

Poverty Truth Commissions: Example Outcomes

We have sought to break down examples of the impact of the Poverty Truth Commissions' work into the differences that they have made at the level of individuals, organisations, policy and wider society.

Individual Impact

- ✓ Community commissioners have spoken of how they have grown in confidence, and how the strength of relationships and sense of purpose of the group has kept them going through hard times.
- ✓ Community Commissioners have spoken of improvements in their mental and physical health and well-being
- ✓ Commissioners have been able to; find work or to establish their own businesses, gain qualifications and go on to higher education.
- ✓ Further examples, Scotland and Leeds, a commissioner attributed his ability to stop drinking to the support which he was offered by others whilst a member of the Commission. Another said Poverty Truth gave her the confidence to go to University.
- ✓ Skills Training for Community Inspirers, West Cheshire PTC. Pennysmart CIC made available a range of skills training. This will enable Community Inspirers to develop the skills that they have gained through involvement in the PTC Process, helping to increase opportunities and help them to continue their community work in a voluntary or paid capacity.
- ✓ In *Leeds* a senior business leader said he had chosen the stigma group because he wanted to understand, and that he was beginning to as he listened. In *Scotland*, a senior public health policy leader has spoken about how her friendship with someone living in food poverty has changed the way she views the issue.

Organisational Impact

- ✓ In *Scotland*, the Commission instigated a mentoring programme for Civil servants through which those who have direct experience of poverty coach senior policy leaders. This programme has now been developed more widely.
- ✓ People with a direct experience of poverty mentoring the Social Justice Team within Scottish Government and the Glasgow Poverty Leadership Panel.
- ✓ West Cheshire 'Changes in Housing Benefits letters: The PTC has worked with Cheshire West and Chester Council to change the wording of Housing Benefit letters to make them more understandable and customer friendly for clients.
- ✓ Salford PTC inspired the council to: stop using enforcement agents when recovering debts from the most vulnerable residents, and also to waive charges

for copies of birth certificates for homeless people, enabling them to more easily obtain the official Identification they need to access benefits

- ✓ In Leeds, Business Leaders in building relationships with Community Commissioners, encouraged their skills and sought to develop new opportunities within their business to make a difference in the city.
- ✓ In Leeds, Leeds Mind working in partnership with Leeds & York NHS Partnership pioneered *Breathing Spaces*, an initiative conceived and developed through the mental health working group of Leeds PTC.
- ✓ Leeds Apprenticeship Training Agency found new ways to support young people without A –C grades in Maths and English at GCSE
- ✓ West Cheshire PTC Pledge: Through listening to the Community Inspirers, many voiced negative customer service experiences when accessing benefit systems and support services. The lack of empathy and respect for people accessing these services had a negative impact on people's mental health and wellbeing. The PTC worked collaboratively to address this issue, creating the PTC Pledge which promotes honest and respectful treatment of all people, encouraging the development of positive relationships rather than transactional processes. The aim being that by signing up to this, organisations and the people within them become more self-aware, and are accountable for their behaviour

Policy Level

- ✓ Co-authorship of the official report, 'Poverty in Scotland' with the Scottish Government.
- ✓ In *Scotland*, the Commission was heavily involved in the *Community Empowerment Bill (2014)*, with commissioners serving on the Bill Reference Team as well as meeting regularly with officials and ministers. The Commission has helped to ensure that the Bill guidance will promote participatory budgeting and other forms of participatory democracy.
- ✓ Leading and involvement of commissioners in the Reference Group for Fairer Scotland.
- ✓ GP Engagement Strategy West Cheshire: The DWP have developed new links with the Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and are, as a result, working more closely with GP practices. The NHS and DWP are building stronger relationships and aim to work together to support people back into employment. This will also lead to a GP forum, working with both trainee GPs and experienced GPs to improve the knowledge shared across the two organisations. This team will work with organisations within Cheshire and seek to continue the good work that has been achieved as a part of the PTC.

- ✓ In *Scotland*, the work of the Commission has led to changes in government policy, including securing a minimum level of £100 for School Clothing Grants in every local authority in Scotland.

Impact Wider Society

- ✓ Wide use of the *Scottish* films on social media and for training purposes - including schools, local authorities, GP training, ATD Fourth World and UNICEF.
- ✓ Leeds PTC working with Church Action on Poverty created videos **for** www.realbenefits-street.com as an alternative narrative to the TV series.
- ✓ Leeds PTC commissioners invited to advise scriptwriters on major national TV soap on storylines and portrayals of people living in poverty.
- ✓ West Cheshire, January 2018: PTC Commissioners featured on the North West's Sunday Politics Show, sharing their lived experiences and discussing their work with the Poverty Truth Commission.