

YOUR GUIDE TO HOSTING YOUR OWN



Everything you need to organise your own sleepout, to help protect children at risk across India, Tanzania, and here in the UK.

Assemble your group of friends, family, or coworkers – whether in a school hall or your back garden – to take on the challenge of giving up your bed for one night to help change a child's future.



ABOUT RAILWAY CHILDREN

We believe no child should have to live on the streets.

We work across India, Tanzania and the UK to protect children who find themselves on the streets because there is nowhere else to go, and nobody left to turn to.

For children who run away or are forced to leave homes through poverty, violence, abuse and neglect, the danger they face on the streets is often far worse.

We work every day to ensure we reach children before an abuser can.

TOGETHER, WE CAN GIVE EVERY CHILD A SAFER, BRIGHTER FUTURE.



CASE STUDY

We met Zoe after British Transport Police found her, aged 14, at the side of the railway tracks thinking of ending her life. She was experiencing poor mental health, depression and anxiety. There was no quick fix, but we are committed to being there for as long as a child needs us. We worked with Zoe and her family, helping her develop the tools she needed to cope with her challenges, return to school and look forward to a happier future.

WHAT IS A SLEEPOUT?

A sleepout is simply giving up your bed for a night to raise money for children at risk around the world.

Hosting your own sleepout is an opportunity to make a difference to children's lives all around the world – with the flexibility of organising it wherever you like! Whether it be in your back garden, school hall, or community centre; hosting your own sleepout means everyone can get involved.

We know this event does not replicate the situations faced by the children we work with, however the awareness you raise means we can make a difference together – and it's a great way of bringing local communities together to spread the word. **Are you in?**

CHOOSE A VENUE

You can hold your sleepout wherever you like! Here are a few ideas;

- local church
- school hall
- community centre
- back garden (get your whole street to join in!)
- workplace



Here's a few top tips to think about when picking your venue

- Provide access to toilets.
- If you're hosting your sleepout outdoors, have access to a covered area to feel safe and protected from the elements.
- Choose somewhere that can be barriered off from the public, for participants' safety.
- Always get permission from the venue or landowners!
- Speak to your local council and police to check if you need any licences of approval for sleeping in public, collecting money or hosting a charity event.

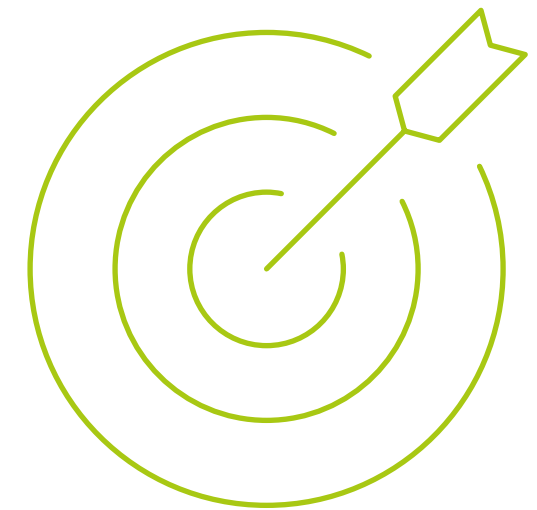
PICK A DATE

We recommend you start planning your sleepout six months in advance.

This will ensure any permissions are in place, and you can start recruiting sleepers three months before*.

Remember! Make sure your date doesn't clash with any major local events or holidays.

* If your sleep out involves children more stringent safeguarding permissions will be needed.



TIME TO GET ORGANISING

- **Set up an organising team** – recruiting a few friends or colleagues to help with your organising not only shares the load, but helps you reach out to more people's networks to invite them to join in.
- **Get in touch with us** – drop us an email on hello@railwaychildren.org.uk or call us on **01270 757 596** to let us know your sleepout details. We can send you posters, sponsor forms, fundraising buckets etc.
- **Health and safety** – as the organiser, it's your responsibility to ensure the safety of those taking part in the sleepout. Think about risks, accidents or legal issues and complete a risk assessment for the event, even if you know the venue well. We advise you collate a simple registration sheet to check your participants in if you are at an external venue.
- **Entertainment** – it's entirely up to you how the entertainment of the night goes. You may opt for a digital detox and ban phones and technology for the night in place of card games or a quiz night. Whatever works for you!
- **Food and drink** – we recommend asking participants to bring food and snacks with them for the evening. You may also wish to provide something for supper and breakfast. We recommend providing a space for hot drinks in case it gets cold in the night.
- **First aid and security** – you will need a qualified first aider and first aid kit at your event. We recommend having exclusive use of your sleepout venue/area to ensure the safety of participants. Someone, or a small group of people, should stay awake (you could take it in turns) to ensure everyone is safe during the night. Railway Children does not take any responsibility for safety and legal issues for third party fundraising events.
- **Kit list** – participants will need a sleeping bag, a pillow, warm clothes (we recommend layers) and a mobile phone to share their experience and raise more awareness and funds throughout the event. Don't forget to tell your participants to bring portable charging packs to avoid difficulties with plug sockets and electrical testing.
- **Weather** – if you're planning outdoor activities make sure you have a suitable indoor venue as a back-up in case of bad weather.
- **Setting up and packing down** – give yourself plenty of time to set up at your venue. Once you are set up, share some fun photos on your socials to prompt people to donate!
- **Including children** – if children are taking part in your event make sure you have signed permission from a parent or carer and there are appropriate levels of supervision which includes staying away throughout the night. We also recommend a designated safeguarding lead on the night as someone who is trained and knows how to respond if there is a concern.



GATHERING PARTICIPANTS

- **Organising team:** get your organising committee to spread the word among friends, family and colleagues to get participants signed up.
- **Local community:** put a poster up in areas such as libraries, coffee shops and shop windows to help spread the word.
- **Create a community:** why not create a WhatsApp or Facebook group and invite those you know to help spread word of the event and keep people updated on plans?
- **Social media:** the best way to spread the word is share, share, share! Share requests for people to sign up, share updates on how many days until the big day, share your fundraising page asking for donations, etc.
- **Ongoing updates:** once participants have signed up, keep in touch – see how their fundraising is going, check if they have any questions or concerns, let them know what they need for the big day. This will help encourage them to share what they are doing with others and continue to raise money and awareness.



CASE STUDY



Neeraj spent seven years lost and alone on the streets, after going out for groceries and taking a wrong turn. Aged just seven, he became completely lost and ended up working in a hotel for 18 hours a day in return for scraps of food and a floor to sleep on.

Finally, aged 14, he escaped from the hotel and found his way to Ghaziabad railway station in India, where our teams were working to protect children just like him. Neeraj was desperate to find his family but remembered very little about them.

Our teams persisted, circulating his photo and details to the local villages until they were contacted by the local police force who had heard about a family who had lost their son seven years earlier.

The family were thrilled to be reunited and Neeraj is now safe and thriving back at home.

FUNDRAISING

Every penny you raise through your sleepout will change children's lives around the world.



£100

could pay for four hours of one-to-one support for a vulnerable child in the UK when they need it most.



£500

could pay for an outreach worker in Tanzania to search the streets and bus stations for a month looking for and protecting children at risk.



£1000

could keep one of our 24-hour Child Help Desks in India running for seven weeks, protecting children arriving scared and alone at stations.

FUNDRAISING SUPPORT

We can provide you with posters, sponsorship forms, example kit lists and information about the charity to help you and your participants fundraise.

ONLINE FUNDRAISING

We recommend using JustGiving to set up an online fundraising page – it makes it quick and easy for both you and the people sponsoring you, it's easy to share across social media, and donations come directly to us at Railway Children, so banking your funds raised is easier than ever. You can set up a page here: <https://www.justgiving.com/railwaychildren>

Set your participants a fundraising target per person – we recommend £100.

Keep up the momentum and encourage participants to share on their social media platforms, with a link to the fundraising page. Encourage participants to think about milestone posts when they hit the halfway mark; and most importantly when they smash their target!

WE'RE HERE TO HELP !

Please get in touch with us at hello@railwaychildren.org.uk or call **01270 757 596** if you have any questions, need any extra fundraising materials etc.

We love hearing your fundraising stories and celebrating your amazing achievements. Don't forget to tag us on social media [@railwaychildren](https://www.instagram.com/railwaychildren) so we can give you a shout-out!

AND GOOD LUCK!

Railway Children

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Registered charity number 1058991

Wherever possible we gained consent of the children pictured in accordance with our child protection policy. Names have been changed and models used to protect identities. Your donations will transform the lives of children in Tanzania, India and the UK - wherever the need is greatest.

children RAILWAY
No child lost to the streets