a sole tenancy for two years. At the time of interviewing David had recently moved from one shared house (a six-month tenancy) to another (two weeks) and had been in full-time employment for over a year. David remained in the same city throughout and was always in regular contact with his sibling and parents.

D.   Scott (20-25 years old)

Scott's first housing memory was before he was five years old, living with his parents in an area where he had family and friends living nearby. Before he turned seven, Scott's parents took employment over fifty miles away, which required them to live on the premises. Scott didn't mind this as he liked the customers and he made friends at school. They lived there for just under six years until Scott's parents moved to new premises, back to the area where he first grew up in and back to the same school. He felt he was back 'home'. He played sports at school but struggled with the academic side, and later got expelled. Despite this, Scott went on to college and passed two GCSE's. Scott also started using drugs. His parent's split-up and Scott stayed with his father.

Both of Scott's parents started new relationships and Scott felt pushed out, so he used to go and stay with family (siblings or cousins) in the north of England, over 150 miles away. Before he turned seventeen, Scott moved in with his partner who was living with her parents and siblings; they had their own room, although it was crowded. Scott and his girlfriend split up after several months and he became homeless for the first time; staying with his cousin for a few weeks. He achieved housing 'priority' and moved into his first sole tenancy (social housing), but only stayed for a few months as he struggled with the independence, managing the property, and living in an unfamiliar area several miles away from his family. During this time Scott was in receipt of welfare benefits and was doing 'odd jobs'.   Scott became homeless again, living temporarily with his mother and step-father, who lived twenty miles

away (informal/hidden homelessness). During this time he had a couple of jobs. Scott's mother and step-father decided to move over thirty miles away and Scott didn't go with them. Before he turned twenty, Scott spent a brief period, less than three months, in prison owing to a driving offence. During his detention, Scott attended a training course.

After leaving prison, and up until the time of interviewing, Scott had experienced nine different housing episodes in just over two years. For the majority of this time, Scott was homeless; four episodes of formal homelessness (fifteen months in total) and two episodes of informal/hidden homelessness (eight months). A couple of these homeless episodes were after a sole tenancy (social housing, lasting less than seven months) ended owing to harassment. At the time of interviewing Scott had been in a sole tenancy for just over a month, was in a relationship, receiving welfare benefits and financial assistance from his mother.

E.   Anthony (18-20 years old)

Anthony spent the first fourteen years of his life living in the same house with his mother, siblings, step-father and step-siblings. Anthony didn't get on with his step-father; his mother and step-father had a 'weird' relationship. When Anthony's mother and step-father split-up he moved to a house with his mother. School was Okay and he had friends on the street where they lived. Unfortunately, just over a year later, Anthony's mother passed away and he went to stay with an aunt in a neighbouring town for several months. During this time Anthony didn't attend school. Anthony and his cousin didn't get on which led to arguments and disagreements with his aunt, and his aunt asked him to leave.

In his mid-teens, Anthony became homeless for the first time. He was placed in supported accommodation for several weeks and was then placed in longer-term supported accommodation for under-eighteens. During this time Anthony attended college. After a couple of years, Anthony moved into 'move-on' accommodation to get him ready for independence; he stayed for just over a year. This was Anthony's first sole tenancy. He continued to receive support and attend college. At the time of interviewing, Anthony had been in his first fully independent sole tenancy (social housing) for several months and was receiving tenancy support. He was very happy with the flat and area, and really liked the independence. The only thing left to do was get a job. Anthony did not have regular contact with any of his family.

F.   Richard (40-45 years old)

Richard spent the first year of his life living with his parents in the UK before his father got a job overseas, four thousand miles away, where they lived for just under five years before travelling around the world for a couple of years. During this time, Richard received no formal schooling.   The family moved back to the UK before Richard turned nine, living with his parents and four siblings until his mid-teens. Richard liked school and had lots of friends and hobbies. Shortly after becoming a teenager, Richard went 'off the rails' which led to him leaving school as soon as he could, this he later regretted.   Richard's parents wanted him to do something productive. He attended a residential college close by for over a year and enjoyed the freedom; he partied a lot and started using drugs. Richard didn't complete the course and returned to the city where he had grown up, became homeless for the first time, and stayed with a friend for several months. In his late-teens Richard had his first sole tenancy (private rented), received welfare benefits and worked 'on the side' (in the criminal economy). His main focus was enjoying himself, this involved using class A drugs. He had a girlfriend and was in regular contact with his siblings.

After a year, Richard moved to work in another European country and lived with his employer and his family, which he enjoyed. When the job ended, Richard decided to stay in the country and go travelling for a few months where he made some friends. He ended up moving in with them and they introduced him to criminal opportunities, which sustained his lifestyle. This is when his class A drug use really took a hold. He went back to the UK regularly to see friends. Over eighteen months later, Richard was homeless again, staying temporarily with friends for several months, following which he went to prison for just under five years. In his mid-twenties, Richard was released and deported back to the UK. Homeless again, he stayed with his sister for several weeks before moving in with his girlfriend and her daughter for several months (in the city where he had grown up). They then moved to a town over eighty miles away. Richard did a degree course at college. He was, however, also involved in crime and using class A drugs. After a couple of years, Richard went to prison again, for just over twelve months.

Over the next six years Richard lived between his girlfriend's house (in the city where he had grown up) and other European countries where he was working and attempting to stay clean of drugs. This was difficult, as his girlfriend was also a drug user.   After splitting up with his girlfriend, Richard became homeless again, staying with a friend for several months, in an area where he could easily access drugs. He managed to secure his own tenancy (social housing), which lasted just under two years, and he worked 'unofficially'. Richard's drug use became really serious, and he lost contact with his family. He went to prison for just under

two months which meant losing his tenancy. On probation, Richard was placed in a supported tenancy for ex-offenders, but his chaotic lifestyle; drug taking, anti-social behaviour and crime resulted in eviction after less than a year. For the next two years Richard was homeless; staying with different friends for a few weeks, and in formal homeless accommodation for the first time, here drugs were rife. After less than a year, Richard lost his room and went to live with a friend for several months; during this period he had a job.

In his early forties, Richard went to rehab for a short time, and formed a relationship. They went to live with one of his siblings in another part of the UK, and Richard got a job. After a year or so, Richard's girlfriend relapsed and they moved back to the area where Richard had grown up and became homeless again (staying with a friend), after several weeks they split up. Richard wanted to sort himself out and get clean. He secured a place in a homeless hostel, started volunteering, attended a degree course and accessed support for his drug addiction. After less than six months, support staff helped Richard secure a sole tenancy (social housing) where he continued with his degree course, voluntary work and engagement with addiction support. After less than a year, and at the time of interviewing, Richard was living in another sole tenancy, with the same landlord, which he liked very much. Richard was attending a training course which included work placements. He felt that he was overcoming his drug addiction and was moving forward with his life. Richard did not mention if he had regular contact with any of his family.

G.   Nicola (20-25 years old)

After spending the first two years of her life with a foster family, Nicola was adopted by a couple who already had a son.   This became Nicola's family: mum, dad and brother. Nicola liked living in the house and the area, she had lots of friends and liked school, passing several GCSE's.   In her mid-teens Nicola started drinking and taking class A and B drugs. She was getting drunk all the time and coming in late. Her behaviour led to frequent arguments with her mum; by her account, she wasn't a nice teenager. Her mum never asked her to leave but Nicola felt she should leave, which she did at the age of sixteen. She later regretted it. She was homeless for the first time and got a place in emergency accommodation for under-eighteens, staying for less than six months. She was getting drunk all the time. Nicola had a partner and soon found out she was pregnant.

Whilst waiting for a place in a mother and baby unit, Nicola stayed with a friend for a few nights. For the next 18 months Nicola stayed in three mother and baby units, with the latter two episodes lasting short of ten months each. During the first of these two episodes, Nicola attended college. During the second she had a partner, was drinking heavily and misusing

drugs; she found it hard adjusting to her new role as a mother. Nicola's behaviour led to her being evicted and her child was adopted by her own adoptive parents. Nicola was then homeless for just short of two years, experiencing eight different dwelling places; three of staying with different friends for between two and four weeks each; living with her partner's family for less than two months; living in a homeless hostel for less than a month and three supported housing projects, one for females under 25 years old, these episodes were for just under six months each. During this period Nicola continued to drink and use drugs. Nicola didn't really like the homeless 'scene' and the atmosphere in the accommodation, i.e. the behaviour of other residents, which included heroin and crack addicts. She received warnings about her own behaviour, usually owing to her alcohol use.

Nicola wanted to get out of the hostels network and secured her first sole tenancy (social housing). She never really did anything to the property and didn't keep on top of the bills. It was just a place to have friends round, drink and party, which Nicola got fed up of. She started staying with her partner at his parent's house until he got his own tenancy. At the time of interviewing, and after less than a year in her tenancy, Nicola had moved into her partner's tenancy. She felt she was being a lot more responsible, for example keeping on top of bills, and was in a more stable routine. Nicola was also taking on more responsibility helping look after her child.

Nicola stayed in the city she was born in and remained in regular contact with her child after her adoptive parents adopted her, usually seeing them every week.   She was in receipt of welfare benefits and had never been employed. Nicola had never had contact with her biological parents or their extended families.

H.   Lucas (30-35 years old)

Lucas lived with his parents and sister, until his parents split up, just before he turned four. Staying in the same city, Lucas, his mother and sister moved in with his Nan, who he spent a lot of time with whilst his mum worked. After a couple of years, Lucas' mother re-married which meant moving house. His mother had another child.   Lucas started school, made friends, enjoyed family life and saw his dad every week. Over five years later, Lucas' step-father got a new job, which meant moving from the city to a town over seventy miles away. Moving to a new school was a big change. He liked the attention of being new. He was popular and wanted this to continue, so he messed about to get people's attention. Lucas ended up getting in with the 'wrong' crowd. Lucas' sister passed away when he reached his teens and things weren't the same from then on. His behaviour changed, he got a bit wild and started using class A drugs. He argued with his half-brother and became distant from his

mother and step-father but remained close to his grandad. Everything came to a head when Lucas had a party when his mother and step-father were away and was then asked to leave.

In his mid-teens, Lucas became homeless for the first time; staying with a friend for several weeks before moving to a supported housing project, staying for just over six months until he was offered a mobile home, staying there for just under six months. During this period, Lucas spent a few weeks at college before getting a full-time job (manual labour). He resumed contact with his mother and step-father. Lucas' job ended, so he was asked to vacate his mobile home. His mother and step-father wouldn't have him back so he decided to move back to the city where he had grown up. He stayed there for just under a year, living in a couple of shared houses for several months each (one social housing and one private rented tenancy), and was in full-time employment. Lucas' life began to get hectic; the people he knocked about with got him into more serious drugs and he never felt safe. Then an exciting job offer came, with accommodation (a mobile home). It took him to another European country for a little over three months, which he really enjoyed.

Before his twentieth birthday Lucas was back living in the city where he had grown up, staying in a homeless hostel for several weeks. He really wanted to go back to the town where his mother and step-father lived, and they let him stay for several weeks until he secured his own tenancy (social housing). He stayed there for several months before he and his partner moved into a joint tenancy (private rented). This was an opportunity for Lucas to settle down after a hectic few years; he got a job and his partner encouraged him to maintain contact with his mother. Lucas had sporadic contact with his father and only saw him three or four times a year. After more than three years in that tenancy, Lucas lost his job, he and his partner became homeless, which he thought brought them even closer together. They stayed with his partner's parents for a few weeks, and then with Lucas's mother and step-father for just over a month, before moving into another joint tenancy (social housing). Lucas was working on and off and his partner worked full-time. Things went well at first until his drug use escalated to using heroin for the first time, which led to criminal behaviour. After a couple of years in the tenancy, Lucas' partner got a new job, which meant moving to a city nearly thirty miles away. They moved into a tenancy (social housing) which was in Lucas' partners name only. Lucas didn't work, and his drug use and criminal behaviour continued.

In his mid-twenties, Lucas' lifestyle led to his first prison detention, for just under four years. During his detention, Lucas received drug rehabilitation support, and his girlfriend stood by him, as did his mother. Upon release, Lucas' partner let him stay for a few weeks before he was recalled to prison and was detained for just over six months. Again, upon release, Lucas went to stay with his partner for a few months, but went back to prison for the third time (for

less than a year). This time, his partner finished the relationship. Lucas was released before he turned thirty years old, continued to use heroin and was homeless for the next three years, staying in six different dwelling places; with friends (three episodes), rough sleeping (one episode), and in a homeless hostel (from which he was evicted for rent arrears) and a supported housing project. Lucas also spent a brief period in hospital after contracting a 'super bug'. The housing project assisted Lucas in accessing drugs support and helped him secure his second sole tenancy (social housing), but he did not spend much time in the flat. He was on remand for most of the time he had the tenancy, just short of nine months. He was eventually evicted due to a breach of his tenancy; he was drug dealing from the property. Whilst in prison for a further two months, Lucas was in touch with the local authority homeless service, which secured accommodation for him. At the time of interviewing, Lucas had been living in a homeless hostel for nearly three months, was receiving support for his drug addiction and had applied to go to residential rehab. He felt it was time for him to get back to work, keep his mind occupied and stay off drugs. Lucas was not in regular contact with any of his family.

I.   Ian (45-50 years old)

For the first eight years of his life Ian was raised in a former British Colony over 4,000 miles away from the UK. He, his parents and siblings came to the United Kingdom in the late 1960s and resided in private rented accommodation for just over three years. Ian liked school, played sports, had friends, got on well with his siblings, and they used to go on holidays. Ian's parents had been saving and were able to buy a property in the area they had been living in and stayed for six years. Ian went to grammar school, he did okay, and in his mid-teens, he went on to do a course at a polytechnic, but left after a year. He decided that he wanted some independence and privacy and moved into his first sole tenancy (private rented) before he turned eighteen. Although he was still dependent on his parents for paying the rent and bills, his meals and doing his laundry. Ian stayed in the tenancy for four years, during which time he discovered women and alcohol, was employed for a year, then went back to college where he completed a three-year course, leading to employment.

In his early twenties, Ian moved into accommodation that came with his job (shared housing), a few miles from where he had been living and had grown up. Ian was in a relationship, and after three years he and his partner moved into a joint tenancy, moving just over ten miles away. However, Ian didn't really like the area. He remained in the same job, and he and his partner got married and had three children; in less than six years they divorced. Ian moved less than ten miles away into his second sole tenancy (private rented), but was again dependent on his parents for meals and doing laundry. Ian remained in the same job. After a

few years he got fed up/disillusioned with the city he was living and working in and after just under five years, Ian sold up everything, packed his things and, apparently randomly, decided to move to a city over a hundred miles away.

He was in his mid-thirties and found himself homeless for the first time, staying in a homeless hostel for just under four months before moving into his third sole tenancy (social housing). Ian got a job in the same industry he had been working in for the past fourteen years. After five years, Ian got itchy feet again; he was fed up with his job and decided to move to a neighbouring city, less than twenty miles away. He could only afford to stay in a bed and breakfast for a couple of weeks, after which he found himself homeless again. Ian was now in his early forties. He was living in a homeless hostel and managed to find a temporary job. After just six months in the hostel, Ian moved into his fourth sole tenancy (social housing) and his employer put him on a permanent contract. This only lasted a few months after which Ian was reliant upon agency jobs.

Ian was happy in the flat for several years then started to get fed up with the area and the behaviour of other residents. He had to spend a few months out of the UK to sort out some family issues, leading to rent arrears, so when Ian returned to the UK, he found he had been evicted. He moved in with his partner, but that only lasted a few weeks. Ian was in his late forties now and was homeless again. He had four different housing episodes over five months; staying with a friend and rough sleeping, and staying in a couple of homeless hostels (for one and two months respectively). Ian managed to find some casual work and secured a sole tenancy (private rented) but was later reliant upon welfare benefits. After a year, Ian moved into a bigger flat with the same landlord. At the time of interviewing, Ian had been living in the flat for several months and was in permanent full-time employment and in receipt of working tax credits. Ian felt life was good and he had reached the stage where he didn't want to move again.

After his divorce, Ian always remained in regular contact with his children, mainly by phone, but also visited sometimes. Ian was also in touch with family living in the former British colony where he was born, and visited on occasion. Ian started using class B drugs in his late teens and had used them ever since.

J.   Craig (25-30 years old)

Craig's first housing memory was living with his parents. He was happy, liked school, had friends and used to go on holidays. Craig's mother died just before he reached his tenth birthday, after which he was placed in foster care in a neighbouring town. He got on okay with his foster carers but he found it hard in his new school and making new friends. After

six months, Craig's grandparents (his mother's parents) offered to take him in which meant moving to a town twenty miles away and another new school, which was tough. Craig also found it hard adjusting to his grandparents' 'old fashioned' rules which meant that they fell out sometimes. After five years, Craig's grandparents decided to move to a coastal town nearly a hundred miles away; Craig was in his mid-teens. Again, Craig found it tough moving to a new school and making new friends, but this move was particularly hard. Craig stayed on at school and later did an NVQ, then got a job.

Several years later, before he turned twenty-one, Craig decided to move back to the city where he had lived with his parents. He found himself homeless for the first time, staying temporarily with family friends, but only stayed there a few weeks. Craig found it hard living in the city where he had lived with his mother. He wanted to get away from the past, so he decided to move to a city just over thirty miles away; he was running away from things. Craig moved into his first tenancy, a room in a shared house, found employment, and attended church, where he made some friends. Just over a year later, in his early twenties, Craig bought a house in a town just over forty miles away, he stayed for just over three years. He made a few friends in the village and was in contact with friends who lived in the city he grew up in with his parents. He also got a job and started a relationship. Craig's partner lived in a city nearly thirty miles away, he decided to sell his house and move there, but the area turned out to be not very nice. Craig got a job. Things didn't work out with his partner. Craig was in his mid-twenties.

Over the next two years or so, Craig experienced three different homeless situations; staying temporarily with a childhood friend in the town where he first lived with his grandparents (twelve months), during which period he had a job; rough sleeping (two weeks), back in the city where he had lived with his parents; and in a homeless hostel in the same city (twelve months). Staff at the hostel helped Craig to secure a sole tenancy (social housing), but he didn't like the area, he couldn't settle, and he found it hard coping on his own. After less than four months here, Craig went back to the homeless hostel.

A year later, he was living in his own flat (social housing), but again in an area he didn't like. He felt he was forced to take the property, otherwise he would have lost his housing priority on the local authority housing register. Craig received regular support whilst in the flat. The same organisation helped to furnish and equip the property. Again, Craig didn't settle and his mental health suffered. His support worker helped him get a housing transfer to a better location, and their support continued. Craig had been living in that flat for just over six months at the time of interviewing. He was struggling a little coping on his own, but was

happier living in the area in which he had grown up in with his parents, plus he had a few friends. Craig was bored during the day and was looking into employment and college courses.

After his mother died, Craig had very little contact with his father, and after he left his grandparents' house, Craig had very little contact with them either.

K.   Paul (40-45 years old)

For the first fifteen years of his life, Paul lived with his parents in a small town. They lived in one house for a year before moving to a second house, where Paul lived for fourteen years; this is where his parents still live. His grandparents lived down the street and Paul had two siblings. He had friends and they used to play out a lot after school. Secondary school was Okay but Paul didn't take any of his exams. Paul started taking drugs in his early teens and he got into trouble with the police, this led to a strained relationship with his parents and he was asked to leave, but he wanted to be on his own anyway. In his mid-teens, Paul became homeless for the first time. He stayed with a friend for a few weeks before he was sentenced to two years in a young offender's institution.

Upon release, Paul stayed temporarily with his parents and siblings for nearly a year (informal/hidden homelessness) until he began a relationship and moved into his partner's tenancy, this later became their joint tenancy (social housing). This was close to his parent's house. Paul was in his early twenties. He and his partner married and had a child. His wife already had two children. Paul had several temporary jobs. The marriage lasted just under six years, after which Paul moved into his own place (private rented). He started hanging round with the wrong crowd, used drugs, and after less than six months, he got sent to prison.

Over the next eight years, Paul was in a cycle of short prison sentences, followed by staying with friends (informal/hidden homelessness) for a few weeks upon release. Paul's estimate of his prison detentions was sixteen episodes, and he thought that his stays with friends amounted to fifteen episodes. This cycle suited his lifestyle at the time i.e. drug use. For some of the time Paul was receiving support with his drug addiction and was on a detoxification programme. Upon release from the sixteenth prison detention in the cycle, Paul slept rough for a few weeks. He was then detained for a further two months, during which time he had an interview for supported housing (formal homeless accommodation), and this is where he was taken upon his release. The project was over fifteen miles away from where he used to live, meaning he could get away from the drug and criminal scene he used to be part of. Paul also liked the freedom of the project compared to the rules in prison. He was receiving support for his drug addiction and was on a detox programme.

After several months, Paul moved into his first sole tenancy (private rented), but he didn't keep on top of the bills, he spent his money on drugs and got back into crime and soon got into rent arrears, resulting in an eviction notice. During this time, Paul was receiving support for his drug addiction and was on a detoxification programme again.   After just six months in the tenancy, Paul asked to go back to the supported housing project, where he had been for just over a month when he was interviewed. He liked the support the staff provided, how they got him into a routine and tried to keep him occupied, so he wouldn't get bored and start using drugs heavily again, jeopardising his place at the project. Paul continued to receive support for his drug addiction and remained on the detox programme. As his drug use had greatly reduced, Paul was seeing his family a lot more.

L.   Clive (40-45 years old)

Clive's first housing memory was living with his mother, step-father and sibling, and later two half-siblings. They had several animals and lived next door to his grandparents, to whom Clive was very close as he spent a lot of time with them when his mother was working in the family business. Clive enjoyed being a member of a boy's youth group but hated school, so he left and got a job in the day, and a night job as well. The night job led to full-time employment which required Clive to live on the premises, so he left his mother's house just before he turned twenty. The job was a lot of responsibility, he worked all hours and didn't have a social life. This led to an argument with his boss and after five years, Clive quit. He was homeless for a few nights, staying with his mother and step-father, until he moved into his first sole tenancy (private rented). Clive got another job and a couple of weekend jobs.

He was in a relationship and his partner wanted to move to a town just under a hundred miles away. So in his mid-twenties, and after eighteen months in the tenancy, Clive left the city he had always lived in and was homeless for the first time, staying in a hotel for a couple of weeks, along with his partner.   Clive stayed in that town for the next sixteen years. At first, he and his partner lived in a couple of private-rented tenancies (each for just over a year). Clive had a job, worked long hours and supported his partner, this led to disagreements, and Clive and his partner split-up. Clive moved into another tenancy (private rented) where he stayed for just over five years. He had a managerial job that he loved, had a good lifestyle and loved the town he was living in. During the winter season, Clive was unemployed and claimed welfare benefits. Clive's boss asked him if he would manage the whole business which meant living on the premises. Clive lived and worked there for nearly eight years; he loved it, until the business was sold.

In his early forties, Clive was homeless, staying with a friend for a couple of weeks, and then in a couple of private rented properties for a few weeks at a time, each of which he left because of rent arrears. He was unemployed and for the next eleven months, Clive was homeless, staying with his sibling for a couple of weeks, then moving over 150 miles away to the coastal town where his mother lived; here he slept rough for a few weeks. Then he moved back to the city he had grown up in and found a hostel place (formal homeless accommodation). Clive liked the staff at the hostel, they encouraged him to get his life sorted. He tried to get a job but experienced prejudice because of where he was living (in a hostel). After nearly a year in the hostel, Clive moved into a sole tenancy (social housing) on a large estate which he didn't like. He felt he was forced into taking the flat, otherwise he would have lost his housing priority on the local authority housing register. Clive had a full-time job but got into rent arrears, which he disputed, and before he was served an eviction notice, he left and went to stay with a friend for a couple of nights before moving into another tenancy (private rented). At the time of interviewing, Clive had been in the tenancy nearly six months and had been promoted in his job. He was very happy in the flat, and with the area, and was in regular contact with his family.

M.   Rob (25-30 years old))

Rob's first housing memory was living with his parents and two siblings in a big house close to the countryside. They were a close and happy family and used to go on lots of holidays. The family moved to another nice house in the same village when Rob was seven, they lived there for just over seven years. Rob enjoyed school, he had lots of friends, and the family continued to go holiday a lot. Rob started using class B drugs when he became a teenager. Shortly after, Rob's parent's split-up and things just got worse. He found his parents' break-up very hard to deal with, and this led to Rob becoming homeless for the first time (at fourteen years old); he didn't know which parent to live with and he slept rough for a few nights. Rob decided to live with his mother, but he got in with the wrong crowd and started using more drugs. He went to stay at his father's regularly, as he didn't like his mother's misuse of alcohol. Rob misbehaved at school and didn't really engage, only taking three GCSEs.

For the next four years, Rob lived between his parents' houses; he'd have an argument with one and go and stay with the other, and spend the odd night with friends. His father would only let him stay when he was drug free, which happened a few times, although Rob wasn't really bothered where he stayed. Drugs were his priority, affecting relations with his family: they didn't trust him. Rob's drug use also affected his reliability regarding employment and his jobs did not last very long. In his early twenties, Rob was offered a job that involved

travelling around the country which came with mobile accommodation. During this time Rob didn't keep in touch with his family. After just over a year in the job, Rob returned to the village where he had grown up and went to stay with his father for the next three years (informal/hidden homelessness). Rob also spent nights sleeping rough and at friends', because his father didn't want his grandchildren exposed to drug use. When this happened, Rob used a homeless day centre in a neighbouring town to shower and get food. Rob had broken the trust of his family; his drug use led to lying, cheating and thieving. Again, Rob's drug use was his priority; he couldn't hold down a job.

In his mid-twenties, Rob was sentenced to just over a month in prison and managed to get clean of drugs. Upon release, Rob was provided with temporary accommodation for the homeless where he stayed for just over a month. He soon got back into heavy drug use and ended up sleeping rough for a few nights and then with his father for a couple of weeks. He received support from his probation officer and a drugs worker, and used the homeless day centre again, helping him find his own place. Rob had his first tenancy of a room in a shared house (private rented). He thought it would be better than the streets, but things didn't go well with the other tenants, who were using drugs and drug dealing. They didn't keep the house clean and didn't contribute to the bills. Police were always at the house and this caused problems with the neighbours. Rob was trying to get clean of drugs, and after a year in the house, the last straw was Rob's room being burgled several times. Rob's father started to let him stay for a few nights, and at the time of interviewing, Rob had been staying with his father for just over three months (informal/hidden homelessness). He was drug free, which meant he was in regular contact with the rest of his family, as they could see that he had changed. Rob wanted to put his life back together, go to college and get a job, but he realised he needed to take things slowly as when he had taken on too much in the past he hadn't coped well, and that's when he turned to drugs.

N.		Julie (20-25 years old))

Julie's first housing memory was when she was living with her mother, father and five siblings. Julie had her own room and the house was nice. They were a happy family, although Julie remembers finding out that her father wasn't her biological father. After a year in the house the family moved to another house (social housing) in the same town, although the area wasn't very nice. Julie stayed in the same school, but, because her mother started using drugs she had to look after her younger siblings and the house, and she didn't go to school much. Her mother also had lots of people coming to the house. After a year in the house, her mother and step-father split up. Julie and her siblings weren't allowed to live with their mother, so they went to live with their step-father, staying in the same village (private

rented house). Julie's mother moved in after a while but wasn't around much. Her step-father looked after them, he was like a 'mother' figure as well.

Julie didn't go to school much, as her mum used to take her thieving. After two years in the house, her mum was attacked. Rather than go to school, Julie used to follow her mum to make sure she was safe. The police put Julie's mum in a refuge for a few nights and Julie and her siblings went with her, sleeping in one room (this was Julie's first experience of being homeless). Then the whole family stayed with a family friend for a couple of weeks (informal/hidden homelessness) before moving to a 'safe' house (social housing) in a village just under thirty miles away.   They didn't have much when they first moved in and a family member helped to sort out furniture. Julie didn't like the area much but made some friends, and school was okay after she settled in. Her school attendance was sporadic because she ended up going out with her mum again to make sure she was safe. Julie's mother only managed to be drug free for a couple of months. After a couple of years in the house, Julie's mother moved to a supported housing project to try and get clean of drugs.

 Julie had started taking drugs herself and wasn't getting on with her step-father, so she decided to move out. She was in her early teens and homeless. Over the next few weeks she ended up staying with different friends and continued to use drugs, before going to live with her mother in her tenancy, in a neighbouring town. Julie only stayed a few weeks, as it wasn't a safe environment for her because of her mother's drug use. Julie went to live with her mother's friend, in a neighbouring village, and after a few weeks the friend was approved by social services to get paid to look after Julie. Julie was cared for at first and was allowed to have her boyfriend stay over, he was a lot older than her and she continued to use drugs. After a while, Julie's foster carer neglected her, leaving her alone for days without food. So, after a year, Julie was placed with some other foster carers for just under six months.

Before she turned sixteen Julie moved in with her boyfriend. He lived in the same village that she had lived with her mother and step-father. Julie went to school a few times but didn't take any GCSEs, she continued to use drugs and didn't really see her family. Julie and her boyfriend lived together for a year then went to stay with Julie's brother (informal/hidden homeless). They split up after a few weeks, because her boyfriend had become physically abusive. Julie was homeless for the next twelve months. She stayed with a friend at her friend's parents' house for several months, and attended a youth training scheme, which she really enjoyed. However, Julie was using drugs, and had started drinking heavily, so she was asked to leave her friend's parents' house. Julie stayed with different friends for a few weeks, this made her feel like a tramp; unclean and living out of bags.

Julie was in her late teens when she went to the local authority to make a homeless application. She was placed in a hotel in a neighbouring town for several weeks, before moving to a supported housing project (formal homeless accommodation) in the same town. Julie got on well with staff at the project and their presence made her feel safe. They provided support with finding full-time employment and life-skills training. Julie was partying a lot but did receive specialist support for her alcohol addiction. She didn't see her family much. After just under a year at the project, she felt ready to move into her own tenancy (social housing) and received tenancy support. Julie had a precarious lifestyle: using drugs and alcohol, partying a lot, getting into dangerous situations with men, in and out of work, and getting into rent arrears. She had a boyfriend, and before she turned twenty she discovered that she was pregnant. This took a lot of getting used to as the partying, drugs and alcohol use had to stop. Children weren't permitted at her accommodation, so Julie and her boyfriend moved in to his parents' house for a couple of months before Julie got a sole tenancy (social housing). At the time of interviewing, Julie had been in her tenancy over six months, had had her child, and was in receipt of welfare benefits and tenancy support. Julie was struggling adjusting to becoming a mum, having her independence taken away and having no time for herself. She did, however, love her daughter, and her daughter's father provided regular support. Julie had intermittent contact with her siblings, mother and step-father.