

# Railway Children sleepout event raises over £130,000

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Network Rail has teamed up with the charity Railway Children to host a fifth annual sleepout event in railway stations across the country, raising money and awareness for the work being done to help the thousands of vulnerable young children who pass through the railway every year.

This year's event, sponsored by VolkerRail, was even bigger than last year's sleepout, with the highest number of participants ever taking part including at seven Network Rail managed stations.

More than 400 participants from across the industry, from regional managing directors to frontline staff and Network Rail's Chair Lord Peter Hendy who is also patron of the charity, took part in the event and have exceeded the fundraising target.

Network Rail chair, Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill, said: "It's great to see so many people come together to raise money for such a good cause, and I'd like to thank our station teams, rail industry partners and the participants for making this event a huge success.

"The Railway Children make a big difference to the lives of some of the most vulnerable people and we're delighted to have supported them for the fifth year running and hope to continue to do so for many years to come."

Railway Children work to help identify and support vulnerable children that may be in danger, including those that have run away, may be at risk of violence, abuse or exploitation with the aim to provide them with the safety and support that they need.

Rob Capener, Railway Children's Chief Executive Officer, said: "Our Sleepout always has a brilliant atmosphere and we're hoping this year's event will have a big impact with the help of our supporters and the rail community.

"Working closely with the British Transport Police, we know that hundreds of vulnerable young people are identified on the UK rail network every day. Many are running away from difficult situations at home, being groomed by abusers or exploited by county lines gangs. The challenges children and young people face are more prevalent than ever with increasing levels of poverty, exploitation, mental health crisis and the lasting effects of the pandemic on their wellbeing and development.

"The Sleepout event is a great way to raise vital funds for our programmes that help us reach children in need of urgent support while increasing awareness of our work with thousands of people who use the transport system every day."

Andrew Wilkins, VolkerRail's Finance Director, commented: "VolkerRail has, for many years, been supporting Railway Children and the valuable work they do to make the lives of countless vulnerable young people much better. We are delighted to be able to continue our support by sponsoring and participating in the 2024 Sleepout."