

**Name of Project: London Youth Gateway**  
**Lead partner: New Horizon Youth Centre**  
**Borough: Bexley**

**Case Study- Bexley**

My name is Stephen and I'm 22. I'm from Bexley. I had dreams for the future that I worked hard for, but they all fell apart. My life fell apart too. At the start of the pandemic I left my local area because I fell into a lifestyle with bad influences. I couldn't go back to my mum because she's in a high Covid risk group. I didn't want to sleep at friends because I moved to get away from them. I was sleeping rough in central London for eight months during the pandemic. I didn't have any support from any other services for rough sleepers. I think the rough sleeper services didn't notice me because I got work with an agency. I went to my night shift job with all my big bags of belongings after sleeping on the streets and in stairwell during the day.

When I had enough money, I'd book into a cheap hotel, going back to rough sleeping when money ran out. My wages were too low to let me find somewhere to rent permanently. And I couldn't get emergency accommodation.

After a while my boss noticed that I was bringing luggage to work and asked me what was up. That's the first time I told anyone about me being homeless and sleeping rough. My boss encouraged me to go to my local council. My council referred me to New Horizon Youth Centre in January 2021. New Horizon Youth Centre helped me with support around a deposit, resettlement and helping to find better and more secure employment. I went into private rented accommodation in February 2021. I'm still working full-time. I feel happy and positive.