

Poverty/Homelessness Action Week

27 Jan – 3 Feb 2008

Each year Homelessness Sunday takes place on the last Sunday of January and Poverty Action Sunday takes place on the Sunday before Lent. In 2008 Homelessness Sunday and Poverty Action Sunday fall at opposite ends of the same week – 27 January and 3 February 2008.

To seize this opportunity Church Action on Poverty and the Homelessness Sunday Partnership (Housing Justice and Scottish Churches Housing Action) are working together with Church Urban Fund and others to plan a week of action – Poverty/Homelessness Action Week 2008. This will be a major opportunity for local churches to discover and engage with poverty and social justice issues within their own communities.

We are hoping that at least 100 local churches or Churches Together groups, working in partnership with local projects, CABs and other agencies will organise a **local Poverty Hearing** or hearing-style event – to hear the voices and stories of people experiencing poverty and homelessness in their own towns and neighbourhoods.

Local Hearings could vary considerably in size from a 1-2 hour neighbourhood hearing hosted by a local church and/or community project to a full day town/city hearing organised by a consortium of organisations.

Why do it?

- The success of Make Poverty History has highlighted the need for a domestic equivalent, to mobilise churches and wider civil society to press political leaders to commit to making UK poverty history.
- Research by MORI has shown that public attitudes to UK poverty are mixed, but would support greater action to tackle poverty if the case was effectively made.
- A CAP survey at Greenbelt, revealed that whilst most churches are equally concerned about poverty in the developing world and on their own doorstep, only 12% currently actively campaign on issues affecting people in poverty in the UK
- Poverty Hearings, by creating a safe place for people to tell their own stories, have proven to be a highly effective means of communicating the reality of poverty to a broad audience
- The data and stories we collect will be collated into a major report on the grassroots experience of poverty in the UK which we will publish in Autumn 2008, with the aim of persuading all the parties to commit to ending poverty in the UK.

Links with the 2008 UK poverty campaign

Action Week will provide a great opportunity for 'kick-starting' a much wider campaign on UK poverty running throughout 2008, by generating interest and awareness at a *local* level – both directly with groups and people at the Hearings, and more widely through linked media coverage across the country. There are also obvious opportunities for other partners within the 2008 campaign to actively Action Week to and through their own network of local groups, projects, partners and supporters.

What is involved?

We will provide training to prepare groups to organise an event and to engage with homeless and marginalised people in your local area.

We will provide materials to promote local events, to brief participants and to record the issues and concerns raised. You will send the information you collect to us and we will produce a state of the nation report. You will receive a copy of the final report. Together we will use the findings to persuade the Government to act to end poverty in the UK.

There will also be materials for worship linked to the themes of the Week.

You will need to provide a venue and organising team for the Action Week event, to publicise the event and to engage with homeless and marginalised people to enable them to tell their stories and voice their concerns.

Resource packs will be ready for distribution from early autumn.
Flyers and publicity materials will be available from late June.

Regional briefing events – autumn 2007

As the first step to resource this process, we are planning a series of regional briefing/training events across the UK during autumn 2007. We aim to hold at least 20 briefing events between late September and early November, for key local contacts in each area.

Each briefing will last a maximum of 2 hours (including refreshments), at a venue and time to suit local circumstances – which could be an evening or Saturday morning. Briefings could also be 'tagged' onto other existing events, eg as a plenary talk and/or conference workshop.

We need **local partners** to identify a suitable venue (preferably free/at low cost), a recommendation on the best date/time for the event (this will need to be negotiated to avoid clashing with other briefings); and some commitment to advertise and encourage key local contacts/networks to attend. We will provide national publicity, content and speakers.

For more information contact

Judith Maizel-Long on 020 7723 7273 x254, j.maizel-long@housingjustice.org.uk or Niall Cooper on 0161 236 9321, niallc@church-poverty.org.uk