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| Report To: | Inverclyde Council | Date: | 8 October 2015 |
| Report By: | Angela Edwards, Head of Inclusive Education, Culture and Corporate Policy | Report No: | IC/03/15/AE/KB |
| Contact Officer: | Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy Officer | Contact No: | 01475 712065 |
| Subject: | The 'Stick Your Labels' Anti-Poverty Campaign | | |

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement for the Council's support for the 'Stick Your Labels' campaign which seeks to challenge negative attitudes towards people experiencing poverty in Scotland and improve understanding of the role of the welfare system.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Poverty Alliance has approached local authorities, public bodies and other organisations to ask them to sign up to a number of pledges which have been developed to highlight the impact of stigmatising attitudes towards people living in poverty.

- 2.2 To demonstrate its support for the campaign, the Council is asked to sign three pledges:

- Pledge 1 – Poverty is not inevitable
Poverty is a problem of political choices, it is neither natural nor acceptable. We all have a role to play in addressing poverty. We will set out our contribution to tackling poverty in Scotland.
- Pledge 2 – Language matters
How we talk about poverty and how we portray it can stigmatise and harm people. We will never use language that may stigmatise people experiencing poverty.
- Pledge 3 – Actions change attitudes
To change beliefs about poverty requires action across our whole society. We will develop actions that help address negative attitudes towards people experiencing poverty.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council:
- a. agrees to support the 'Stick Your Labels' campaign.

Angela Edwards, Head of Inclusive Education, Culture and Corporate Policy

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Poverty is a complex issue. It affects, and is affected by, a huge range of public policy issues. To tackle poverty effectively requires an understanding that it is a cross-cutting issue which requires actions at a number of levels, both nationally and locally.
- 4.2 The stigma associated with poverty is increasing and the Council and the Inverclyde Alliance are working hard to reduce poverty and improve wellbeing in the local area. However, it is noted that more people are now likely to see poverty primarily as a result of individual behaviour rather than the result of structural factors such as low pay, minimal benefits levels, or how income and wealth are distributed in our society.

5.0 LOCAL ANTI-POVERTY INITIATIVES

- 5.1 Led by the Financial Inclusion Partnership, a wide range of initiatives are already being implemented in Inverclyde to combat poverty. Many community planning partners are working together to ensure the right support is provided to people at the right time and that appropriate referrals are made between agencies to tailor support to individuals and their families.
- 5.2 A report considered by the Inverclyde Council earlier this year outlined the variety of support in place across the authority area. Additionally, child poverty features in the work of the local Nurturing Inverclyde Collaborative (the local Early Years Collaborative).

Min. Ref.
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6.0 'STICK YOUR LABELS' CAMPAIGN

- 6.1 The 'Stick Your Labels' campaign is part of the ongoing work of the Poverty Alliance to challenge negative attitudes towards people experiencing poverty in Scotland and improve understanding of the role of the welfare system.
- 6.2 The Poverty Alliance has approached local authorities, public bodies and other organisations to ask them to sign up to a number of pledges which have been developed to highlight the impact of stigmatising attitudes towards people living in poverty.
- 6.3 A number of organisations have already agreed to support the campaign including the Scottish Government, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and Energy Action Scotland. Additionally, other organisations are expected to pledge their support during *Challenge Poverty Week* which takes place 17-23 October 2015.
- 6.4 If the Council agrees to support the campaign, the following actions around the three key Pledges would be require to be developed:

Pledge 1 – Poverty is not acceptable

The Council will set out its contribution to tackling poverty in Scotland.

Pledge 2 – Language matters

The Council will agree to never use language that may stigmatise people experiencing poverty.

Pledge 3 – Actions change attitudes

The Council will develop actions that help address negative attitudes towards people experiencing poverty.

- 6.5 A strand of the campaign's work also focusses on working with young people, producing materials for use in school classrooms to stimulate discussion about the realities of poverty and stigma. This area of work could potentially be taken forward as part of the Council's health and wellbeing work stream in our educational establishments.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial implications - one-off costs:

| Cost centre | Budget heading | Budget year | Proposed spend this report | Virement from | Other comments |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

Financial implications - annually recurring costs/(savings):

| Cost centre | Budget heading | With effect from | Annual net impact | Virement from | Other comments |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

7.2 Human Resources: There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

7.3 Legal: There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

7.4 Equalities: By pledging its support for the 'Stick Your Labels' campaign, the Council will complement its existing efforts to tackle poverty which in turn tackles inequality in Inverclyde; this should have a positive impact on those people with protected characteristics.

7.5 Repopulation: There are no direct repopulation implications.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 There was no requirement to carry out consultation on the content of this report.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Report to the Inverclyde Council on 4 June 2015 entitled 'Update on Local Strategies to Alleviate Child Poverty'.

10.0 CONCLUSION

10.1 The Council is asked to consider supporting the 'Stick Your Labels' campaign which would involve taking action to support three key pledges, as outlined at section 6.4 of this report.

WHAT IS STICK YOUR LABELS DOING TO COMBAT STIGMA?

CHANGING ACTIONS

- As part of the campaign, Poverty Alliance is approaching local authorities, public bodies and other organisations and asking them to sign up to a number of pledges developed to highlight the impact of stigmatising attitudes towards people living in poverty.

RAISING AWARENESS

- Engaging with people and organisations at meetings across Scotland. We will also focus our work on young people and produce materials for schools to use in the classroom about the realities of poverty and stigma.

MYTH BUSTING

- Where we see myths being perpetuated about poverty, we will hold people to account. This includes stigmatising language in the press and divisive language by politicians.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Raise awareness locally and challenge myths when you hear them.
- Organise a local meeting to discuss stigma - we can help!
- Get your organisation to sign up to the stigma pledges
- Help us spread the word via our social media pages
- 'Like' us on facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/StickYourLabels>
- Follow us on twitter @PovertyAlliance
- Let us know what is happening in your area.

SICK OF ATTACKS
ON PEOPLE ON
LOW INCOMES?

TIRED OF READING
ABOUT SKIVERS,
SCROUNGERS AND
CHEATS?

DO YOU THINK
OUR WELFARE
STATE IS WORTH
DEFENDING?

**THEN SUPPORT
THE STICK YOUR
LABELS CAMPAIGN!**



Stick Your Labels is part of the Poverty Alliance's ongoing work to challenge negative attitudes towards people experiencing poverty in Scotland and improving the understanding of the role of the welfare system.

We believe that everyone has a role to play in tackling stigma and negative attitudes. Get involved in the campaign and find out how you can play your part.



MYTH BUSTING – POVERTY IS NOT INEVITABLE!



One of the challenges that we face in addressing poverty in Scotland is the widespread belief that the existence of poverty is simply inevitable. Many people believe that poverty is just a part of modern life, and that there is relatively little that can be done to change this fact.

Research has shown that 35 per cent of people in Britain currently believe that poverty is inevitable, with another 13 per cent believing that it is simply down to luck.

In order to challenge the existence of poverty, it is important that we show people that this is a myth, and poverty need not exist in a country as rich as Scotland.

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE!

Over recent years we have witnessed a hardening of attitudes towards those in poverty. Many people are now likely to see poverty as a result of individual behaviour rather than the result of more structural factors such as low pay, minimal benefit levels, or how we redistribute income and wealth.

We are all aware of the phrase 'strivers versus skivers' but it is often the more nuanced language that can be the most divisive. Phrases such as 'hardworking families' imply that there are families who aren't hard working and divides people into 'them' and 'us'.



By using phrases such as these, and a tendency to focus on individual causes of poverty, such as addictions, we are moving back towards the language of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving poor'.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?



- Evidence suggests that the stigmatisation of people in receipt of benefits has negative impacts on their well-being and may reduce benefit take up. With an estimated £10billion in benefits going unclaimed, stigma is directly contributing to high levels of poverty in the UK.
- In Scotland, a third of people believe that the main reason for child poverty is parents' dependency on drugs, alcohol or other circumstances; 80% think it is a contributing factor. This assumption, however, is not supported by the evidence. While poverty affects more than 20 percent of the U.K. population; less than 4.7% of the population experiences drug or alcohol dependence.
- By focusing on the individual causes of poverty, we ignore the more important structural causes, and in turn fail to hold Government to account.
- In order to tackle poverty effectively, it is important to get the message across that people in poverty are people just like anybody else.



Minister for Housing and Welfare in the Scottish Government, Margaret Burgess MSP, supports the campaign at the launch in the Scottish Parliament in May 2015.

STIGMA PLEDGE NO. 1: POVERTY IS NOT INEVITABLE



Poverty is a problem of political choices, it is neither natural nor acceptable. We all have a role to play in addressing poverty: **We will set out our contribution to tackling poverty in Scotland.**

The first of the Stick Your Labels Campaign Stigma pledges is aimed at challenging the idea that poverty is inevitable by getting organisations to state clearly what they will do to help address poverty.

One of the biggest challenges that we face in addressing poverty in Scotland, is the widespread belief that the existence of poverty is simply inevitable. It is seen as simply a part of modern life, and that there is relatively little that can be done to change this fact. Around 35 per cent of people in Britain currently believe that poverty is inevitable, with another 13 per cent believing that it is simply down to luck.¹ In order to challenge the existence of poverty, it is important that we show people that this is a myth, and poverty need not exist in a country as rich as Scotland.

With almost half of people thinking that the existence of poverty is inevitable or down to luck¹, it is possible to get disheartened about the possibility of change, but this is not the end of the story. People often hold contradictory views on poverty, and the recently published 'Public attitudes to poverty, inequality and welfare in Scotland and Britain' shows this is still the case.

Tackling poverty

While people may say they believe poverty will always exist, 98 per cent of people believe tackling child poverty is important, and three quarters of people felt it was the job of the Scottish Government to do something about it.²

In Scotland, there are currently 820,000 people living in poverty, including 180,000 children. Of these children, 59 per cent live in a household where someone works.³ While poverty is about more than money, for these families at least the cause is clear – low incomes. By clearly identifying the cause, we can start to find the solution to poverty. For many of those in work the problems are about low wages and underemployment.

Change is possible

Child poverty figures demonstrate that change is possible. In the decade to 2010/11, the child poverty rate in Scotland fell from 31% to 21% after housing costs (AHC).⁴ Scotland went from having a higher child poverty rate than England and Wales, to having a much lower rate. There are many reasons for this, including big policy changes such as the introduction of Tax Credits and the National Minimum Wage. It was also about actions taken at a more local level, for example to support more lone parents into employment. Unfortunately, it is likely that these trends will be reversed over the next 5 years, with the Institute for Fiscal Studies predicting as many as 100,000 more children in Scotland living in poverty by 2020.

Both the decline in child poverty in Scotland in decade up to 2010/11, and the recent IFS predictions show that policy decisions impact poverty levels. The existence of poverty is a political choice, not an inevitability, and it is only by acknowledging this that we can expect to see real change happen.

¹ Scottish Government (2015) 'Public attitudes to poverty, inequality and welfare in Scotland and Britain' <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00473561.pdf>

² Scottish Government (2015) 'Public attitudes to poverty, inequality and welfare in Scotland and Britain' <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00473561.pdf>

³ Scottish Government (2014) 'Poverty and Income inequality in Scotland: 2012/13' <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00473561.pdf>

⁴ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2013) 'Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in Scotland in Scotland 2013' <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-exclusion-scotland-summary.pdf>



YOUR contribution to tackling poverty

To change the negative attitudes towards those living in poverty and challenge the pessimism that poverty is inevitable it is essential to show where change is being made. One of the things we all can do is to be clear about the actions we are taking to address poverty. Below we highlight some of the things that your organisation could do to show that they are serious about tackling poverty.

By signing up to the Stick Your Labels pledges, you are agreeing to set out what your organisation is planning to do help address poverty. What different organisations are able to do will vary depending on their main purpose, the sector they operate in, their size and a range of other factors. No matter whether in the public sector, the voluntary and community sector or the private sector, all organisations can help address poverty.

So for a company from the private sector it may be about signing up to pay the Living Wage, or to sign up to the Fair Tax mark, or giving employees time off for volunteering, or supporting local anti-poverty charities. For public sector organisations like Local Authorities it means going beyond their statutory duties by producing a specific anti-poverty strategy. Renfrewshire Council produce a clear strategy, as have many others, which they will now implement.



It doesn't matter whether the action is big or small, the important thing is that the public know that your organisation is committed to tackling poverty. **Organisations across Scotland are in a position to shape the way we think about poverty.** If more of us believed that we really can tackle poverty, then some of the negative and misguided attitudes to those living in poverty.

When you sign up to Stick Your Labels, we will help you develop your anti-poverty plan and will publicise your aims. By working together we can help tackle the stigma of poverty and make a real difference to the lives of people across Scotland.

To get involved contact us at:

0141 353 0440

admin@povertyalliance.org



STIGMA PLEDGE NO. 2: LANGUAGE MATTERS



How we talk about poverty and how we portray it can stigmatise and harm people: **We will never use language that may stigmatise people experiencing poverty.**

The second of the Stick Your Labels Campaign pledges focuses on the key issue of the language that we use to discuss people who claiming benefits and people who are living on low incomes. The language we use affects the way we think about poverty and, in turn, the solutions we develop. It is essential that we avoid language that may stigmatise those on low incomes.



ignores that there are people who may not be able to work but contribute to society in other ways. It is important to recognise the value of unpaid work too, both to our society and our economy. By using phrases such as these, and a tendency to focus on individual causes of poverty, we are moving back towards the language of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving poor'.

Over recent years there has been a hardening of attitudes towards those in poverty, accompanied by an increase in individuals being blamed for their poverty. This increased negativity towards people experiencing poverty is partly driven by the divisive rhetoric deployed by the media and politicians when describing people in receipt of benefits.

'Hardworking families'

We are all aware of the phrase 'strivers and skivers' but, it is often the more nuanced language that can be the most divisive. Phrases such as 'hardworking families' imply that there are families who aren't hard working and divides people into 'them' and 'us'. The recent focus of politicians on 'working' families'

'Three generations of families out of work'

There is a strong belief in Scotland that poverty is caused by people not wanting to work.¹ This is associated with a belief in the existence "culture of worklessness" which is assumed to be the result of such unemployment. The extent of inter-generational unemployment is frequently overstated. In the entire UK, there are only 15,000 households where two or more generations have 'never worked' and in thirty-five percent of these cases the second generation has been out of education for less than a year.² In addition to being inaccurate, the idea of a "culture of worklessness"

¹ McKendrick, J.H. (2014) 'COUNTING POVERTY IN SCOTLAND - NUMBERS THAT SHOULD SHAPE OUR PRIORITIES FOR ANTI-POVERTY ACTIVITY BEYOND 2014' in Scottish Anti Poverty Review http://povertyalliance.org/userfiles/files/SAPR_16_AUTUMN_14.pdf

² Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2012) Poverty: The Role of Institutions, Behaviours, and Culture: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/poverty-role-institutions-behaviours>

³ Ibid p.26

ATTITUDES MATTER



is also divisive. This myth suggests that people experiencing poverty differ from others in terms of their fundamental values and aspirations³. This contributes to an “us” vs. “them” narrative in which people with experience of poverty are accused of having poor values – including laziness or the unwillingness to work – and of not wanting the best for themselves or their children. The pervasiveness of these assumption is illustrated by the fact that a large number of Scottish people now view “unwillingness to work” as a major cause of poverty, and see this as being encouraged by overly “generous” benefits levels⁴.

Impact of stigma

Evidence suggests that the stigmatisation of people in receipt of benefits has negative impacts on their well-being and may reduce benefit take up.⁵ Turn2us suggest that benefit stigma in Britain is primarily driven by the perception that claimants are ‘undeserving’.⁶ They argue that looking at trends over time, non-take-up of benefits has risen concurrently with stigma and that stigma has also had a negative impact on claimants own sense of self-worth.⁷

Change is possible

The good news is that change is possible! The See Me campaign is a clear demonstration of this. While there is still a stigma surrounding mental health, there is no doubt that there is a much greater understanding and acceptance towards people with mental health problems

today. See Me has certainly contributed to a better understanding of mental health.

By signing the Organisational Pledges your organisation will be publically committing to never use language that may contribute to stigmatising people living on low incomes. Whether in policy documents, speeches, press release, on twitter or Facebook, you will make sure that the language that is used is sensitive to the realities of poverty. When your organisation speaks about people on low incomes with respect it will lay the basis for longer term change in attitudes to poverty.

What your organisation can do:

- Share your commitment with people in your organisation
- Promote the pledge with your clients, customers or members
- Encourage others to sign the stigma pledges

To get involved contact us at:

0141 353 0440

admin@povertyalliance.org



WORKING TOGETHER TO COMBAT POVERTY

⁴ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2012) Poverty: The Role of Institutions, Behaviours, and Culture: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/poverty-role-institutions-behaviours>

⁵ Scottish Government (2015) ‘Public attitudes to poverty, inequality and welfare in Scotland and Britain’ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00473561.pdf>

⁶ Turn2us (nd) ‘Benefits stigma in Britain’ <http://www.turn2us.org.uk/PDF/Benefits%20Stigma%20in%20Britain.pdf>

⁷ Turn2us (nd) ‘Benefits stigma in Britain’ <http://www.turn2us.org.uk/PDF/Benefits%20Stigma%20in%20Britain.pdf>

STIGMA PLEDGE NO. 3: ACTIONS CHANGE ATTITUDES



To change beliefs about poverty requires action across our whole society: **We will develop actions that help address negative attitudes towards people experiencing poverty.**

The third of the Stick Your Labels Campaign pledges focuses on what organisations can practically do to address negative attitudes to those living on low incomes.

We are all responsible for tackling poverty. Each of us has a role to play. We need to take practical actions to address attitudes where we can. This briefing will highlight why this is important and what your organisation can do it.

Practical steps to tackle attitudes

A report published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2009¹ found that change is possible. It isn't easy to change people's perceptions and attitudes but there are some things which we know work:

- 1 Real-life stories are important and can demonstrate to an audience that people in poverty are no different to anybody else.
- 2 Campaigning on particular measures or policies to help people experiencing poverty, but focusing on specific groups of people living in poverty for whom the public is perceived to have more sympathy, such as children and those on low wages.
- 3 Focus on a specific problem and present a clear solution.

For campaigning organisations by ensuring that the actions you take reflect these three points, you can make real progress in helping to tackle negative attitudes towards people experiencing poverty. However, it is not just campaigning organisations that can take actions to address attitudes to poverty. Below we give some examples of what where others have tried a variety of things to change attitudes.

Glasgow Poverty Leadership Panel

Glasgow's Poverty Leadership Panel provides one example of a campaign to tackle stigma. The Poverty Leadership Panel decided to focus their work on stigma after speaking to people with direct experience of poverty and hearing about the impact stigma had on their lives.

The PLP brought together people from the 3rd sector, the public sector and people with experience of poverty who agreed two goals for the campaign.

- Improving services so they're as responsive as possible to the needs of people living in poverty
- Ensuring that we do not stigmatise people struggling against poverty.

The PLP used case studies and captured people's real experiences on camera. They have also ensured that at all stages people with direct

experience of poverty were represented. To complement the campaign, and to build understanding at the top level of organisations, they have also launched a mutual mentoring programme by matching a senior member of staff with someone who has directly experienced poverty. While the campaign is still in its infancy, feedback so far has been positive and we would hope to see this approach being replicated across the country.

<http://povertyleadershiptpanel.org.uk/>

PEOPLE
MAKE
GLASGOW
FAIRER

¹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2009)

'Building public support for eradicating poverty in the UK' <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/public-support-eradicating-poverty>



See Me: Tackling Mental Health Discrimination

See Me is Scotland's campaign to change public attitudes to mental health. The campaign is built on the idea that everyone has the same fundamental human rights. They believe that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to receive fair treatment if they are ill or distressed.

In the last year they have been all over the country growing the movement and adding more passionate voices to the thousands that have joined with See Me over the last 10 years. As part of their work in communities they have recruited and trained Community Champions, they have organised nationwide media campaign, and have had more than 600 organisations signed up to a series workplace pledges.

See Me have been successful as a result of hard work and taking a variety of approaches to tackling stigma. Their work with real people has allowed many people to understand what mental illness really means and why no one should be discriminated against. For more information visit <https://www.seemescotland.org/>



Practical action YOU can take to tackle poverty stigma

Changing public attitudes to poverty can seem like an overwhelming task when so many negative messages come through the media every day but there are things you can do to start making a difference in your organisation. Whether it is changing the media messages you send out, providing training and information for your staff, or getting involved in local anti-poverty activity, it can all make a difference.

The Poverty Alliance will be happy to discuss with you what is practical and feasible for your organisation. Please get in touch with us to find out more.

What your organisation can do:

- Carry out poverty awareness activity with your staff or members
- Support the Stick Your Labels campaign in social media
- Challenge stigmatising language when you hear it

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