



Destitution Summer Sleepout 2007

Sleepout to raise awareness of destitute refused asylum seekers - 22 June 2007

From 22 June 2007, Church Action on Poverty, Amnesty International, and the Refugee Council will be organising a nationwide Sleepout to highlight the scandal of destitution of people refused asylum.

Support the Sleepouts

We would like as many groups of people to Sleepout all around the country for a night on or soon after the 22 June. We encourage you to work together with other groups representing Amnesty International or the Refugee Council and other refugee groups and we will help to put you in touch with them if needed.

Why a Sleepout?

CAP, Amnesty International, and the Refugee Council are all supporters of the **Still Human Still Here** campaign which is dedicated to highlighting the plight of tens of thousands of people refused asylum who are being forced into abject poverty including homelessness in an attempt to drive them out of the country. We believe this is immoral and besides it is ineffective. Not many people know about this issue, so by organising a Sleepout in your local area, you can help raise awareness about the issue amongst members of the local community, the local media and your local MP. For more background information on this issue and the campaign go to:

- www.stillhuman.org.uk
- www.church-poverty.org.uk/campaigns/
- www.amnesty.org.uk/asylum
- www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/justfair

Why now?

Refugee Week (18-24 June) is a time for celebrating the contribution of refugees to the UK. It is also a time when the spotlight is turned to refugee and asylum issues and it is important to remember after the celebrating that we should also focus on this serious and urgent issue. The date is flexible, so if the 22 June clashes with another event you are involved with as part of Refugee Week, please organise your Sleepout at a later date. We want them all to take place within 2 weeks after the 22nd.

stillhumanstillhere
The campaign to end destitution of refused asylum seekers



What do I need to know?

There are many things to consider when organising your Sleepout, these include location, stewarding, permission, publicity, media, first aid, toilets, shelter, appropriate clothing, food and drink.

There is a separate 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, eg town square, or outside an official building such as central government regional office, civic centre, Home Office building etc or alternatively consider other places where refused asylum sleepers may be found – phone boxes, parks, bus stops, railway stations, etc.

You need to consider everyone's personal safety; for example not hosting your Sleepout next to a busy road or near the loudest local pub. You also need to consider, where possible, access to toilets and had washing facilities. You should consider whether the location of the Sleepout is accessible for disabled participants.

Dealing with unwanted attention

Have the courage of your convictions! While many people will be sympathetic, there may be negative response to your action. Don't contradict 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.

Who should I inform?

We advise you to inform the local police of the date of your Sleepout and you should also gain permission in advance from the owner of the site you intend to use.

If possible, please let us know if you are organising a Sleepout by 15 May by emailing livingghosts@church-poverty.org.uk or ringing 0161 2369321.

You MP should know about your Sleepout and of the reasons why you are doing it. Why not encourage them to come down and meet you?

Remember that although MPs are the main people we want to influence, you could also contact other people locally who have influence - for example local councillors, MEP's, business leaders, journalists, union leaders, barristers & solicitors, priests, church ministers, imams, rabbis, etc.



Likewise if you know of any local celebrities you could encourage them to join you at your Sleepout or send a message of support. This would certainly help with generating local media attention.

Media

Contacting your local media is a great way to promote your Sleepout and to raise awareness to the issue of destitution of refused asylum seekers.

There will be a template press release available soon to send to your local newspapers, radio stations and TV. ***Please let us know if you are organising a Sleepout and we will send you a local media pack.***

Sponsorship

Making your Sleepout a sponsored event is a great way to generate extra interest in the issue and at the same time raise some money for Church Action on Poverty or a local project working with destitute people refused asylum. You can download copies from www.church-poverty.org.uk/sleepout For reasons of safety, we don't recommend you collect money during the Sleepout itself.

You are not on your own!

Remember the Sleepout will be a national event, so you will not be alone. We will be putting as many details as possible about the Sleepouts on our website. We will get more information about this to organisers. Whilst you are choosing to Sleepout for one night, thousands of refused asylum seekers will not have such a choice.

Next steps

Please let us know as soon as possible if you are organising a Sleepout. It is important you are in touch with us, so that we can send you any additional support materials, updated information and a local media pack.

After the Sleepout

It would be great to hear how your Sleepout went, so please email your experiences to livingghosts@church-poverty.org.uk. Don't forget to take photos of your Sleepout and send them to us.

Contact us

Contact us on 0161 236 9321 or email livingghosts@church-poverty.org.uk. Church Action on Poverty, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JT