

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

Before the lockdown Edi (22) had nowhere safe to call home. When the government announced that everyone had to stay home, he was sofa surfing at his friend's but was asked to leave because the landlord saw him and gave his friend a warning.

"I ended up sleeping in my friend's car in London next to a station."

New Horizon Youth Centre was already supporting Edi. They referred him to Street Link and advocated with the housing options team of his local council, with the team working closely with both. New Horizon's outreach team went out to see Edi on streets for wellbeing checks. After a week sleeping rough, he was placed in a London hotel as part of the GLA Covid-19 rough sleeping provision.

Edi has no recourse to public funds, so employment is only route into housing. Throughout lockdown he has continued to use New Horizon's employment, education, training support to try to get into work.

"I'm looking for a job. I want to be a delivery driver and I have applied and I'm waiting to hear back. At the moment I'm thinking about being an electrician as well. I have experience, I have done two years of it so why don't I continue it."

With the uncertainty about where he might be staying next, his progress could be in jeopardy.

"I've found lockdown really hard. I've been in the hotel nearly a month now. I now have somewhere to wash and clean. I'm waiting to hear about my move-on options as there are a lot of things I want to do in the future."