

# TELEVISION

## NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Evicted: a heartwrenching documentary about the plight of the homeless Wednesday, BBC1, 10.40pm



DIGITAL FILM RADIO SPORT SOAP



# OUTRAGEOUS MISFORTUNE

**NO HOME: EVICTED**

BBC1, 10.40PM

**T**here is a moment early on in Brian Woods's outstanding documentary when Conor, who cannot be more than six, debates how his brothers and sisters could be taken into care. Looking at his sister, he says trustingly: 'No, but how *would* they take us?' before turning first to the offscreen cameramen and then to the camera, and thus the viewers, and repeating his question, a gappy smile on his face.

It is 40 years since the screening of Ken Loach's drama *Cathy Come Home* and yet homelessness remains a social stigma, ignored in our frivolous world of celebrity reality TV shows and ever more conspicuous consumption. Yet, as this heart-rending programme makes clear, we should be paying attention. In June of this year there were 130,472 homeless children in Britain pushed from hostel to boarding house, from sheltered accommodation to the streets. The ignorant assumption is to demand: 'How can anyone be homeless in 21st-century Britain?' and thus the lines are drawn once more into the evil Victorian demarcation of the deserving and the undeserving poor.

Woods's documentary, which focuses on three homeless families, is both angry and compassionate. It is impossible to watch without a growing sense of outrage: outrage at the housing association who tell five-year-old Chloe's parents that 'you intentionally made yourselves homeless' (a statement they later retract); outrage at Chloe's teachers who announce that they are not responsible when her mother begs them to send her classwork for the week; and outrage as sweet-tempered Sarah (above) tells of how she leaves her baked beans on the radiator in the morning and hopes they'll be warm come night. The film is full of scenes such as this – we watch Charlotte's father tramp the streets of Somerset with his clinically depressed wife, adamant that he will not allow his children to be taken into care.

Woods unobtrusively builds a picture of a still Dickensian Britain, a place of bureaucrats and bullies, of dreams dashed and families fragmented. As Sarah says at one point: 'A house is not bricks and mortar, it is a family home, a place to have fun.' This is, without question, the documentary of the year. It should not be missed. **Sarah Hughes**  
For further information go to [bbc.co.uk/nohome](http://bbc.co.uk/nohome) or call 0800 839 839