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PRESS RELEASE

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Economic downturn spurs LSE students to sleep on the streets for homeless charity

As temperatures start to drop tonight, more than 40 students will know what it is like to be homeless.

The students from London's School of Economics will endure eight hours on the street as part of a campaign run by the Student Union's Islamic Society. The aim is to raise awareness for the issue of homelessness along with funds for East London homeless charity Anchor House.

Kawsar Zaman, 21, a final year LSE law student and one of the key organisers behind the campaign said the 'Sleep Out' is a campaign devised collectively to bring the issue of homelessness right to the forefront of the student and academic community at the LSE.

"When we think of homelessness our imaginations often take us to the streets of Africa or Asia. But homelessness is a sad reality in the UK as much as any other part of the world which is all too conveniently brushed under the carpet.," Mr Zaman said.

"We have long term homeless, but also people who are increasingly struggling to make ends meet because of the economic downturn. Many families are facing repossession of their homes."

Mr Zaman said the students were inspired to take action after attending Anchor House's Appeal Launch last month with Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, Chairman of the East London Mosque and patron of the charity.

"We found that Anchor House not only gives people a roof over their heads but empowers them with new skills and rehabilitation to take back their lives," he said.

"They don't just talk – they act. So we are appealing to all - to dig deep and support Anchor House." All money raised will go towards Anchor House's £9.3 million Home and Hope Appeal to redevelop and improve the services of its nationally acclaimed residential life-skills centre in Canning Town, www.anchorhouseuk.org. People can donate online at www.justgiving.com/Sleepingout.

Photos and interviews are available by calling Samantha Johnson, Communications Officer or Jazmine Sandison, Marketing Executive on 0207 476 6062, communications@anchorhouseuk.org.

**EDITORS NOTE:**

Anchor House is a nationally acclaimed flagship project addressing the root causes of homelessness: deprivation; drug addiction; mental illness; unemployment; lack of skills/education and crime.

It is a registered charity providing accommodation for up to 180 single homeless people each year. It also provides a wide range of accredited vocational training courses in construction, electrical, plumbing and distance learning for both residents and the local community.

The charity is located in Canning Town, in the London Borough of Newham, the third most deprived borough in England and Wales.

In 2010 Anchor House achieved:

- 95% of residents were involved in positive transitional activities
- 32 residents obtained part-time or full-time employment
- 58 residents moved on to independent living

Last year, Anchor House was recognised as a centre of National Excellence and were awarded five National Training Awards by the UK Skills Council, including our Head of Employment and Education, Aggie Chikiwa (a former resident), being awarded UK's Individual Trainer of the Year.

It was also awarded the Charity Times Award for Best Use of Technology and was a finalist in the Third Sector Excellence Awards for Financial Management. And in 2006 and 2008, it won the Michael Whippman Award for Innovation in Homelessness.

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