

## Press Release

### **The Brewery Sleepout 2021** Making Homelessness In Romford History

- The Brewery Sleepout 2021 will support homeless charities, Ahava Community and Zarach.
- In 2019, The Brewery raised over £10k for charity from its community Sleepout event.
- Nearly half (44%) of all people sleeping rough in the UK on a single night in autumn are in London and the South East.

**29th October 2021:** The management team and retailers from The Brewery, Romford's retail and leisure complex, will come together for one night in late November to experience what it is like to sleep out on the streets. Donations can be made through the dedicated Just Giving Page <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/brewery-sleepout>

The aim of The Brewery Sleepout 2021 is to raise awareness of those less fortunate, who sleep every night on the streets. On any given night, tens of thousands of families and individuals are experiencing homelessness across Great Britain. The longer someone experiences rough sleeping the more likely they are to face challenges around trauma, mental health and drug misuse. Nearly half of all people sleeping rough in the UK on a single night in Autumn are those in London and the South East of England.

With furlough measures ending, evictions looming and the cost of heating rising, many households are struggling to keep hold of their properties. Charities have also been hit with fundraising activities on hold for almost two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Data shows that there has been an increase in homelessness within Havering and the event and funds raised will be donated to Romford based charity, [Ahava Community](#), formally the Hope4Havering charity and Charity [Zarach](#) who deliver beds and basics to children in poverty.

Ahava Community works tirelessly to help and support the local homeless people by providing shelter and offering transformation programmes, which helps to mentor vulnerable individuals with the main philosophy being 'Rescue. Revive. Renew.'. The charity has recently extended beyond Romford to cover areas including Harlow and Dartford in Kent.

Kim Merry, founder of Ahava Community explains: *"The public see the rough sleepers on the high street but don't see the many riding on buses, sleeping behind stairwells or hidden in the parks. Homeless people are of all ages and from all social demographics. We can have a manager who has overseen 200 people sleeping on the streets alongside a young person who has had a disagreement with their parents, or has no parents at all."*

Zarach is a charity committed to helping children and families who are living in poverty. Active in both schools and the community, they have witnessed a surge in requests for help in the latest lockdown, many from affluent areas. This year, to further raise awareness of homelessness among families, we are looking to encourage local schools to support the cause with their own sponsored events.

It is the second year that The Brewery has supported local charities to raise awareness of homelessness and raise essential funds to help combat homelessness. The last Brewery Sleepout in 2019 raised over £10k for the charity and is aiming to exceed this target in 2021.

Please view the 2019 Sleepout video here: [The Brewery Sleepout - YouTube](#)

Tom Stobbart, manager of The Brewery explains:

*“Remember that homelessness is not just the person sitting on the floor, it could be the person sitting next to you in the library or in the queue in front of you at the post office. If a person is carrying a large number of bags and still in the same position when you have walked past they may be in need. Speak to them and recommend going to the PASC to get a referral or the Salvation Army for something to eat. This problem won’t go away overnight, but maybe us helping to raise money to support charities that are working hard to solve the problem can make a difference. Our previous Sleepout raised over £10k, we’ve got our sights on raising even more this year.”*

On the evening of the sleepout, key speakers will share their personal experiences of being homeless and how they rebuilt their lives on the day of the event. Tom adds:

*“When we think about homelessness, we envisage people sleeping rough on the streets. But this serious issue extends far beyond that. It could be a young person forced to live in sheltered accommodation while studying hard for a degree, or a mum forced to flee from her home as a result of domestic abuse and living in a temporary bed and breakfast with her children. We may be a retail complex, but community is a large part of our ethos. We believe that by hosting this event, we’ll begin to break the stereotype of homelessness and show it can affect everyone. Just because you have somewhere to sleep, it doesn’t mean you have a home”.*

The overnight sleepout is a Brewery management-only activity, but the entire Romford community can easily get involved. Those families wishing to support can donate food and useful kitchen items to [Hope4Havering](#) in the centre. Alternatively, donations can be made through the dedicated Crowdfunder page <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/brewery-sleepout> and merchandise can be purchased from the Hope4Havering shop at The Brewery Shopping Centre.

All fundraising will be split between Ahava Community (75%) and Zarach (25%). With additional funds, these dedicated charities will be able to help even more rough sleepers in Romford and beyond.

#### The Stats:

- 160,000 homeless households in Britain (Crisis, the national charity for homeless people)
- Every year over 100,000 young people aged 16-24 ask councils in the UK for help with homelessness. (Centrepoin)
- In the last three years, over half of state school teachers in Britain (56%) have worked at a school with children who were homeless or became homeless. (Report by Shelter and YouGov 2020)
- Nearly half (44%) of all people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn are in London and the South East. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2020/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2020>
- To date, Ahava Community has helped **1,814** people, provided **94,747** beds and housed **657** people in Havering.
- Charity Zarach has 200 partner schools in their referral network, they receive up to 20 referrals a week and to date have delivered **1,200** bed bundles.

The Brewery logo, featuring the word "The Brewery" in white text on a black rectangular background. The word "The" is smaller and positioned above "Brewery".

**Ends**

**For more information, or to secure a press pass for the sleepout event contact:  
[events@onbrand.co.uk](mailto:events@onbrand.co.uk) so we can arrange a press pass for you.**

There will be a dedicated media zone on the night and you will have the opportunity to interview Kim Merry (Co-founder and CEO of Ahava Community) and Tom Stobbart (Manager of The Brewery).