

Spread a Smile Activity 1

Don't Forget Your Toothbrush

What you need to do

Answer the quiz questions about homelessness and dental health.

What do we need?

Some paper and pens

How long will it take?

30-60 minutes

Fundraising and understanding

This activity is about starting to **understand** homelessness, the effects this has on homeless people and to **raise money** by having a small entry fee to take part.

Why are we doing this?

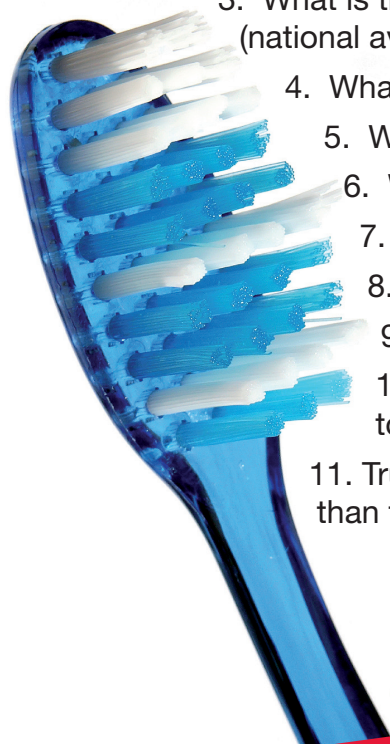
To help you get a better understanding of the scale of homelessness and how it can affect health.

You could use the stickers in this pack to give to the winning pupil or team, or have special questions with stickers attached.

Are you surprised at some of the answers? What do you think would make any of these answers change? Have a look at the information and answers over the page.

The Questions

1. How many rough sleepers are there in London?
2. What percentage of rough sleepers are female?
3. What is the average life expectancy of a rough sleeper?
(national average is 74 for men and 79 for women)
4. What do you think is meant by the term 'hidden homeless'?
5. What is the main reason for becoming homeless?
6. What percentage of homeless people have no qualifications?
7. What percentage of homeless people in England have mental health issues?
8. What percentage of homeless people spend their entire day alone?
9. In England how many people are on the social housing waiting list?
10. What things do you think would make it difficult for a homeless person to see a dentist?
11. True or False – homeless people are more likely to have their teeth taken out than fixed by a dentist.



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The Answers

1. 3472 people slept rough at some point in London during 2008/09, an increase of 15% on the previous year's total of 3017 and of more than a thousand since 2005/06.
2. 13%. Why do you think this figure is so low? Rough sleeping is extremely dangerous for homeless women. Many have been physically attacked, verbally abused and sexually assaulted. Women respond to these dangers by making efforts to 'remain invisible', choosing places to sleep which are hidden from view and disguising their homeless status in some way.
3. 42 years of age.
4. The vast majority of homeless people exist out of sight in hostels and refuges, bed and breakfasts, squats, unsatisfactory or overcrowded accommodation and on the floors or sofas of friends and families. This means that they are all too often invisible to the public and so, despite meeting the legal definition of homelessness, are often not regarded as a priority for decision makers. These are the 'hidden homeless'.
5. The main cause of homelessness is widely accepted as being relationship breakdown (such as disputes with parents, domestic abuse, marital breakdown or bereavement).
6. 37%
7. 32% of clients of homelessness services in England have mental health needs and 14% have a personality disorder.
8. 38%
9. 4.5 million people.
10. There are many factors including; the chaotic nature of a homeless persons lifestyle, low disposable income, mental health issues, lack of awareness of local services.
11. True. Because it is difficult to access dental care when you are homeless by the time homeless people do get to see a dentist it's often too late to save their teeth.