

# Shine

# Light

**Community Sleep Out**  
**Host Your Own Guide**

**FOCUS**  
Ireland



Bord Gáis  
Energy

Proudly supported by Bord Gáis Energy

# Welcome to Shine A Light!



Welcome on board and thank you for participating in Shine A Light for Focus Ireland, proudly supported by Board Gáis Energy.

This guide will provide you with information on hosting your own Sleep Out and an overview of how your participation will help support those experiencing homelessness in Ireland.

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# Why do we need your support?



## What is Shine A Light?

This Friday, October 10, Focus Ireland and Bord Gáis Energy are calling on all schools, communities, workplaces, and business leaders to join the nationwide Sleep Out against homelessness.

The community sleep out aims to inspire people to take action, raise funds for crucial homeless services, and foster empathy for thousands of people in Ireland experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

Together with Bord Gáis Energy, and your amazing fundraising, we aim to raise €1.2 million to support the thousands of people experiencing homelessness in Ireland.

## What is the Community Sleep Out?

A Community Sleep Out can take different shapes and forms, just as a community does. It is a powerful event where people from all walks of life come together to raise awareness and funds for homelessness. It's a night spent outdoors in solidarity with those who don't have a safe place to call home. No matter how you choose to participate, you can be part of Shine A Light.

## Solo or Squad

We offer flexible options to make participation accessible: take on the challenge individually, or gather your friends and family together, or organise your own event. Do it your own way - it is an experience for everyone, and all your collective efforts will have a lasting impact on those who need it most.



## Who can take part?

Everyone can take part - individual or with a group such as:

- Individuals
- Families
- Friends
- Colleges
- Universities
- Associations
- Church groups
- Social Clubs
- Sport Clubs



# The Sleep Out: Why, Where and When



## Why host a Community Sleep Out?

The statistics around homelessness are staggering. With over 4,000 children experiencing homelessness, it's clear we need to take action.

The Community Sleep Out encourages responsible individuals and groups to take action, raise funds for crucial homeless services, and foster empathy for thousands of people in Ireland without a safe and secure home.

This is an opportunity for you to take part in the nationwide Sleep Out against homelessness.

## When is it?

Shine A Light will be taking place nationwide on 10 October. We encourage everyone to join us on the same day for bigger impact but you are welcome to adapt to your needs.

## Where can we sleep?

Choose somewhere safe and secure, for example, your local club, church carpark, or even in your own home or garden. All that we ask is that you step out of the comfort of your own bed for one night. Make sure that you have permission to organise your sleep out at your chosen location venue.

# Fundraising



## Why Fundraise?

**Homelessness affects real people;** men, women, children, families, young people, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Focus Ireland is driven by the fundamental belief that **homelessness is wrong.**

We work to prevent homelessness and find sustainable long-term solutions to help people leave homelessness forever. Your generous fundraising directly support our mission.

## Need support?

Not sure where to start or want a extra boost of creativity to take your fundraising to next level? We've got you covered. We prepared a compilation of the best **Tips for Fundraising** and once you have registered, you will have access to lots of resources to help you.

## Latest Homeless Figures\*

**15,500+** people  
are currently in  
**homelessness in Ireland\***

\*Latest figures are correct as of April 2025. Please visit the Focus Ireland website for updated figures: [www.focusireland.ie](http://www.focusireland.ie)





# Sleep out options for a Community Sleep Out



## Solo

Thinking of taking the plunge and doing the Community Sleep Out solo? Amazing! It's a powerful way to raise awareness and push your boundaries for a great cause. Remember to inform a trusted friend or family member about your plans and location.

## Friends & Family

Gather your loved ones for a night of solidarity and awareness. Set up in your garden - or even indoors - your living room floor is a perfect spot! Use this opportunity to share stories, play games, and raise awareness together. This is also a great way to introduce the concept of homelessness and encourage empathy if you have children.

## Host your own event

Clubs, sports teams, or any group you're part of can organise a large-scale sleep out event. Secure a spacious outdoor area like a community centre, sports club or church car park (with permission) to accommodate participants. Form a Sleep Out Committee and recruit other participants to support the planning and delivery. Plan engaging activities throughout the night - guest speakers, movie screenings, or fundraising games can keep everyone motivated.



# Organising your own Sleep Out Event



## Be Prepared

- **Sleep Out area:** Do not sleep out in a public place. Consider your own home, garden or venues where you can get permission from the owner/management.
- **Gear:** Choose a sleeping bag and sleeping mat that are appropriate for the weather conditions.
- **Warmth:** Pack layers of clothing you can easily adjust to changing temperatures. Don't forget a hat, gloves, and warm socks.
- **Light:** Bring a headlamp or flashlight for nighttime visibility.
- **Comfort Essentials:** Pack all the items and spare clothing you may need. Check out our packing list over in the website.
- **Health & Safety:** Pack a first-aid kit with all the essentials, and any medication you may use.
- **Emergency Shelter:** Plan a place or shelter you can use in the event of poor weather.
- **Plan your activities:** We have some suggestions for [activities to do during the sleep out](#), but you can tailor it so it better fits your interests and the overall theme of the night.

### Extra precaution for a solo sleep out:

- **Emergency Contact:** Inform a close friend or family member of your sleep out plans including location and times.

## On the night

- **Sleep out area:** You should only choose a sleep out area which is safe, secure and accessible to facilities/shelter. Please do not sleep in a public place.
- **Health & safety:** Please use your own judgement as your wellbeing is the most important factor. **You should not feel cold during the night** - if you are, you may need additional warm layers, or you may need to return indoors.
- **Listen to your body:** if you feel unwell, please return indoors.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water throughout the event, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- **Food:** Pack nutritious and easy-to-prepare meals and snacks.

## Recommendations

For additional warmth, comfort and protection from wind and rain, consider buying a survival bag (a large orange bag to cover yourself and your sleeping bag), and an emergency foil blanket.

## Further Information

Please read page 11 which outlines ideas for activities during your sleep out, and you can find more information on the [FAQ](#) page to common questions about the sleep out.

# Organising a Sleep Out: Event Plan Example



Time	Activity	Who	Materials Needed
5:30-6pm	Set up registration table, cardboard, first aid station, dinner/breakfast area, sleeping area, presentation area, any activities.	Sleep Out Committee	Pen Registration form Cardboard First aid kit Cutlery, plates, etc. Projector Speaker Extension lead
6-6:30pm	Final event briefing to go over plans for the night.	Sleep Out Committee	-
6:30-7pm	<b>The event starts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants arrive;</li> <li>• Registration;</li> <li>• Collection of sleeping material;</li> <li>• Setting up of materials and belongings;</li> <li>• Introduction and going over event plan;</li> </ul>	Participants Sleep Out Committee	-
7-7:30pm	Dinner is served. Allow time for eating dinner and mingling	Sleep Out Committee	Prepared food/catering
7:30- 8pm	<b>Shine A Light Online Programme</b> Online videos including talks from Focus Ireland staff, our sponsors Bord Gáis Energy, and customers with lived experience of homelessness.	Participants Sleep Out Committee	Projector Speakers  Note: The <a href="#">Shine A Light online programme</a> will be made live on the morning of Friday 10 October.

Continued on next page



# Organising a Sleep Out: Event Plan Example



Time	Activity	Who	Materials Needed
8-8.30pm	<b>Dedicated social media time</b> Remind your team that the sleep out is a critical time to raise funds so share their activity on social media with a link to your team fundraising page and ask for donations!	Participants Sleep Out Committee	
8-10pm	<b>Activities</b> Opportunity to run an activity for participants to help deepen their understanding of homelessness. Come up with your own activity or use one of our suggestions on page 8.	Participants Sleep Out Committee	Activities materials
10-10:30pm	Time to get ready for bed.  <b>Social media reminder - Share an update with supporters and continue to ask for donations.</b>	Participants Sleep Out Committee	-
10:30pm-6am	Lights out and sleep.	Participants Sleep Out Committee	-
6-7am	Wake up and Breakfast.	Participants Sleep Out Committee	Prepared food/Catering
7am	Pack up belongings and leave for home.  <b>Social media reminder - Share an update with supporters that your team have completed the sleep out and continue to ask for donations.</b>	Participants Sleep Out Committee	
7-7.30am	Tidy up	Sleep Out Committee	

# Activities during the Sleep Out



## Shine A Light Online Programme

Going live on Friday, October 10, Focus Ireland will be broadcasting videos featuring Focus Ireland staff and customers, as well as Bord Gáis Energy Staff, providing insights into the impact of your fundraising efforts.

## Quiz Night

Host a quiz to test your team's general knowledge. In addition to your own awesome trivia questions, add a special 'Shine A Light' round dedicated to raising awareness about homelessness.

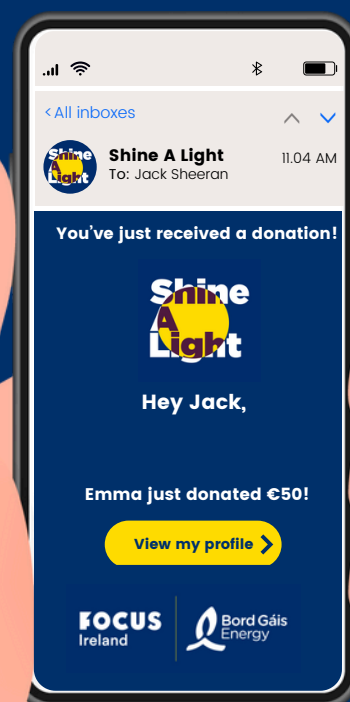
## Watch A Movie

Movies can spark important conversations and raise awareness about homelessness. Here are some recommendations that can set the tone for reflection and empathy:

- Rosie;
- Pursuit of Happyness;
- The Soloist;
- Timeout of mind.

## Social Media

The event day is a prime opportunity to secure donations. Share live updates during the sleep out event and ask your supporters to continue donating throughout the night. Take photos of your team setting up their sleep out area, enjoying activities, getting ready for lights out, and most importantly, keep sharing your fundraising pages to encourage donations.



# Risk Assessment



This is a template risk assessment which you may tailor to your particular venue and requirements. A risk assessment aims to identify potential hazards associated with the Sleep Out event, assess the likelihood and severity of those hazards, and implement control measures to minimize risks to participants.

What hazards are present or may be generated?	Who is affected or exposed to hazards?	What is the potential severity of harm?	What precautions are in place to either eliminate or reduce the risk of an accident happening	What is the likelihood of harm occurring?	What is the risk rating?
<b>Unsafe sleep out locations</b>	Participants	Serious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants will not be sleeping in public spaces;</li> <li>There will be a designated area for the sleep out;</li> <li>The sleep out area will be inspected for potential hazards.</li> </ul>	Improbable	Low Risk
<b>Hypothermia</b>	Participants, staff & volunteers	Serious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants will be advised to wear appropriate clothing and bring adequate supplies for all types of weather;</li> <li>A health &amp; safety briefing will be delivered to participants.</li> <li>Organisers will monitor well-being of participants.</li> <li>Participants will return indoors, and will receive medical attention if required.</li> </ul>	Possible	Low Risk
<b>Fall, trip, or slip</b>	Participants, staff & volunteers	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The event area will be checked for litter and any hazards immediately before, during and after, the event;</li> <li>All participants will be advised to take extra care if it has been raining.</li> <li>encourage participants to keep belongings organised.</li> </ul>	Possible	Low Risk



# Shine A Light

## Risk Assessment



What hazards are present or may be generated?	Who is affected or exposed to hazards?	What is the potential severity of harm?	What precautions are in place to either eliminate or reduce the risk of an accident happening	What is the likelihood of harm occurring?	What is the risk rating?
<b>Inaccessible venue</b>	Participants, staff & volunteers	Serious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure access points are in place for those with a disability.</li> </ul>	Improbable	Low Risk
<b>Fire</b>	Participants, staff & volunteers	Serious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prohibit open flames, designate smoking areas, have fire extinguishers readily available.</li> </ul>	Improbable	Low Risk
<b>Medical emergencies Allergic reactions, injuries</b>	Participants, staff & volunteers	Serious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a first-aid kit readily available, identify a designated person with basic first-aid training.</li> <li>Organisers to call emergency services if required.</li> <li>Participants will be asked to share any allergy information prior to the event.</li> </ul>	Improbable	Low Risk
<b>Security: Theft of personal belongings</b>	Participants, staff & volunteers	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage participants to bring minimal valuables, designate a secure area for valuables if needed.</li> </ul>	Improbable	Low Risk

# Thank You & Further Support



## Fundraising Dashboard

When you sign up to Shine A Light, a fundraising page will be created for you. On your fundraising dashboard, you will have access to a QR code poster, social media guide, fundraising tips, email & social media templates, and more.

## Didn't find what you were looking for?

Have you tried looking through the downloadable resources on our website?

**[shinealight.focusireland.ie](https://shinealight.focusireland.ie)**

We also have a list of FAQs that might be able to answer your question.

If you still haven't found the answer to your question, please feel free to get in touch with our team:

**[shinealight@focusireland.ie](mailto:shinealight@focusireland.ie)**

or call the Focus Ireland team on:

**01 881 5900**



# Thank You!