

Model news release



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News release ²

For immediate release / Embargoed until [insert date] ³

YOUTOWN UNITES TO BREAK THE GRIP OF POVERTY ⁴

Anti-poverty groups from across Yourtown are coming together to call for more compassion to break the grip of poverty on people's lives. ⁵

The groups are staging a special event called 'Challenge Poverty in Yourtown', showing how low incomes, high costs, lack of decent work, and lack of access to help and services the people need are affecting thousands of local households. ⁶

The event – being held in Yourtown Town Hall at 7pm on Tuesday 8 October – is part of Challenge Poverty Week.

The Scotland-wide campaign is designed to show that poverty exists in Scotland and affects us all, that people can work to end it, that it restricts people's ability to take part in society, and that it can be solved by boosting incomes and reducing costs of living. ⁷

The event in Yourtown is being organised by Yourtown Resource Centre, Yourtown Citizens Advice Bureau and the Yourtown Trades Union Council.

Lindsay McGowan, chair of the Yourtown Resource Centre, said: "Yourtown is well-known for its strong community spirit. It's a place where people help each other and have compassion for their neighbours.

“But right here, there are tens of thousands of households whose lives are restricted by poverty – and across the country poverty is increasing for the first time in two decades. More and more people aren’t getting the income they need to live a full and free life.

“Poverty restricts people’s lives in hundreds of different ways – and it’s women, children, minority groups and disabled people who are often affected the most.

“We need to turn compassion into action. We need to put this situation right so that everyone has a decent standard of living that allows them to grow and progress in their lives. We hope lots of local people will come along to our event to find out how we can challenge poverty together.”⁸

There are more than [insert figure] people in poverty in [Yourtown local authority area]. Some [insert figure] children are in poverty, and [insert figure] are in in fuel poverty.⁹

Challenge Poverty Week brings together local groups across the country with big national organisations.

Peter Kelly of The Poverty Alliance said: “Poverty restricts the choices people can make, leaving them in impossible situations like choosing either to heat their home or pay their rent.

“With rising living costs and unstable work, our economy is holding people down and stopping many from choosing their own path.

“We can solve poverty by loosening its grip on people. Benefits help release people from the restrictions our economy places on them, such as low pay and high housing costs.”¹⁰

‘Challenge Poverty in Yourtown’ is being held in Yourtown Town Hall at 7pm on Thursday 10 October.

ENDS¹¹

Notes to editors¹²

- Follow the Yourtown Resource Centre at twitter.com/ycrc18 or facebook.com/ycrc18.
- For more information about the ‘Challenge Poverty in Yourtown’ event, contact

- Lindsay McGowan on 07777 777777, or email lindsay@emailaddress.com ¹³
- For more information about Challenge Poverty Week see www.challengpoverty.net
- Reporters and photographers are invited to attend 'The Scandal of Poverty' event at 7pm on Tuesday 8 October in Yourtown Town Hall, Theirtown Road, Yourtown YT1 1AB. Photographs can also be made available to the media after the event. ¹⁴

Notes on the model news release

1. Always have your logo on the top of any news release.
2. If it's just a straight release, write **News Release**. If there's also a photo opportunity, write **News release / Photo opportunity**
3. **For immediate rerelease** means you're happy for the media to use the information straight away. Sometimes though, you might want to give them the information, but restrict when they can use it – for example you might get a funding award that isn't being made public until a specific date. In that case, write **Embargoed until** (the date you want).
4. Give your release a headline. Try to make it short – definitely less than 10 words – and interesting.
5. Your first paragraph should ideally be less than 25 words, definitely less than 30, and give a quick summary of the story. Think of what you'd say to someone in the street: 'Did you hear about this poverty event?'. Also note that we've put the values up front - 'compassion'
6. Your second paragraph should try to answer 'Who, What, Why, Where, When?'. You can use another couple of paragraphs to do this if you need to give more detail. But don't take too long - because you soon want to move on to your key messages.
7. This is where your key messages should go. Here are the key messages for Challenge Poverty Week:

Challenge Poverty in Scotland? Aye, we can!

- Too many people in Scotland are trapped in the grip of poverty
- By boosting people's incomes and reducing the cost of living we can solve poverty
- Solving poverty is about ensuring we can all participate in a just and compassionate society

8. Follow up your key message with a quote. Make it lively, approachable. If you have an appeal to make to people, this is the place to do it. Note again that we're putting the values up front 'community spirit', 'compassion', 'helping each other'

9. Journalists like facts, and local journalists like local facts. Here are some sources where you can find figures on:

- Relative poverty in your local authority area:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SHCS/keyanalyses/LAtables2016>

- Child poverty in your local area:

<http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2018/>

- Fuel poverty in your local authority area:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SHCS/keyanalyses/LAtables2016>

10. If you want, you can also use this quote from the Poverty Alliance, to underline the fact that your event is part of a nationwide campaign. If you can get supportive quotes from other prominent local people – maybe your Provost, or council leader, or MP, or MSPs – then this would be a good place to put them. Remember – choose messengers who highlight your values, and especially if they will surprise people.

11. After the quotes, you can add in further paragraphs with information that you think is important. At the end of your release write **ENDS**

12. **Notes to editors** is a place to put information that might not be directly relevant to your story, but might be useful background. It's also a good place to put in links to your social media accounts, giving journalists a chance to follow you.

13. This is vital. Put in the contact details of someone that a journalist can talk to, with a mobile number. If a journalist calls in a friendly way – for example, just looking for more information or to arrange a

photograph - you can deal with that on the phone. But if they've got difficult or challenging questions, or if you start to feel uncomfortable with where the conversation is going, just say you're very busy and ask them to put their query in an email to you. This gives you a bit more time to decide how to deal with it.

14. If you're hoping that photographers or reporters come to the event, make sure you give them the time, date and full address of the venue, including postcode. Postcode is handy for satnav. If you're taking your own photos – and it'd be a good idea for your own newsletters and social media – then you can also offer them to the media.

Talking points

These talking points are designed with the broadcast media in mind – and especially local radio. But they could help with any type of public engagement.

You'll be familiar with these talking points already from the framing work that we did. You might feel that you're repeating yourself a lot – but remember, you might say something a thousand times, most people will only hear you once. And the research shows that the more times we use a frame that activates helpful values, the stronger those values get.

“Scottish people believe in justice and compassion. But, right now, there are around a million people in Scotland whose lives are restricted by poverty. That’s just wrong and unjust.

“Around a quarter of a million of those people are children who are just setting out on their life journey. Without a decent income to support them, they’ll never be able to properly participate in Scottish society.

“Challenge Poverty Week is a chance for us to highlight the injustice of poverty in Scotland, and to celebrate the people and projects that are standing together against it in different ways.

“We’ve got a moral responsibility to solve poverty in Scotland – and we can. “We can redesign our economy so that people don’t get swept into poverty by the currents of unemployment, or low incomes.

“We can make sure that the services we all rely on – like the NHS, education, and social security – are properly funded and able to help us all.

“And we can use benefits to help free people from the restrictions that poverty puts on their lives.”

These talking points follow the framing advice:

- Values first.
- Leading with poverty as the problem.
- Framing statistics with values – in this case ‘injustice’.
- ‘Poverty stops people participating in society’ - a CPW key message, strengthened with the ‘restricts and restrains’ metaphor.
- Other Challenge Poverty Week key messages - ‘Poverty exists’ ‘We can solve it’.
- Solutions framed as the ‘services we all rely on’
- We can redesign our economy metaphor – strengthened by the ‘currents’
- Metaphor
- Benefits loosen the grip of poverty

You can adapt the talking points to your needs, just like we looked at doing with the news release. You could use local figures on poverty and child poverty in the first and second paragraphs. You could mention your organisation and your particular Challenge Poverty Event in the third paragraph. Instead of talking about ‘Scotland’ you could talk about your particular community. Take the talking points as a template.

Radio interviews

As we said when we looked at the news release – journalists are getting a bit thin on the ground. That means that it's pretty unlikely that a radio journalist will come to interview you. Instead, they'll want to do an interview on the phone.

These days, that often means that they'll ask you to record the interview on your mobile phone using the built in voice recorder app. They'll phone you on another phone line to ask the questions. Then they'll ask that you email the recording to them. If you don't have a smartphone, or can't figure out how to do it, they might just do a straight interview down the phone.

Four easy steps to deal with questions

Usually, a reporter will just ask you something very general like 'Tell us what Challenge Poverty Week is all about...'

Most journalists are decent folk. But sometimes they might ask difficult questions. Sometimes you might come across a journalist who definitely has an agenda. Try not to get angry or frustrated. Whatever the question is, just remember – values first, and follow the four steps below.

Try and listen carefully to the reporter's questions and give short, direct, appropriate answers. Don't just give the talking points without trying to answer the question. Remember Ed Miliband! The trick is to answer the question very quickly and then smoothly go back to your talking points.

This four step approach helps you to do that:

1. Wait until the complete question is asked.
2. Answer the question directly.
3. Bridge to your talking points.
4. Talking points.

You may need to follow these steps several times during the same interview to stay on message. Here's an example of how the four steps might work in practice.

<p>Reporter</p> <p>So are you saying that poverty in Scotland is the fault of the Tory Government in Westminster?</p>	<p>1. Wait until the question is finished – even if it's daft!</p>
<p>You</p> <p>Well we definitely need to have government at all levels in our society that reflect our values of justice and compassion.</p> <p>Because as I was saying earlier,</p> <p>Scotland is a place that believes in the values of justice and compassion.</p>	<p>2. Answer the question quickly and directly. This answer avoids overt political attacks and mentions the values of compassion and justice.</p> <p>3. This is your bridge</p> <p>4. And you're back into your talking points.</p>

Examples:

“Some people might be asking why people in poverty don’t help themselves.”

Values first	“People in Scotland believe that we need to look out for each other...”
Answer the question	“...so I’ve never heard that question asked myself.”
Bridge	“But Challenge Poverty Week is a chance to tell everyone...”
Back to talking points	“...about the million people in Scotland whose lives are restricted by poverty.”

“What about all the benefit fraud that’s going on?”

Values first	“We’re a compassionate society..
Answer the question	“...so our concern is about the overwhelming majority of people who are being caught up in the currents of unemployment and low incomes.”
Bridge	“During Challenge Poverty Week we’ll be talking about...”
Back to talking points	“...how benefits help free people from the restrictions that poverty puts on their lives, and about how we can redesign our economy to solve poverty for good.”

“So how can we redesign our economy?”

Values first	“Well we could start redesigning our economy by building on the values of compassion and justice...”
Answer the question	“... so that people don’t get swept away in the currents of unemployment and low incomes that affect far too many people in Scotland today.”
Bridge	“This week we’re saying...”
Back to talking points	“... that we can solve poverty together. We can make sure that the services we all rely on – like the NHS, education, and social security – are properly funded and able to help us all. And we can use benefits to help free people from the restrictions that poverty puts on their lives.”

Opinion piece

The print media often take opinion pieces from organisations – especially if they're tied into particular events like Challenge Poverty Week.

So even if you're also issuing a news release about your CPW events, it's also worth offering them an opinion piece. You could also place it on your website or blog, and then share it on your social media. If your area has a community website or blog, you could offer it to them too.

Below is a model opinion piece that you can take and adapt for your own needs.

Scottish people believe in justice and compassion. But, right now, there are around a million people in Scotland whose lives are restricted by poverty. That's just wrong and unjust.

Around a quarter of a million of those people are children who are just setting out on their life journey. Without a decent income to support them, they'll never be able to properly participate in Scottish society.

Challenge Poverty Week is a chance for us to highlight the injustice of poverty in Scotland, and to celebrate the people and projects that are standing together against it in different ways.

In Yourtown, we are holding an event on **[give details of your event, and invite people along. Give details of the work that you do in the community, how it helps people, and why it's so important.]**

These kinds of events are important because there is a lot of injustice in our communities. Yourtown is well-known for its strong community spirit. It's a place where people help each other and have compassion for their neighbours.

But right here, there are **[insert figure]** thousands of households whose lives are restricted because they are fenced-in by poverty – and across the country poverty is increasing for the first time in two decades. More and more people aren't getting the income they need to live a full and free life.

In Yourtown some **[insert figure]** children are in poverty, and **[insert figure]** are in in fuel poverty.

This poverty restricts people's lives in hundreds of different ways – and it's women, children, minority groups and disabled people who are often fenced in the most.

We need to turn compassion into action. We need to put this situation right so that everyone has a decent standard of living that allows them to grow and progress in their lives.

It doesn't have to be like this. We've got a moral responsibility to solve poverty in Scotland – and we can.

We can redesign our economy so that people don't get swept into poverty by the currents of unemployment, or low incomes.

We can make sure that the services we all rely on – like the NHS, education, and social security – are properly funded and able to help us all.

And we can use benefits to help free people from the restrictions that poverty puts on their lives.

Poverty exists in Yourtown and it's restricting people's lives. But together we can solve it. We hope lots of local people will come along to our event to find out how we can challenge poverty together. Please join us, and follow our social media at twitter.com/ycrc18 and facebook.com/ycrc18.

Letter to the editor

If – for whatever reason – you can't get an opinion piece into the newspaper, you could send them a letter. Letters have to be short and punchy.

Here's a model letter to the editor that you can adapt:

Challenge Poverty Week is a chance for us to highlight the injustice of poverty in Scotland, and to celebrate the people and projects that are standing together against it in different ways.

In Yourtown, we are holding an event on **[give details of your event, and invite people along. Give details of the work that you do in the community, how it helps people, and why it's so important.]**

Yourtown is well-known for its strong community spirit. It's a place where people help each other and have compassion for their neighbours.

But right here, there are **[insert figure]** thousands of households whose lives are restricted by poverty. Some **[insert figure]** children are in poverty, and **[insert figure]** are in fuel poverty.

We've got a moral responsibility to solve poverty in Scotland – and we can. Please join us and follow our social media at twitter.com/cpw_scotland and facebook.com/povertyalliance.

Name, organisation and address