

Lord and Lady Provost leading the sleep out at the Zoo next week

✘ Edinburgh's Lord and Lady Provost will brave a cold night at the Zoo on Thursday 24 September in a bid to raise thousands of pounds for local causes.

They took a visit to Penguin's Rock this week to receive their sleeping bags ahead of the big event. The sleep out will take place outside the Zoo's historic Mansion House, close to the popular Penguins and Lemur Walkthroughs.

['The Lady Provost's Sleep Out at Edinburgh Zoo'](#) will raise vital funds for Four Square and the Rock Trust to help young people get off the streets and into work. Over 150 people have signed up to take part including teams from Edinburgh companies, members of the British Army and Marketing Edinburgh.

The Lady Provost said she wants people to "open their eyes" to what it is like for young homeless people during the colder months but admits the challenge will be nothing compared to the struggle faced by those who sleep rough every night.

She said: "The event is edging closer and I'm so impressed by Edinburgh's fundraising efforts. In spite of Edinburgh's continued growth as a successful and affluent city, homelessness remains a pressing issue. Nobody can truly experience the struggle of homelessness based on one night in the cold, but I hope our eyes can be opened to what it is like to spend a night outside. We'll be sleeping out in September when the nights get longer and the temperature drops – I hope this shock to the system will emphasise just how difficult this year's colder months will be for our young homeless people.

The Lord Provost Donald Wilson said: “Elaine is determined to raise awareness of youth homelessness in Edinburgh and this event is an attempt to raise as much money as possible for Four Square and the Rock Trust. These charities are very close to her heart and I hope we can help to make a big difference.”

While the number of people presenting to the City of Edinburgh Council as rough sleepers is the lowest of any Scottish city – having reduced by almost 15 per cent over the last five years – almost 4,000* people were assessed as homeless in the Capital last year. A quarter of those are aged 24 or younger.

Show your support on social media #ZooSleepOut and by making a donation: www.virginmoneygiving.com/SleepOutAtEdinburghZoo