Understanding Homelessness

Background
In response to a marked increase in homelessness, in parallel with abusiveness and antisocial behaviour towards the homeless on the rise, two exciting resources to raise awareness of the experiences and issues faced by the homeless have been created: the game, ‘Homeless Monopoly’; and the creative toolkit, Understanding Homelessness. Developed for a variety of users including teachers, youth groups, voluntary organisations and service providers both resources combine creativity and real life stories to help users approach the complex issues around homelessness.

The Resources
Developed in partnership between Coventry University’s Disruptive Media Learning Lab, Coventry Cyrenians and University of Warwick:

Homeless Monopoly is based on research of the experiences of people who have experienced homelessness in Coventry, translating the situations they face and places they interact with, into scenarios and resources that players need to navigate and collect with an end goal of finding a home.

Understanding Homelessness, is a creative toolkit that looks at the wider context of homelessness and utilises a range of creative practices including drama, art, journalism and case studies to explore triggers leading to homelessness, support available and the different social and cultural responses to homelessness.

What’s next?
Players enthusiastically engaged with experiences of homelessness during testing of the game in a secondary school in Coventry and with groups in Coventry City Council, in all cases participants felt that they had learned something and also had fun. The creative toolkit is hot off the press this week in time for the start of a new academic year with potential applications in Active Citizenship, PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) and within the curriculum.

Professor Nadine Holdsworth and Dr Jackie Calderwood have several ideas for future development that could include making versions of the game and toolkit for different locations and exploring the possibility of creating a Social Enterprise to increase insight into homelessness in society through artistic methods and creative resources.

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