

A refuge from the bullies

10 year-old James sometimes feels like a prisoner in his own home - but at least he's safe behind his own front door.

Young reporter James Jordan, 10, hates not being able to go out on his own - but thinks it's the only way to stay safe.

My family and I live on a council estate in North London. We've been in the same flat for nearly 11 years – that's my entire life. I've been kicked and punched so many times I've lost count.

When I was little I really liked living on the estate. There was a good playground with loads of swings to play on and lots of other kids.

But when I was six years old, I started getting bullied by an older group. Since then things have never really been the same for my family and me. I would go, as far as life on the estate has been pretty miserable for us.

I never walk around on my own because I just don't feel safe. I'm worried that there'll be kids hiding around corners and that they'll jump out and attack me. I can't even walk to school on my own like other kids and it's only a few minutes down the road from where we live.

I've been kicked and punched so many times I've lost count. But for me the worst thing was when this boy who lives in the same block of flats, head butted me. It was so painful, I blacked out for a couple of minutes. It was pretty serious because I had to be rushed to hospital in an ambulance.

Thinking about that boy still makes me feel angry. What he did to me has changed my life because I no longer feel safe. My parents worry a lot about me and won't let me step foot outside the front door unless I'm with one of them or with my big sister.

I hate it that I can't go out on my own but at least that way I won't get hurt. It's not fair that my life has to be like this just because of a bunch of stupid kids.

One of the only places where I do feel safe is an adventure playground just round the corner, where I can play outside and do things like cooking and stuff. It's fun there because I get a bit of freedom.

I do have little play fights with other kids at the adventure playground but it's nothing serious. I like it there because I know I'm not going to get bullied.

A lot of the kids who bully me on my estate are the same kids who also steal mopeds and cars and then blow them up with petrol bombs. It's not really nice for us having to see burnt out bikes and cars but it's something you just get used to seeing.

There are lots of other kinds of vandalism on the estate as well. We don't have swings in our park any more because the big kids kept pulling them down and the council just got sick of fixing them.

I reckon the reason some young people do these kinds of things is because they're not getting enough attention at home. Or maybe they're just bored.

I think the council should do more for young people in my area. If there were more things to do and better places to play, kids wouldn't need to ruin things and pick on others. The estate needs a better playground and somewhere for children to play ball games.

The council could also start a youth club on the estate. As well I think that there should be somewhere kids can go and express their anger.

It is quite possible that some kids who are bullied will grow up and become bullies themselves. There have been a few times when I've picked on other kids, but it's usually only when I'm trying to protect myself. Most of the time I try really hard not to bully others because I know what it feels like and it's not nice!

About the team

This story was produced by James Jordan, and was published in [Community Care](#) magazine.

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