



**12th August 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Children's charity SAFE@LAST's BIG Sleepout event returns this year for a third time and promises to be bigger and better than before. Staff and volunteers from the charity will be in Barnsley this Saturday 15th August calling for people to sign up to take part in the event.

The BIG Sleepout will be held at Parkgate Shopping Rotherham on Friday October 23rd. The event aims to raise funds and awareness for the children affected by running away. It is reported that around 100,000 children and young people run away from home each year with a quarter of these feeling that they have no alternative but to sleep rough.

Last year the BIG Sleepout saw nearly 200 supporters sleep rough on the tarmac at Parkgate shopping for one night. Supporters braved freezing temperatures with minimal comforts to get a small taste of what sleeping rough might be like for a young runaway. Last year's event raised a staggering £14,000 to support SAFE@LAST in delivering its vital services for vulnerable young people. SAFE@LAST provides services across South Yorkshire including Barnsley and which include work in schools, a helpline, ongoing support and an emergency refuge.

Hilary Massarella, SAFE@LAST founder trustee said "We are very excited that the BIG Sleepout is returning for another year. This event seems to get better each time and we are pulling out all the stops to ensure that this is the best one yet. We hope to beat last years targets in terms of those taking part and the amount the event raises. SAFE@LAST's work is significantly supported by funds raised from events such as these and as the credit crunch continues the demand for our services only increases. With around 1 in 9 children running away from home everyone will have a child in their lives affected by this phenomenon. I'm asking everyone to do what they can to make sure this event is the success we know it can be and to make a real difference to children in our area".

To sign up for the BIG Sleepout people can attend the sign up event at the Priory Campus Summer Fayre on Saturday 15th August between or call 01909 566977 or visit www.safeatlast.org.uk.

Ends

Editors notes

- SAFE@LAST is a registered charity working with young people who have run away from, or have been thrown out of, the place where they usually live.
- SAFE@LAST provides services for the 1 in 9 children in South Yorkshire who run away from home or care. SAFE@LAST provides preventative work, a 24 hour helpline (0800 335 SAFE), a MISPER (Missing Persons) Scheme and an emergency refuge for young people who are 16 and under. SAFE@LAST receives very little statutory income and the majority of its services are reliant on the generosity of charitable trusts and individuals.
- Young People that need help can contact SAFE@LAST on their 24hour helpline by calling 0800 335 SAFE.

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