

## Media Release



Jan 4, 2018

### Cambridge residents make New Years' resolution to sleep out in freezing conditions

No one should have to sleep rough in winter, but local residents have resolved to sleep rough in potentially freezing conditions to tackle homelessness this New Year.

While homelessness skyrockets in Cambridge, in Calais in around Northern France another ~1,000 refugees are sleeping rough. Homeless individuals in both Cambridge and Calais face similar barriers in their lives from the day to day struggles of sleeping rough in the worst months of Winter and the issue of stigmatisation for being homeless.

The Cambridge Convoy Refugee Action Group (CamCrag) and Wintercomfort for the Homeless (Wintercomfort), in cooperation with the Cambridge Churches Homelessness Project, are hosting **The Big Cambridge Calais Sleepout: A Tale of Homelessness in Two Cities**. The event, to be held on Homeless Sunday, 28 January at St Giles Church, Cambridge, from 4pm, will raise awareness and aid for refugees and homeless in Cambridge and Calais.

Volunteers from multiple faiths and non-faiths including Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews and Humanists have already come forward, and the organisers are calling for further volunteers to make it their New Year's resolution to tackle homelessness in 2018.

Wintercomfort's fundraiser, Simon Pickering said: "Our volunteers are going to be giving up their warm beds to brave the cold sleeping outside. While it will certainly be an unpleasant experience, especially if the temperature plummets, they will be able to go home the next day. But, for refugees and the homeless in our city this isn't an option."

Elliot Harris, chair of CamCrag, said: "We are seeing rising homelessness and increasingly wretched conditions for the homeless, whether local rough sleepers or refugees abroad. Many people are alarmed and upset by the scale of the problem, but feel helpless. We're offering a variety of ways to make a difference in 2018, from sleeping out in potentially sub-zero temperatures on Homeless Sunday (or sponsoring someone to do so) to donating money or aid, or signing up to help out throughout the year in a variety of ways. We encourage everyone to make their resolution now."

As well as or instead of signing up to sleep rough at the sleepout, residents can join the events team, help with a soup kitchen, sponsor a sleeper, or sign up to participate in a satellite activity later in the year such as making a "Sea of Tents" – open spaced filled with unoccupied tents symbolising the problem of homelessness. (See our "ways to help" below).

For details about the event, visit [www.camcrag.org.uk/sleepout](http://www.camcrag.org.uk/sleepout)

## **Four ways you can resolve to do something about homelessness in 2018**

- 1) Attend the Big Cambridge Calais Sleepout launch event on Homeless Sunday, 28 January at St Giles Church, Cambridge, from 4pm. Get a free ticket at: <https://2citiessleepout.eventbrite.co.uk>
- 2) Volunteer to sleep rough, or otherwise help with the Big Cambridge Calais Sleepout. Find out more or sign up at [www.camcrag.org.uk/sleepout](http://www.camcrag.org.uk/sleepout).
- 3) Sponsor one or all of our rough sleepers here <https://mydonate.bt.com/events/2citiessleepout/453504>.
- 4) Find out more about helping out with a satellite event later in the year such as the “Sea of Tents” and register your interest [www.camcrag.org.uk/sleepout](http://www.camcrag.org.uk/sleepout).

**- Ends -**

### **Notes for the editor**

Contact

For further information and to request an interview please email [camb4calaispublicity@gmail.com](mailto:camb4calaispublicity@gmail.com)

### **CamCrag - Cambridge Convoy Refugee Action Group**

Formed in the summer of 2015, Cambridge Convoy Refugee Action Group is a group of people who live in and around Cambridge working to help the refugees living Northern France and further afield. Our aim is to raise awareness of the situation, send volunteer aid convoys, fundraise and organise donations of clothing and other items. We are a registered charity. [www.camcrag.org.uk](http://www.camcrag.org.uk)

### **Wintercomfort for the homeless**

Wintercomfort provides vital welfare services, learning and development, volunteering and employment opportunities, for homeless and vulnerably housed people in Cambridgeshire. The centre is open 7 days a week (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 3.30pm. Saturday and Sunday 8.30 – 12.00 offering breakfast, showers and laundry facilities as well as providing a wide programme of activities, information, advice and support. [www.wintercomfort.org.uk](http://www.wintercomfort.org.uk)  
[simonpickering@wintercomfort.org.uk](mailto:simonpickering@wintercomfort.org.uk)