

TRUTHS ABOUT POVERTY IN LEEDS

What if people living in poverty could take the lead on challenging the city's leaders to work with them on tackling poverty?

Would it make a difference to the decisions that are being made?

Would new solutions to poverty be discovered?

Would people listen and, if they did, would they better understand the challenges that poverty brings...?

NOTES

NOTHING
ABOUT
US
WITHOUT
US
IS
FOR
US

SARAH



“Life has knocked me down a few times. It has shown me things I never wanted to see. I have experienced sadness and failures. But one thing’s for sure...

I always get up!”

On the 20th of May I was made
redundant (on my first
apprenticeship job) after only 3
weeks of what was meant to be a
three month trial.

Then the next day I had a bike
crash, fracturing my elbow, thus
stopping me from riding my bike
for 3-6 weeks.

After this, I spent the next few
weeks walking for hours on end -
which I very much dislike...

So I decided to get back into
skateboarding (with my fave
longboard) using an adapted
bicycle caliper brake system...

The reason that I did this is
because skateboards inherently
lack effective braking when at
speeds over 15-20mph.

*(The photo here of me with my
board is from an old discontinued
Leeds Passion for Fashion show.*

*And below is a photo of the
actual braking system on the
board itself...)*



JAIMES LEWIS MORAN



OVERCOMING OBSTACLES



TARIQ

I lost two partners who both passed away.
Elaine and Tracy.
I have to cope with this by going for long walks.

I like horse racing.
I like socialising, meeting with people.
I volunteer with LS14 trust.
I get on with life.

I don't get tied down with these problems.
I would like to say to people in charge
'help people more instead of thinking of
yourselves...'

I have been getting help from LS14 Trust
- such as my money problems and other
things.

Job centres don't help you with your
problems.
They should be more helpful.
They should not ignore you and make
you feel low.

I've been sanctioned twice.
Once for 26 weeks.
Had to apply for 20+ jobs a
week. Couldn't make the
target. Not enough jobs.

Had to borrow off sister.

One get emergency
payment, once.
Had to use foodbank, but
only tins, not proper meals.

After my last sanction, GIPSIL
helped. Had words. Chipped in
for a hamper for me.

They see criteria, not people.
You're not treated as a person.

I can now go online. Couldn't use
a computer before the LS14 trust
taught me how.
Now go there every day.
I volunteer helping set up for events,
I carry stuff.

I go to mens group. Helps with isolation.
Eat, meet, get stuff of chest. Get out, as
nowhere else to go, if not LS14 trust then
only library, job centre or pub.
Now have Seacroft Stampers walking
around estate.

GEOFF



SELLINA



MARGARET EAST

The Norm of Naturalisation

The standards are misery
Like a person staying by the lake
And has no fish to cook
I was supposed to sit the life in the UK test
Or produce medical documents for exemption
I exhibited medical documents, for exemption.

My disability was under estimated for exemption
Because it is invisible, to understand for exemption
Therefore, I am also invisible to sort for exemption
Because am judged externally rather than internally.

I have existed waiting
Waiting in the box like a prisoner
For my naturalisation
I paid my fees through my nose
I was promised six months for a decision,
six months expanded to years
Leaving me in a design of disappointment.

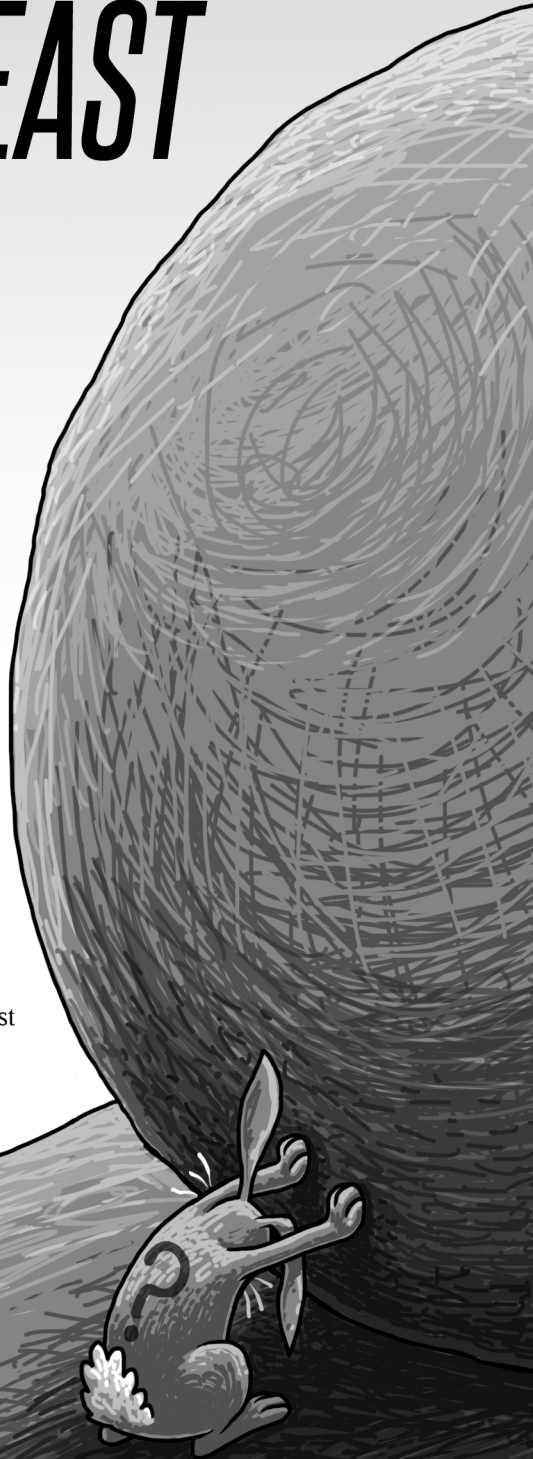
My brain has a leakage
Scientifically examined as vascular dementia
Pumping this history
Will leak like fetching water in a basket
Pumping this history
Is like pumping air in a fractured car tyre
Where the law has one size to fit everyone.

The natives who live good lives would still fail this test
But miracles are expected from me
I have lived and revealed enough history of self
Life expectancy in Uganda is 45 years
Some have gone to sleep in a wooden box forever
I never said bye bye.

My mother existed, exhausted waiting
In her expanded expired years
Waiting to see me surfacing
In a sphere of fourteen years long long waiting.

I still believe
It's not the beautiful buildings
It's the beautiful human beings
Among the beautiful human race.

Margaret East



MARIAMA

16 years old and naïve to how the world really worked,
But I knew everything!
Deceived by my own confidence, not aware of consequence,
July of '09 was my prime,
No longer sheltered, I revelled in alcohol, bud and ran after lust.

Clutching the porcelain bowl, mumbling meaningless lullabies,
What had I done?!
The school bell rings, my safe haven,
I put trust in people who promised to help,
Only to find myself falling further.

5 ½ months and no help,
I was having a baby and I was lost,
Trapped in a labyrinth of my own doing,
Pregnant by a man who knew less than I and I was terrified,
Turning to my mum, I learned how to cope with baby bills and budgets.

Back on top and no one could stop me, I was invincible!!
I felt I had a new lease of life and soon met a 'man' - PFFT,
I just wanted to complete my family,
And so, two months on and we were married,
I thought I had everything I could ever want,

But he wasn't what he seemed,
And in my delusion, I'd followed another dream,
Spiralling out of control, overwhelmed,
Not even in my sleep could I escape the brutal feeling of deceit,
Wondering is this really my reality
Or have I driven myself to lose my sanity?

Unable to control the life I had created,
I had to leave the family home,
And I couldn't take my baby!
Broken, I had to find a place to stay,
From July to October 2011,
Harehills, Beeston, Hyde Park, and Woodhouse.

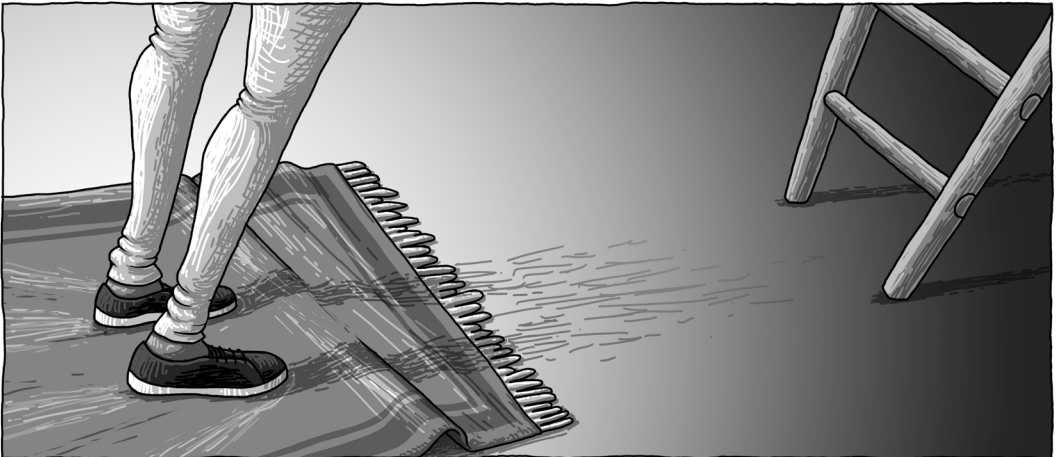
Still trapped in my daydreams of having it all,
I fell pregnant again.
Burying myself further into his clutches,
It hurt to be there but it was mine and I couldn't let go,
Of the picture perfect family.

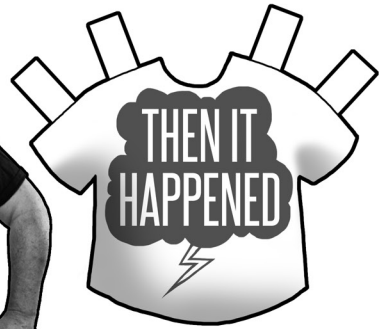
Taking my vulnerability,
Roping me in further to the abyss of my own darkness,
I laid every night in a pool of my own broken dreams,
Never sleeping from my minds endless screams,
Asking myself why?
And never getting an answer.

All I wanted to do was forget,
But he had tainted me beyond recognition,
Slowly taking me apart,
And every time I tried to put myself back together,
I ended up back at the start.

My ladder of life would not hold steady,
Voices in my head screaming,
You're just not ready!
And now?
Just a few years pass,
And it still hurts,
But at least I can get up my ladder to start my life.

Mariama Weston





NICK



St Hilda's community room is our venue for Wednesday lunch. It's been going for 4 years, we provide a hot meal to our local community. We serve meat each week as it's a luxury for most of our diners. We also do a take away service for those who can't get out, and offer help in any way we are able...

MARY



"...consistency..."

Craig

"...humbling to sit at a table,
no politics, just all of us talking
and listening to each other..."

Fr. Darren

"...Never Boring..."

Terry

"...so relaxing,
good Food..."

Mick

"...Restored my
Faith in people..."

Andy

"...love the Atmosphere.
Feel safe, great staff -
worth their weight in gold..."

Steve

"...First Day in Cross Green
what a welcome so kind..."

David

"...My Yorkshire Family..."

Cathy

"...confidence learning
to cook Fresh Food..."

Katie

"...like going to a
restaurant with banter..."

Billy

"...Family care..."

Karl

"...Energy. Look Forward
to the lovely Food..."

Kerry & Danny

Our postcode is in the lowest 3%,
according to Indices of Multiple
Deprivation in the UK.

FLETCH

I came to Seacroft in 2013 and I could not use a computer. I have got very good and I can log in and use Facebook now.

I am also now able to help other people there with the computer.

I am a volunteer for LS14 Trust, and I have passed my First Aid and Food Hygiene.

I help set up the training rooms for meetings.

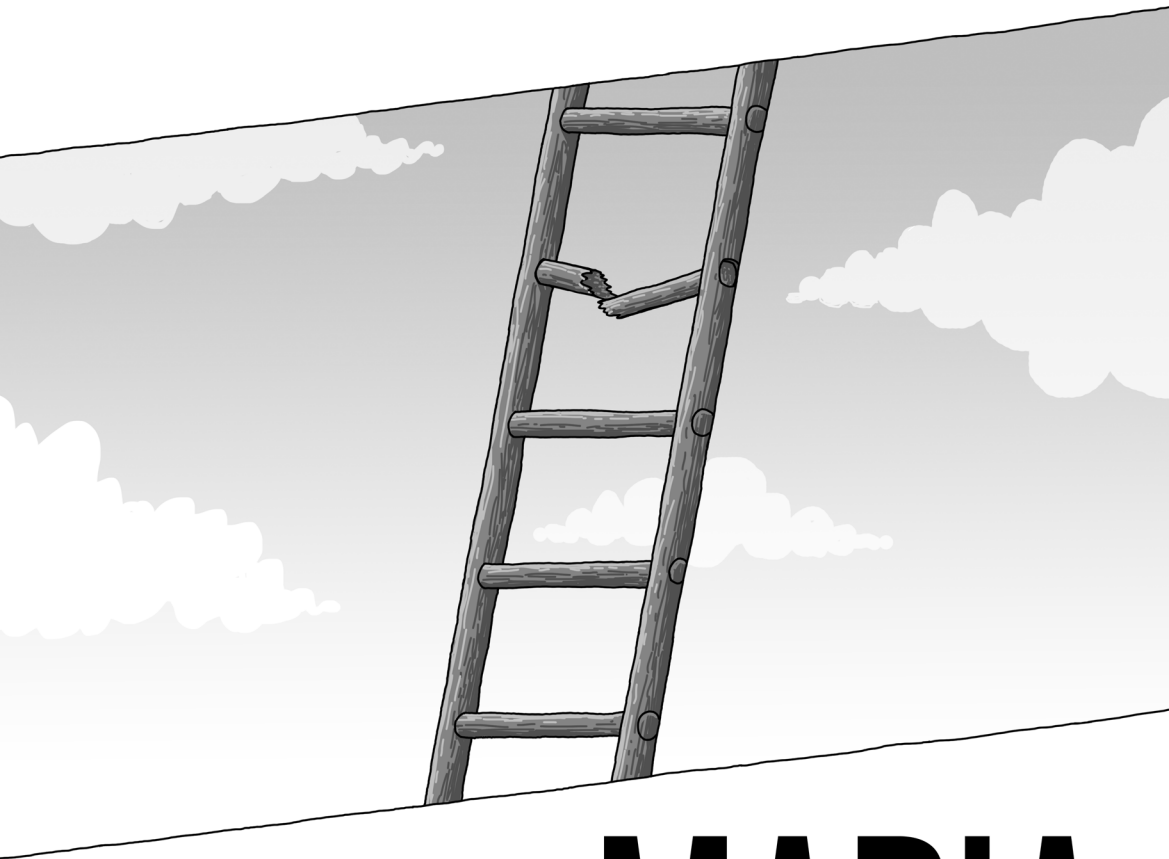
I help out at the Galas, and I now go to the LS14 Men's Group, which I enjoy.



**POVERTY
TRUTH**



I want to get on the ladder
and climb up, but you
have to make provision
for the unthinkable...



MARIA

“Who thinks at night,
that morn will ever be?
Who knows, far out
upon the central sea,
That anywhere is land?
And yet, a shore
Has set behind us,
and will rise before:
A past foretells
a future...”

Bayard Taylor



**POVERTY
TRUTH**

LEEDS

STEVEN

LEE



I FOUND MYSELF TRAPPED AND VULNERABLE, IN A BAD PLACE. I NEEDED TO MOVE AWAY.

I GOT HELP FROM THE HOUSING DEPT.



A DISCRETIONARY PAYMENT CLEARED MY DEBT...



...AND I WAS FREE TO MOVE OUT.



TWO YEARS LATER...



THE PHONE CALL CAME AS A BIT OF A SHOCK.

THE DISCRETIONARY PAYMENT HAD BEEN RECLAIMED, LEAVING ME £1,000 IN DEBT.



I DIDN'T KNOW IT, BUT WHEN I'D COME OFF OF SICKNESS BENEFITS AND ONTO JSA, HOUSING BENEFITS HAD NOT BEEN TOLD...



I SPENT AGES ON THE PHONE, WORKING MY WAY THROUGH THEIR AUTOMATED ANSWERING SYSTEM. ONLY TO BE CUT OFF BEFORE I COULD LEAVE MY FULL ADDRESS.

SO NOW I AM STUCK WAITING FOR THE FORMS THAT MAY OR MAY NOT GET ME OUT OF THIS SITUATION...



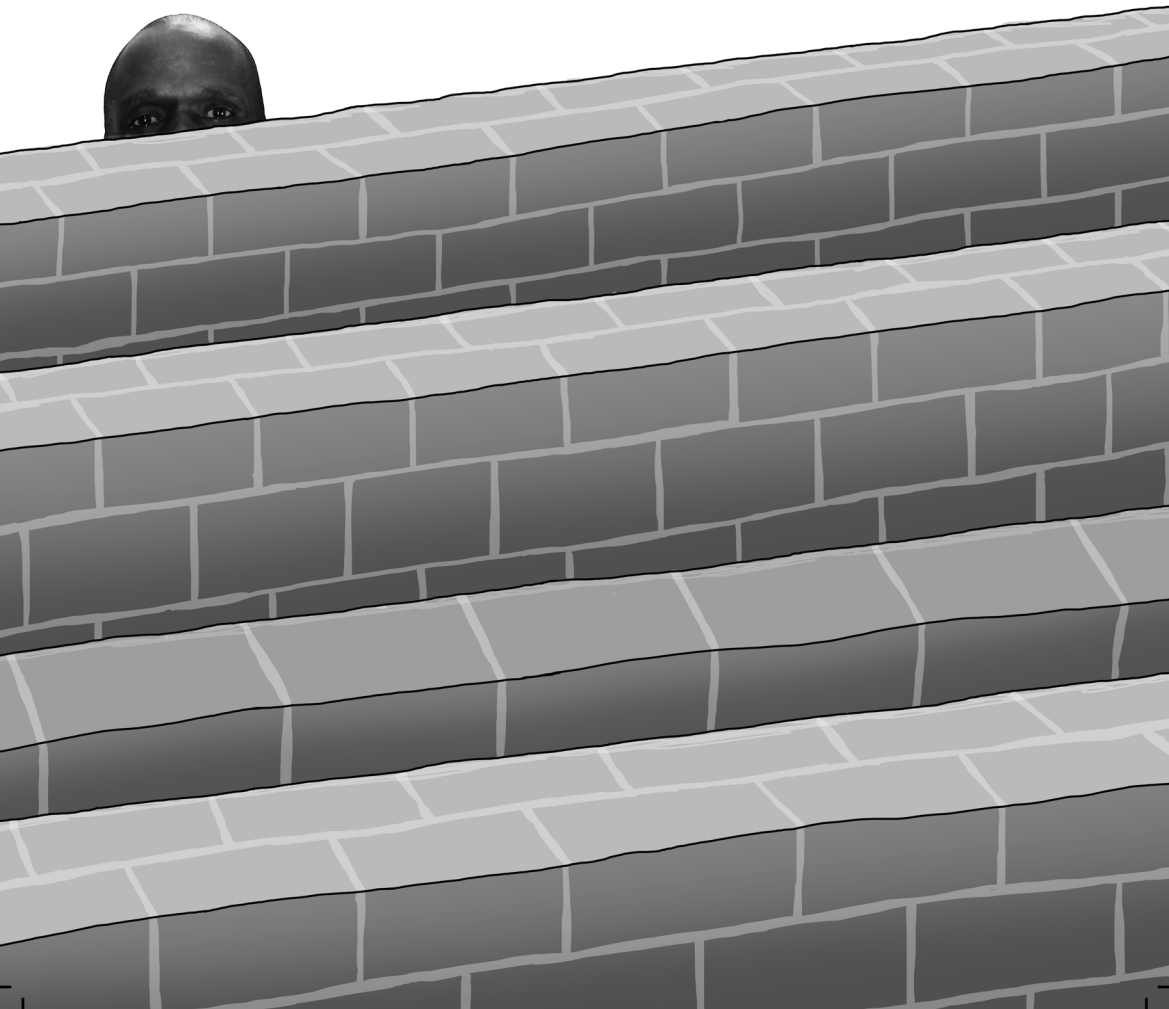
OF POVERTY BARRIERS

Reflecting on PovertyTruth as a refugee and an asylum seeking migrant, I see that the path to a fulfilled and fully realised life is littered with a host of brick walls and layered by human barriers that create generational poverty.

HOWARD

The first barrier in the host haven of refuge and asylum is emptiness of everything that surrounds your mind. You literally have nothing of economic value for self-dependence. Socially, economically, politically, spiritually and culturally you are fallen to poverty. The start point is that you have no inheritance or heritage. You are starting from ground zero. In my case, Leeds happened to be my safe haven. A host of legalities and policies erected barriers that trapped me into positions of poverty. Rules and regulations prohibited me from any meaningful economic participation and engagement, even though I am endowed with skills and abilities for work and business enterprise.

My two daughters qualified for Bradford University and for Special Communication College in Doncaster. But neither could go, because of my status. Together we saw realized, erected barriers to our abilities, capabilities and skills development



DARK
NESS

CHRISTINE

Just because I have to live where the council put
me shouldn't mean that I can't live as good as
people who buy their own homes...

CAN'T
CHOOSE
WHERE I
LIVE

NO
Peace

HEAD
ACHE

NO
SLEEP

SHOUTING

LETTERS

CAN'T
SHARE
WITH
FRIENDS

NO
MONEY
MOVE
AGAIN
ANKER

FIGHTING

negative
thoughts

GO
IF
NO
JOY

HEART
BEATING
OVER-FAST

NOISE
THINK
CALLS



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR

...I'd like more choice of where I live.

**Just
enjoying
being
home**



Joy

Reading

**Being
positive**

Peace

LAUGHING

SMILING

**FEELING
SAFE**

**FEELING
HAPPY**

**NO
HEAD
ACHES**

**Enjoying
hobbies
again**

Friends

Family

**Heart
beats
slower**

**No
noise**