Focus E15 to ‘Evict the Bailiffs’ at the British Credit Awards

Housing activists and families who have experienced bailiff evictions plan to shine a light on an extravagant awards banquet celebrating companies that prey on poverty and the housing crisis.

Central London – On the evening of Wednesday, February 11, the Brewery in Moorgate is hosting the British Credit Awards [1], a £4,000-per-table black-tie awards show for bailiffs and debt collectors, and the Focus E15 housing campaign will be there to turn the front entrance of the venue into a mock eviction site.

While the event is meant to recognise the wider credit industry, awards on the evening will include: ‘Enforcement Team of the Year,’ ‘Third Party Debt Collection Team of the Year’ and ‘Consumer Collections Team of the Year.’ In November, UK eviction rates rose to their highest recorded levels [2], and homeless charity Shelter announced that 1,300 people are being put at risk of eviction every day, due primarily to government welfare reforms and out-of-control housing prices [3].

Many of the companies that will accept British Credit Awards this year, prey on the poverty and vulnerability created by the housing and economic crises, and the wider austerity agenda. For these companies, such as Croydon-based bailiffs, The Sheriff’s Office, the suffering of others is a boon for business.

We have invited families who have experienced evictions at the hands of the nominated companies, to come out and share their stories with those entering the venue. Nazrah Ismail and her family were evicted when The Sheriff’s Office bailiffs broke into their flat at 6:30am the week before Christmas. The former Newham and Lambeth school teacher said:

“I was violently and unexpectedly evicted with my three kids and disabled husband by officers from The Sheriff’s Office. We were not informed in advance before they appeared at dawn ordering us to get out. We were left street homeless and frightened by this traumatic experience. It is infuriating that the company have been nominated for an award. I am concerned and outraged that they will continue to put other families through the kinds of grief we have experienced.”

Samantha Middleton, one of the original mums that founded the Focus E15 campaign said:

“We’ve helped stop lots of bailiff evictions around Newham and have seen from those who’ve been through them how awful they are. It’s appalling that these companies are getting awards at all, and attending events at a price-per-table that could keep a family housed for many months. These companies are the hired soldiers of social cleansing.”

The action at the Brewery (52 Chiswell Street, City of London, EC1Y 4SD) will begin at 6:00pm sharp, to welcome those arriving for a 6:30pm drinks reception. An edited video and photos from the action will be available on the morning of Thursday, February 12.

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