



County Durham Poverty Truth Commission

Did you know that Durham Community Action is the host organisation for County Durham's first Poverty Truth Commission?

The Poverty Truth Commission (PTC) originated in Scotland in 2009 and there are now approximately 30 commissions across the UK.

The aim of all PTCs is to change the way decisions and policies are made, by giving a powerful voice to people with lived experience and encouraging civic and community commissioners to come up with joint solutions to identified issues.

PTCs involve a process built around relationship building and real life experiences. It ensures everyone is equal by stripping back lanyards and job titles and removing hierarchy.

It works by recruiting two sets of Commissioners, Community Commissioners who are local residents with lived experience of poverty, and Civic Commissioners who are local leaders and decision-makers in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Facilitators support the two groups of Commissioners to foster strong relationships, enabling a deeper understanding of poverty in the local area and how it affects residents' lives.

The process is led by Community Commissioners who set the agenda and identify topics they want to tackle. They then invite Civic Commissioners into their environment to look at ways to deal with those topics together.

The first County Durham Poverty Truth Commission began its journey in May 2024, recruiting 16 Community Commissioners from areas around Newton Aycliffe, Shildon, Ferryhill and Bishop Auckland. Meetings began in September 2024 with the Commissioners getting to know each other and building relationships before focusing on poverty and related issues. The Commission is now preparing for its launch event in March 2025. This will be an opportunity for Community Commissioners to share their experiences of poverty with local leaders and decision-makers, some of whom will become Civic Commissioners.

Following the launch, the two groups of Commissioners will unite, build new relationships and begin to work collaboratively.

The whole Commission process takes around 18 months. This is then followed by a further public event which reports on the PTC's findings, work so far and recommendations. A period of embedding will then take place locally to ensure work to tackle local issues continues.

Further information on County Durham Poverty Truth Commission can be found on our [website](#).

Julie, our County Durham Poverty Truth Commission Project Worker is writing a series of blogs to track the journey of the Poverty Truth Commission and those involved in it; you can read them [here](#)