Before I came to Hartlepool, the furthest North I had ever travelled was to visit the Midlands…so not exactly Northern! To say I was daunted was a bit of an understatement, but at the same time I was excited to be living in a new area. Like me if you Google the Northeast, popular searches like Newcastle or Middlesbrough will come up, however as I found there are lots of things to do and see in Hartlepool! The biggest benefit also is, unlike other towns or cities; you can walk to anywhere you need in Hartlepool! Whether it's materials for coursework, drinks with a friend, taking in a film with a date, or even a scenic walk by yourself there is everything you need just around the corner.

Within walking distance, in the centre of Hartlepool, there is a shopping centre with popular shops such as River Island, Primark, New Look and WH Smiths, amongst many others. These are great for a shopping trip, or even if you wanted part time work in the area. There also many, many discount stores, which come in handy living on a student budget!

For those art student essentials there are plenty of places and local businesses nearby to help you out. For art bits, paints, pens, binding and printing there's a local business called Ords just off York Road. This provides goods and services at really good prices and they offer student discount. There is also a large Staples store, in the retail park; this is great for printers and ink, handy for those essays and dissertation projects! If you're doing fashion or costume, there's a great local store called Linens. This has a wide range of fabrics cut to your demand, and ordered in if they don't have what you're looking for. They also have a vast arrangement of bits and bobs in their haberdashery, perfect for embellishments. They also provide a good student discount, and trust me from experience, close to the end of term, this comes in handy! There is also the Hartlepool Sewing Centre who can sell and repair your equipment in case you come into any trouble. There is also Hartlepool Library just next to the shopping centre, which has an excellent range of leisure reading material or reference books, great for essay research!

You also have leisure activities close by with the likes of the Vue cinema complex or Ten Pin Bowling, great for a night out with friends. There's also the Maritime Experience, which is a local museum that offers a historical insight into Hartlepool and the surrounding area. Here, there are lots of costumes, photography and things to do and see, a fun day outing close to home. Nearby to the museum is the Marina. It is a relatively new development and it's full of really nice restaurants and bars, serving an array of different food choices. There's Japanese, Chinese, Indian, Mexican, American, and Italian to name a few! The best thing I found coming from the South, was that everything (including food and drinks!) was so much cheaper in the North! So nights out with friends or group meals were definitely easier to afford.

On York Road and in and around Church Square, there are many pubs, bars and clubs, offering nights out for musical tastes ranging from R&B to hard metal music! These places are open till the early hours, providing plenty of time for a good night out with friends! Hartlepool also offers a mass of local takeaways as well as franchise takeaways, perfect after a night out! If you do fancy a bite on

the way home after a night out, you have to try a local dish called a 'Parmo'. Although the name isn't glamorous, it definitely does the job!

As Hartlepool is a coastal town, there is the benefit of having the beach pretty much on your doorstep! The Northeast coast is beautiful in places, and around Hartlepool the beaches are long and sandy. Don't go thinking they're particularly warm…as the water is pretty nippy! But they are great to visit for a winter walk, or to hang out with friends and have a beach BBQ during the summer. My friends and I had our fair share of those during my first two years at the uni.

For everyday food shopping and essentials you have a huge choice of supermarkets all within a 10-minute walk. You can choose between Morrisons, Asda, Tesco, Tesco Express, Sainsbury's Local or M&S if you wanted to push the boat out! The first two are next to the university, so less hassle if you've had a long day of lectures!

You also have the benefit of the train station being two minutes from the university and ten minutes from Hutton Halls. This provides quick and easy transport links to local cities like Newcastle, Middlesbrough and Sunderland. Or if you fancied a visit to somewhere new, York and Leeds are only short journeys away!

There is so much to see and do as a student in and around Hartlepool, apart from studying a course you'll love that is! I hope my page has helped you get an insight into just some of the things this Northern town has to offer!