

Marc: Wanting a future

[Redcar, Cleveland]

Marc: I'll probably want in my life just to be stable enough to feed myself and my kids, cos my Mum couldn't when ... she couldn't afford to feed herself when she was feeding us

[Marc is 19, unemployed and on Jobseeker's Allowance. He has two A-levels, a BTEC and a number GCSEs.]

Well, I came out of school with English literature. The other one, triple science. 'C' in ICT; I've got my geography; I've got catering, ... Team Leadership award in PE. My public services, Level 3. And that's basically all the qualifications but no one wants to look at them really.

I've been searching for work for two and a half years, near enough three, and it's coming up clueless at the moment.

Must have been hundreds, hundreds of jobs I've applied for in the past two/three years. Bar tending jobs, cleaning jobs. Everything you can probably think of, even fixing lamposts. It's not what you know, it's who you know around here.

If there's no decent jobs around the north East or in England then you have to live off the benefits, but no one is going to look at you because you are on benefits.

My Mum was on benefits all the way through her life. Working in and out, coming on and off it.

Marc: But I grew up on them and my sisters did.

[Marc and his sister as children]

Some days she couldn't afford to feed us and herself so she would feed us and she would starve herself for two days. Just things like

that. That would really affect someone. I wouldn't want to bring up someone like that. I would struggle. I don't know how she went through it at all.

I met a girlfriend. Settled down. Moved out. Moved in with her. Everything went upside down, became homeless.

[He currently lives with his sister in charity-supported housing for young people. Marc meets with his key support worker once a week. He has four months left on his tenancy.]

Mum couldn't take me in. So I slept in the caravan, then on the streets, then caravan, then streets. Here and there, and then eventually I've ended up in this Coatham house property.

Support officer: But you know you are alright here till April anyway, and then you are not just going to get asked to leave. Obviously I'll help you move on to somewhere, whatever it may be, a joint tenancy or a single tenancy.

Marc: Joint tenancy is really just a temporary one-year tenancy agreement house so after the year's up I'll have to find somewhere for myself.

At the moment I'm comfortable how I am but it's still ticking on my mind.

Because anything these days can get turned upside down and you could be out on your ... out on the streets with your black bags again.

Yeah, I do kind of worry about that.

Things I want for the future is for things to pick up around here now. It's probably just more jobs around here. More jobs, bring the EMA back. And just things like that, little tiny simple things. That's all I want.

Decent transport, decent house, a nice family and a decent job as well. And that's it.

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