



How to... Sleepout

Why do it?

Educating other people that thousands of people are destitute is key in building support for the campaign. By organising a Sleepout in your local area, you can help raise awareness about the issue amongst members of the local community, and even your local MP. You can use the Sleepout for raising money or just to distribute campaign materials.

What do I need to know?

There are many things to consider, such as location, permission, publicity, stewarding, first aid, toilets, shelter, appropriate clothing, food and drink. At the end of this briefing you will find a checklist of things to remember when organising your Sleepout.

Where should I organise the Sleepout?

Consider organising your Sleepout at a well known public meeting place, e.g. your students union, the town square, or outside an official building such as the central government regional office, civic centre, etc. You should also consider: everyone's personal safety, for example not hosting your Sleepout next to a busy road or near the loudest local pub; access to toilets and hand washing facilities; whether the location of the Sleepout is accessible for disabled participants.

Who should I inform?

If you are sleeping out on a university campus then we advise you to inform the university security, but if you are outside your university then contact the local police about what you're doing. You should also gain permission in advance from the owner of the site you intend to use. You should also contact the STAR national team for any advice and to help promote your event.

You could inform your MP of your Sleepout and of the reasons why you are doing it. Remember that although MPs are the main people we want to influence, you could also contact other people who have influence locally - for example local councillors, MEP's, business leaders, journalists, union leaders, barristers & solicitors, vicars, ministers, imams, rabbis.

Dealing with unwanted attention

While many people will be sympathetic, there may be negative responses to your action. Try not to get frustrated. Argue your point clearly and calmly. Be careful about contradicting what people tell you, it will make them resentful. And remember, if people are willing to engage with you then at least that's something. If someone becomes abusive, walk away – don't engage.

Contact the STAR national team:

Email: campaigns@star-network.org.uk

Phone: 020 7729 8880 ext.207

Checklist for Organising a Sleepout

Task	Date	Done
Contact us to tell us of your interest		
Agree a co-ordinator for your area; agree whether a telephone or email address can be given publicly		
Co-ordinate with other interested groups in your area who may be able to support the same Sleepout, e.g. Amnesty groups		
Hold a meeting to agree the best date and place		
Check who is legally responsible for the location of where you want to hold the Sleepout and consider whether they need to be informed		
Deliver local information to potential allies calling for volunteers for the Sleepout		
Create a list of expected participants that is updated and includes their contact details in case of changes to venue or schedule; it's very helpful to get a rough idea of numbers as early as possible. You will need to agree a policy about people under the age of 18 taking part.		
Create a list of "people of influence" who you can invite to attend the Sleepout or send messages of support. These could be MP's, politicians, faith leaders, etc.		
Consider weather protection and alternatives		
Agree who is responsible for organising contact with passing members of the public at the Sleepout; they will need supplies of publicity materials and may need to organise shifts of helpers		
Send an update to all participants confirming arrangements at least a few days before the Sleepout. Advise them not to bring items of personal value with them unless necessary.		
Arrange for stewards on a rota who will be responsible for keeping the Sleepout safe and enjoyable; one person at least should be awake at all times and responsible at that time. They should also take names and contact details of everyone joining the Sleepout. The lead steward should always have a fully charged mobile phone.		
Find out if any of the participants has received first aid training and ask them to bring along any necessary support material.		
Provide participants with information about the campaign.		
Ensure that all rubbish is removed in the morning		