

Life on the street ... it's a star cast

■ Homeless take lead roles in city story

■ It will play at festivals around the world

■ BRIAN LASHLEY

STARS of a new film about homelessness in Manchester know the setting better than anyone else - they've all lived on the streets.

The project recruited people who have slept rough and put them through fortnightly acting workshops.

The result is a short film which follows a group of young people going out for a meal as they become intertwined with the lives of rough sleepers.

Acting On Impulse stars Danny May, who has slept rough in Man-

INSPIRED Lauren wrote the film for homeless actors



chester and now works as a M.E.N. vendor.

Actress Lauren Tomlinson came up with the idea after organising a concert for the homeless and meeting many rough sleepers.

She said: "I spent an evening listening to life stories and hearing about the boredom and aimlessness of life on the streets.

"Many of them expressed an interest in acting, so I came home and wrote a script.

"About 25 people have taken part, with a core of seven who were cast as characters in the film. This has been an amazing experience in itself, and I have seen all of them grow in confidence, discover their imaginations and begin to work as a team.

"Visitors have commented on the talent discovered in this group."

The film was shot around the viaducts between Deans-

gate Station and the Cornerhouse Cinema on Whitworth Street, which were once 'home' to Clare Pickard, 27, from Ardwick.

She slept rough for more than two years following difficulties with family, and always dreamed of being an actress.

Clare, who plays a vulnerable woman called Shelly in the film, said: "I first spoke to Lauren at the food van on Store Street when she was looking to discover people who wanted to act.

"I remember thinking she'd have no problems finding a few drama queens round here.

"When you are out there on the streets you can only ever dream about the camera being on you. Living on the streets was horrible, cold, wet and windy.

"I loved the acting and I'd love to do more. This has given me a new experience and hopefully it will raise public awareness about homelessness."

The premiere of the six-minute film will be in June. It will be entered in short film festivals and made available to anyone who works with the homeless.



▶▶ **CLASH** A scene from Acting In Impulse, set in Manchester, which will be shown at international short film festivals