



**Report of the Head of Adult Social Services and Tackling Poverty
Social Care and Tackling Poverty Service Transformation Committee –
7 April 2025**

**Swansea Poverty Truth Commission – Evaluation and
Update Report**

Purpose: The report is for information purposes only.

Report Authors: Anthony Richards / Amy Hawkins

Finance Officer: Chris Davies

Legal Officer: Mathew Joyce-Brown

Access to Services Officer: N/A

For Information

1 Background

- 1.1 Poverty Truth Commissions place those with lived experience of poverty at the heart of decision-making about poverty. They create a safe space for those with lived experience of poverty to tell their stories, build relationships with each other, and with influential decision makers in a local area.
- 1.2 Poverty Truth Commissions are not owned nor directed by any single organisation. Commissions are made up of 'Community Commissioners' with lived experience of poverty, and 'Civic and Business Commissioners' who have influence within key local services. A 'Facilitation Team' supports the Commission through its lifespan.
- 1.3 In Swansea, the Facilitation Team is hosted by Swansea Council for Voluntary Service (SCVS). SCVS was selected as host organisation by the multi-agency 'Start Up Group' which was coordinated by the Tackling Poverty Service in Swansea Council.
- 1.4 The [Swansea Poverty Truth Commission](#) (SPTC / PTC) held its official [launch event](#) at the Taliesin Theatre in October 2022 with the Community Commissioners telling their stories, and Civic and Business Commissioners officially recruited into the Commission.

- 1.5 Following the course of the Commission, a [‘Celebration Event’](#) was held at the Dylan Thomas Centre in April 2024.

2 Evaluation Report

- 2.1 The [independent evaluation](#) of the first Swansea PTC found that, in common with other PTCs, it had:
- *Deepened Commissioners’ understanding of poverty and the role of the system, that is supposed to be there to help people when they are in need but ends up creating deeper and more problematic issues.*
 - *Increased the visibility of poverty and has given voice to the different aspects of poverty.*
 - *Created a momentum and commitment to making change happen, despite the constraints and challenges facing the public sector.*
 - *Changed people personally and professionally.*
 - *Had influence well beyond Swansea with input into national and UK wide strategies.*
- 2.2 Individuals experiencing poverty were found to have benefitted personally from the PTC’s high level of interpersonal support and the very effective signposting to relevant services – a result of the Commission being hosted within SCVS and having access to so many supportive projects and partner agencies.
- 2.3 SCVS’s trauma-informed approach ensured that Community Commissioners had access to counselling which enabled them to process the difficult experiences which arise when discussing poverty, so not only remain engaged in the Commission but have the resilience to develop their role as “experts by experience” in other spaces.
- 2.4 Civic and Business Commissioners were found to have undergone significant shifts in their perception and understanding of poverty, with a strengthened ability to see connections between poverty in their work areas, and an increased commitment to learning from the expertise of lived experience.

3 Learning and Recommendations

- 3.1 The Commission’s three working groups each made clear recommendations for local businesses and services to consider taking up. These include:
- A “Rehumanising Systems and Services” Charter.
 - More signposting to easily accessible services to support mental health, which people do not know are available to them.
 - A review of GP’s general accessibility – many barriers have been encountered in trying to simply book appointments.
 - A Peer Mentoring scheme between service providers and service users, to learn from each other and improve service impacts.
- 3.2 An overall recommendation from the Commission was that a “Lived Experience Panel” should be formed to allow ongoing dialogue between local

service providers and service users on low incomes about how Swansea could be improved.

- 3.3 The effectiveness of the “Poverty Truth Approach” has been recognised, with its emphasis on relationship building as a basis for honest conversations leading to innovative solutions. This has subsequently been explored further by SCVS in a shorter-term project using Welsh Government Child Poverty Innovation Grant, with excellent results.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 SCVS completion of report summarising the recommendations and learning points from the Swansea Poverty Truth Commission.
- 4.2 Exploring the opportunity to secure resources for a second STPC via establishing a new ‘Start-Up Group’.
- 4.3 Working with Housing to pilot implementation of the Rehumanising Systems and Services Charter.

5 Integrated Assessment Implications

- 5.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 5.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the ‘well-being goals’.
- 5.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

5.4 This is a for-information report. As such an IIA screening is not required.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, it may lead to decisions being taken at a later date that may have costs attached. Any such costs will need to be managed within departmental resources at that time with due regard to the Council's medium term financial plan.

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None