

this was

poverty & homelessness action week

2014

a new direction

As always, Poverty & Homelessness Action Week 2014 saw events take place across the UK which raised vital funds and awareness. You can read about some of the highlights overleaf.

Church Action on Poverty, Housing Justice and Scottish Churches Housing Action are sad to announce that we have decided to bring the partnership to an end. Action Week 2014 was the final year of operation. The partners thank everyone who has contributed to the work – supporters, churches, friends and sponsors.

Poverty & Homelessness Action Week was established in 2008, linking Homelessness Sunday with Poverty Action Sunday. Over the seven exciting years of activity, there have been significant achievements. However, it has proved impossible to cover the costs of coordinating Action Week, and the partners are no longer in a position to subsidise this activity.

Our themes have been: 'Opening Doors, Opening Hearts'; 'Voices from the Edge'; 'Enough for All'; 'Who Counts?'; 'Breaking Barriers'; 'Can You Cast the First Stone?'; and 'Standing With People in Crisis'.

Through these themes, we have successfully:

- Linked the issues of homelessness and poverty, and raised their public profile
- Delivered worship materials and children's resources
- Developed a prayer calendar, with a daily reflection through the week
- Engaged grassroots churches and community organisations
- Demonstrated successful partnership working
- Opened hearts and minds to people experiencing exclusion through these issues.

All this has been done on a shoestring. The partner organisations have decided that we will now each focus on our own fundraising. Relationships remain strong, and we will work jointly as appropriate. The worship resources will remain online at www.actionweek.org.uk for anyone who wishes to use them – sadly, it looks as if they will remain relevant for some years to come.

We thank all who have been with us on our journey, and invite you to continue standing with us in our shared vision of justice for people on the edges of our society. In 2015, Homelessness Sunday will be on 18 January, and Poverty Action Sunday on 15 February. We hope as many Action Week supporters as possible will take part in both.



Church Action
on Poverty

Poverty Action Sunday is the last Sunday before Lent: 15 February 2015.

To take part and raise funds for Church Action on Poverty's work, please visit www.church-poverty.org.uk or call 0161 236 9321.



Housing Justice



Scottish Churches
Housing Action

Homelessness Sunday will be on 18 January in 2015.

To take part and raise funds for our work, please contact Housing Justice (www.housingjustice.org.uk, 020 3544 8094) or Scottish Churches Housing Action (www.churches-housing.org, 0131 477 4500)

Truth, Lies, and the Spirit Level

Over 100 people gathered in York on 31 January to hear Professors Kate Pickett and Jonathan Bradshaw of the University of York, Paul Morrison of the Joint Public Issues Team, Dr Paul Edmondson-Jones of York City Council, and chair Dean of York the Very Revd Vivienne Faull, speak on poverty and inequality in the UK today. They talked about the damaging effects of government policy and inequality, as well as debunking many myths about poverty. At a local level, the situation in York was detailed, and the people attending exchanged names and organisations, forming networks to better fight poverty and inequality.



Poverty and Inequality in Britain Today
Photo from www.comehear.org

A fresh start

The Fresh Start East Dunbartonshire starter pack project was launched during Action Week, in association with East Dunbartonshire Women's Aid (EDWA).

In Bishopbriggs, Kirkintilloch and Lenzie – to the north of Glasgow – members of congregations were invited to donate items to make up starter packs – bedding, kitchen equipment, and cleaning materials.

Revd Graham Finch of Cadder Church in Bishopbriggs says: "Our congregation has supported East Dunbartonshire



Ruth Cribbis and Alison Little receive some of the goods donated by local churches

Women's Aid for a number of years now at Christmas with gifts of toilet bags and toys. Fresh Start, the new Starter Pack initiative, was a natural development from there... It took three cars to get the donations to the store!"

Church services

As in previous years, church services were the most popular type of event, in which great use was made of the Action Week worship guide. Other churches set up displays to educate attendees about poverty and homelessness, such as at St Wilfrid's Church in Preston (see right).



Photo by Ged Cunningham



Photo by David Price

St Mark's Broomhill in Sheffield invited local MP Paul Blomfield (see left) to address the congregation at the Homelessness Sunday Eucharist. He talked about the large disparity between rich and poor

in his constituency, political moves to regulate payday lending, and local food banks. His conclusion was a direct summons to action: "We cannot stand back from a potential social catastrophe."

Housing for the Common Good

At this event in Southwark, Housing Justice hosted David Orr (CEO of the National Housing Federation) in a discussion about the acute shortage of affordable housing – a problem which poses fundamental questions about 'what sort of society we want to live in' and calls the Church to urgent action. As David Orr put it, "being well housed is critical for the whole nation, critical to our future economic success, and critical to our wellbeing".



From left to right: Terry Drummond, Alison Gelder, and David Orr. Photo by Housing Justice.