

Team Broadland The Benjamin Foundation Sleepout



The Benjamin Foundation



2:47am, Saturday 18 November 2017

Lying on a sheet of cardboard, 'cocooned' in a sleeping bag, encased in what really was a large paper bag with the 'Sleepout' logo across it, on the tarmac of the EDP car park in Norwich with 125 other people, does not begin to equate to the real life of those who confront being homeless daily and alone.

Fighting off the cold, with the sounds of a Friday night (police sirens, a distant argument, noisy revellers making their way home) echoing across the tarmac is a sobering experience, even when you're in a safe, sterile environment. Again, any lack of comfort you personally experience pales into insignificance when you realise that those who have this as their real world don't have the luxury of getting up and heading home to central heating, food, hot water and loved ones.

But, by being among nearly 125 people in Norwich (and part of 2,300 altogether supporting the Benjamin Foundation's Sleepout campaign in November), 5 colleagues from Broadland Housing have been able to shine a very small light on the work of this charity and their role in the national End Youth Homelessness campaign. Through our efforts we've also been able to highlight to friends and family what life is like for far too many people and, more importantly, raise funds for TBF and their work.

Next week sees start of our Tenancy Support Team's 'Better Together Week'. It was at the start of the planning stages in the spring that we became aware of the TBF Sleepout and felt that this would be a positive event to launch our own campaign to combat loneliness.

3 members of the TS Team (Sarah Cook, Jess Kent and Kevin Gee) signed up to take part in the Sleepout and were subsequently supported and joined by Sophie Wiles (HR) & Daniel Nolan (ESO).

We set ourselves a fundraising target of £500, not only to support the incredible work of TBF but also to raise awareness of homelessness in our society, and the impact of isolation and being alone. We have nearly doubled our target figure, so we wish to say a big thank you to all those who have donated so far.

Finally, lying on the tarmac unable to sleep, looking at the black night sky and trying to remember the names of the constellations above, you realise just how small and insignificant we are as individuals. It's good to know that people coming together can and do have the opportunity to make a difference.



