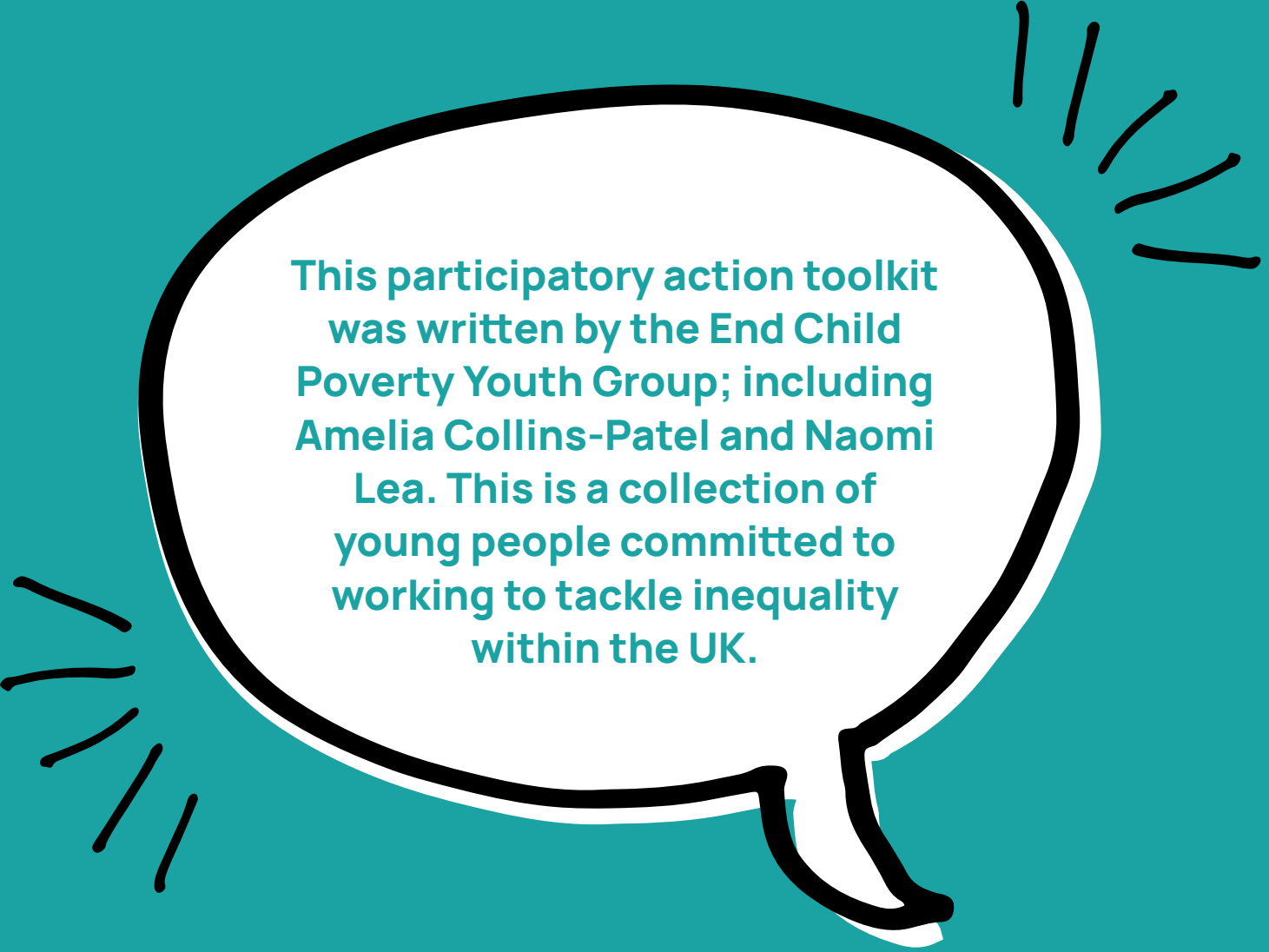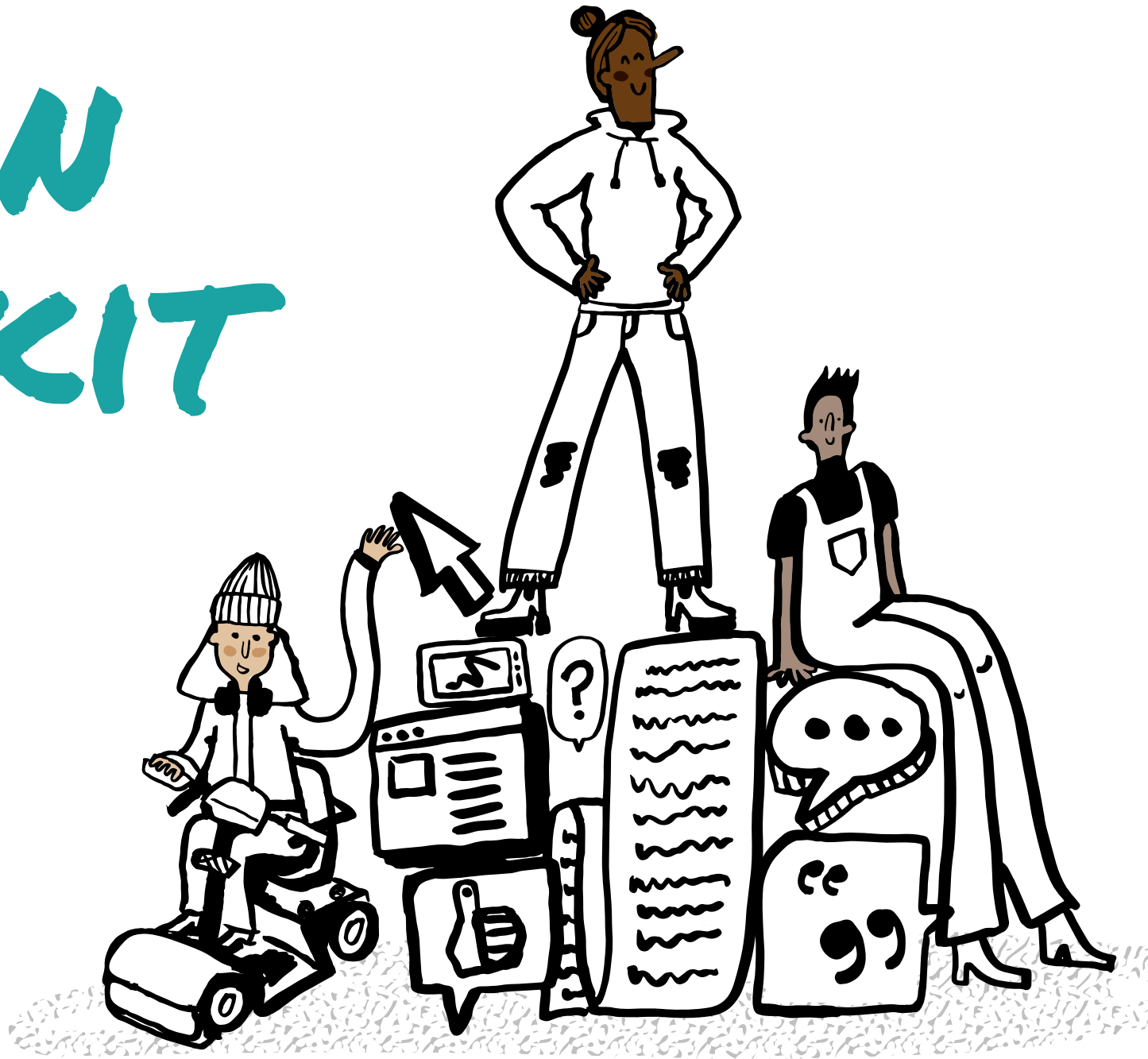# Action Toolkit

Talking about...
POVERTY

This participatory action toolkit was written by the End Child Poverty Youth Group; including Amelia Collins-Patel and Naomi Lea. This is a collection of young people committed to working to tackle inequality within the UK.

In an average UK classroom

9
CHILDREN OUT OF
30
WILL BE LIVING IN POVERTY.

Child poverty is common in the UK today. But it can be a really difficult issue to talk about. Young people may perhaps feel ashamed at the living conditions that their families are faced with, and could believe that they are in some way responsible for the levels of poverty there are experiencing. These feelings can make it hard to openly discuss the root causes of poverty in the UK today.

1 - Child Poverty Action Group, Facts and Figures: https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures

How to use this Toolkit

This toolkit contains resources and activities for groups who want to start the conversation around poverty in the UK – especially for groups of people who are 'experts by experience' (that is, people who have experience of child poverty as children, young people or parents).

The toolkit is broken down into two sections:

Section A

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Provides tools and resources to run meetings where young people can build up to sharing their understanding of child poverty, and possibly their experiences of living in poverty.

Section B

NEXT STEPS FOR ACTION ON CHILD POVERTY

Provides resources for turning these discussions in to campaign actions.

Each meeting outline lasts between one and a half to two and a half hours and includes a variety of activities. You may want to spend longer on some activities, or adapt or miss out others, or organise the meetings according to a different format. It is completely up to you.

However, we strongly recommend setting a group agreement at the beginning and debriefing at the end of each meeting to help keep everyone safe and supported as you talk about poverty. Do not forget to add refreshment or comfort breaks as well!

BEFORE YOU START...

We know starting to talk about poverty can be scary. But being prepared makes a difference. Regardless of where your conversations take you, there are certain things you need to have in place at the start to make sure everyone is safe and able to take part.

Use the checklist opposite to make sure you have everything you need. Once you have this in place, you are ready to get your group started.

PRE-MEETING CHECKLIST

☑ *A safeguarding policy (find out how to develop a safeguarding policy here:* https://learning. nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/ writing-a-safeguarding-policy-statement*)*

☑ *Clear information for children, young people and families about the project (download a sample information sheet for children, young people and families here:* https://learning.nspcc.org. uk/media/1670/example-consent-form.pdf*)*

☑ *A group of people who want to take part*

☑ *Two people to facilitate the group*

MEETING IN PERSON:

A comfortable room with plenty of space and privacy

Pens, paper and post-it notes

Refreshments for the meetings – check any allergies or dietary requirements first!

MEETING ONLINE:

Everyone has access to a computer, tablet or phone with internet connection and can use meeting software such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

You set aside some time to deal with internet and connection problems.

You can use online applications such as Miro or Jamboard to run virtual sessions with post-it notes or diagrams which everyone can contribute to.

GETTING STARTED

1 WELCOME!

10 mins

Aim: To help to put people at ease and enable everyone to speak.

RESOURCES

IN PERSON:

- Name labels to hand out, either pre-written or for people to write themselves
- Pens or pencils

ONLINE: ○○○

- Ask people to add their name to their screen for everyone to see

TASK:

Ask each person to say their name and a 'fun fact' about themselves (for example, an unusual middle name or hidden talent).

Keep it light-hearted – more personal details will be shared in later activities.

2 ICEBREAKER

15 mins

Aim: To help group members get to know each other and to feel comfortable in the group context.

RESOURCES

This will depend on the activity you select.

TASK:

Pick an icebreaker that is appropriate for the nature and age of your group; some suggested icebreaker activities are listed on page 30.

3 INTRODUCTIONS

30 mins

Aim: To help remind everyone of the purpose of the group, and establish an equal and respectful atmosphere.

RESOURCES

IN PERSON:
- Post-it notes
- pens or pencils

ONLINE:
- Access to online post-it notes, using a Miro board for example
- Or, the facilitator types up responses and shares their screen

TASK:

If meeting face to face ensure everyone is comfortable and sitting in a way that reflects an equal and supportive environment (for example, in a circle).

Explain that this is a chance for everyone to get to know each other by sharing why they have come to the meeting and what they want to get out of the group. Ask for a volunteer to go first. Although you are facilitating the meetings, the space is for all the group members and their views are most important.

As each person says what they would like to get out of the group, ask them to also write their answers on post-it notes.

Display the post-it notes on the walls or on a large sheet of paper. Take time to review the ideas as a group, and share reflections on the differences and similarities.

This activity can help to clear up any misunderstandings about the group and, even more importantly, help to steer the group's work towards meeting the aims of all the group members.

4 SETTING UP A GROUP AGREEMENT

30 - 45 mins

Aim: Developing a group agreement together enables everyone to have a say in how the group will work and share responsibility for meeting its aims. Everyone should know why they are attending the group and what is expected of them.

Any organisational requirements (like confidentiality and safeguarding policies) need to be clear to everyone too.

RESOURCES

IN PERSON:
- Large paper or flip chart paper
- Pens
- Materials to stick the agreement to the wall

ONLINE:
- Access to online post-it notes, using a Miro board for example.
- Or, the facilitator types up responses and shares their screen

TASKS:

Explain the exercise and ask each person to suggest at least one thing that would help the group to feel like a safe space where they could discuss anything they wanted to share

Make sure common issues such as confidentiality, respect, and approaching the discussion with an open mind are covered, as well as any organisational policies.

Write down what you have agreed and display it prominently at every meeting

Let the group know that this agreement is theirs, so they can revisit it whenever they want to. Encourage them to take responsibility for making sure everyone sticks to the agreement. You can do so too, but it is better if group members take responsibility for this themselves.

DEBRIEFING

15 mins

Aim: Develop the habit of debriefing at the end of each group meeting, so that group members can reflect on the discussion, and let you know if they are struggling with anything

Sometimes just sharing the fact that it has been difficult is sufficient to help someone feel supported.

TASK:

Each person in the group take turns to answer one or more reflexive questions. You can select these yourself or ask the group to come with ideas

These questions should help the group members to process their responses to the session and to focus on looking after themselves – especially after difficult conversations

One facilitator could go first to show the participants that all responses are okay.

YOU COULD START WITH:

• Say one thing you have learnt from today's meeting.

• In three words, how are you feeling after today's meeting?

• What is one nice thing you are going to do for yourself this week? (For example, have a cup of tea and a rest after the meeting, or listen to your favourite music.)

Make sure everyone has the chance to speak. Follow up with anyone who seems upset in any way (one-to-one if that is more appropriate)
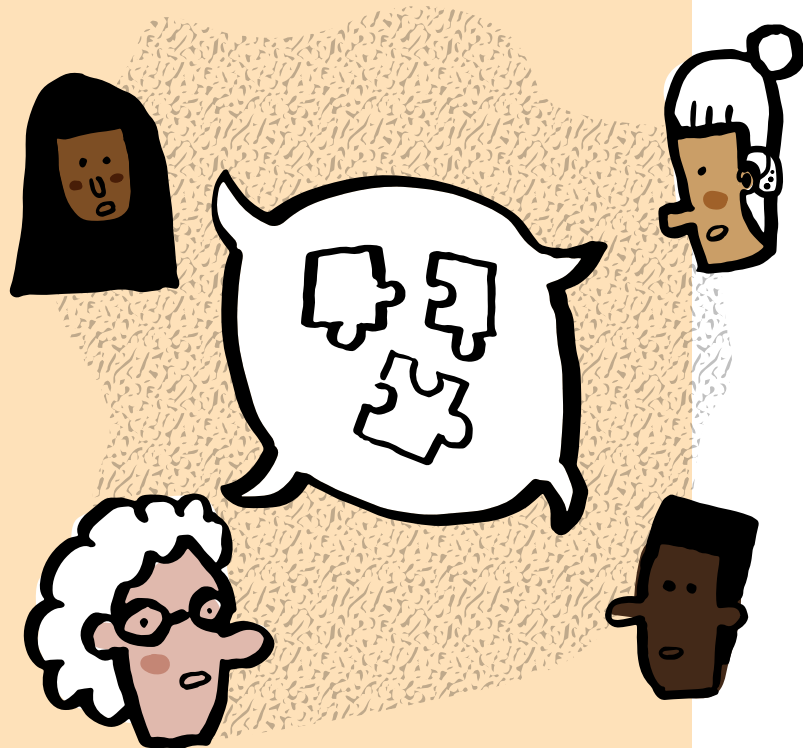
Welcome participants to the session and display the Group Agreement created in the previous session for all to see. You could always read through this again, especially if people are participating virtually, to ensure everyone understands it.

TALKING ABOUT POVERTY

1 Icebreaker

This should take about 15 minutes. For more details about how to run this activity, see Meeting one on page 30.

15 mins

2 POVERTY QUIZ

30 mins

Aim: Starting with a quiz is a light-hearted way to get people thinking about what poverty is, and what it means for themselves and their local area.

It highlights how common perceptions and misconceptions about poverty can have an impact on children, young people and families living in poverty.

RESOURCES

Facts and figures about poverty. You can find up-to-date information from the Child Poverty Action Group website or the End Child Poverty coalition website. You can also invite group members to research their own facts.

TASK:

Read out statements about poverty, based on the facts and figures that you have found. Ask group members to show whether they agree or disagree by raising their hands, or label one side of the room 'True' and the other 'False' and ask them to move to the side that reflects their answer

If people are participating virtually you can ask them to raise their hand if they believe the statement to be true, or keep their hands down if they believe it is false.

Ask people to share their thoughts and responses before you give the correct answer.

You can move from more factual questions towards more subjective and sensitive questions, depending on the mood in the room and how group members react. For example, 'how do you think you would feel if you were experiencing this?' Or, 'knowing this, how do you now feel?'

3 WHAT IS POVERTY?

30-60 mins

AIM: We all come to discussions of poverty with preconceptions about what it is. No matter how well-informed or not we are, messages in wider society will shape our views and thinking. This exercise allows group members to share ideas and challenge their own and other members' thinking on poverty.

You are not trying to come up with an understanding that everyone agrees on, but to examine the ways we think about poverty and the influences which affect us all.

RESOURCES

IN PERSON:
- Pens or pencils
- Paper
- Post-it notes

ONLINE:
- Virtual post-it notes such as a Miro board
- Or ask everyone to have their own pen and paper, and to be ready to hold up any illustrations etc.

TASK:

Everyone spends a few minutes on their own, writing or drawing any words, phrases, or images that come into their mind when they hear the word 'poverty' or the phrase 'child poverty'. These might be their personal views, or messages which they are aware of, whether or not they agree with them.

Ask group members to stick their work up on the walls or on a large sheet of paper. Or if working online, to contribute to the Miro board .

Give everyone the chance to talk about what they have written or drawn and to look at what other people have done. Encourage the group to look for similarities and differences between the ideas about poverty. Consider together how the messages we hear around us about poverty might impact people living in poverty.

4   'A Day In The Life...'

30 - 60 mins

AIM: To allow group members to reflect in depth on what life in poverty is like, for themselves and/or for others, by exploring in detail what a 'normal day' in poverty is like – and what the world could look like if no-one lived in poverty.

This will help group members consider what changes are needed at different levels to help eradicate poverty and, in the meantime, to minimise the impact of poverty on children, young people and families.

RESOURCES

IN PERSON:
- Pens or pencils
- Paper
- Post-it notes

ONLINE:
- Someone to take notes, either with a pen and paper or via Word

TASK:

Divide the main group into small groups and ask the group members to make two 'Day Plans':

- One for a perfect day in the life of a child, young person, or parent,
- And one for a day in the life of a child, young person, or parent who is experiencing poverty.

They can interpret this however they like.

Ask them to think through each part of the day, and draw or write this out on a timeline, including as much detail as possible about what is happening, why, and how it affects whether the day is a good one or not. They need to identify the points in the day when poverty has a significant impact on someone's life.

When they have finished, ask each small group to talk the whole group through both of their day plans.

If working in person ask the small groups to swap their plans with each other and to use post-it notes to suggest what could happen differently in the day of the person experiencing poverty (for example, 'better pay', 'free school uniform', 'more job opportunities for young people', and so on). Encourage the groups to be creative. There are no wrong answers, and suggestions do not have to be realistic!

If working online ask each group to look again at their own plan and make suggestions for how things could happen differently.

Finally, ask each group to talk through their suggestions to the whole group. Start with a completely open mind, and then discuss whether and how their suggestions might be possible.
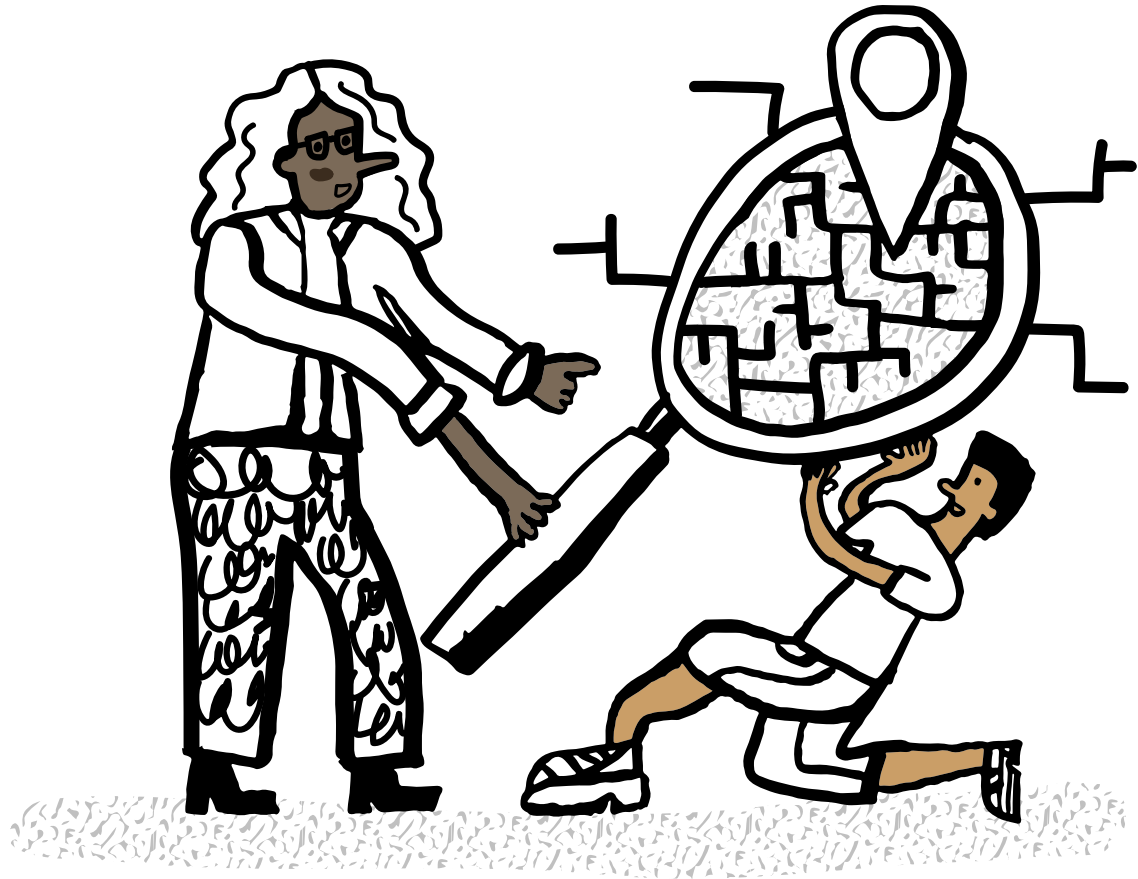
5 DEBRIEF

15 mins

This should take about 15 minutes. For more details about how to run this activity, see Meeting one.

MAPPING OUR LOCAL AREA

1 *ICEBREAKER*

This should take about 15 minutes. For more details about how to run this activity, see Meeting one.

15 mins

2 WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE?

30 - 60 mins

AIM: To allow group members to do their own research to discover availability of help for those people living in poverty in their area. Depending on where your group is, this might mean their street, their neighbourhood, their town, their city, or a larger region if they live in a rural area. Or, if they come from across the country this could be an imagined local area, based on a combination of the areas where they all live.

It encourages people to think creatively about the range of services and support available, and how easy or difficult it might be for people to access them.

RESOURCES

IN PERSON:
- Maps of the local area if all participants come from the same area
- An internet connection
- Devices to access the internet
- Paper and pens

ONLINE: ○○○
- You may want to use a collaborative platform such as Jamboard

TASK:

If working with a group based across a wide geographical area first ask them to draw up a 'map' of an imagined town. This could include a high street, a bank, supermarket, shops a school etc.

In pairs or small groups, use either real or imagined maps and websites to identify and write down services and support in your local area that might be useful to people experiencing poverty.

Encourage group members to be creative. It is not just about support provided from the government but includes access to affordable shops; public spaces e.g. parks; health and education services; and so on. Also consider what barriers might prevent people in poverty from accessing them

Ask each group tells the whole group what they have proposed. The whole group then discuss any similarities and differences between the different views.

Identify providers or services that the group are particularly interested in, or have knowledge about. This will help with the next activity

3   CONTINUING TO MAP OUR AREA

30 - 60 mins

AIM: To develop a sense of problems and potential in the area where your group is located. It builds on Activity two.

It provides group members with an opportunity to identify problems and consider solutions, and explore how members of the local community could campaign for change together.

RESOURCES

IN PERSON:
- Pens or pencils
- Large or flip chart paper
- Post-it notes in at least three colours

ONLINE:
- Paper and pens
- Or access to an online creative platform such as Jamboard

TASK:

Ask the group to look again at the map of their local area. As before, they can define their local area in whichever way makes most sense for them, including online communities and resources.

The map does not have to be geographically accurate, but should include places which the group members identify as important to them and relevant to people living in poverty, starting with the places and services identified in Activity two.

Next, ask people to add descriptions of poverty 'hot spots' to the map (that is, places where poverty is relevant to the experiences of local people – and possibly even themselves).

For example, a row of shops which people living in poverty can, or cannot access; schools; parks; streets or areas which people feel are welcoming or not – anything that the group identifies as important.

Ask group members to use one colour of post-it notes to identify problems; another colour to identify good things about the local area; and a third colour to identify opportunities (places that could be helpful for people in poverty or changes that could be made to make problem areas into strengths).

If working in person add these post-it notes to the relevant spots on the map. Or if working online ensure that one person is taking notes.

Finally, take time as a group to look at the map and discuss all the different impressions people have of the local area, and their suggestions for change.

Consider as a group whether there is anything in particular that inspires you to campaign or take action, and make a note of any ideas! These will be useful for meeting five!

4 INVITE A SPEAKER

20 mins

AIM: Arranging to hear from someone working on the frontline against poverty in your local will help widen your group's understanding of the issues.

It may inspire them to campaign or take action or simply encourage them to carry on thinking and talking about poverty. Either is fine!

Please note: This activity involves the group in choosing and inviting a speaker for a separate session in the future.

RESOURCES

None at this stage, although you will need a room to hold a meeting with an invited speaker or access to the internet for an online meeting if working remotely. You may also need to consider making available funding to cover the speaker's costs.

TASK:

Look back at the local resources and services that you identified in Activity two and ask the group to choose one or more that they would like to know more about (for example, foodbanks, a local group working with young people, anything you like!)

Work out how you will approach the organisation and invite someone to visit the group.

Select who should approach the organisation to ask if someone is available to speak to the group, ideally at the next session.

5 DEBRIEF

15 mins

This should take about 15 minutes. For more details about how to run this activity, see Meeting one.

If you identified a speaker to come to this session in Meeting three you could start this session with their talk. You could ask them to speak for 15 or 20 minutes about their service, leaving some time for a question and answer session at the end.

SHARING OUR STORIES

1 **ICEBREAKER** **15 mins** This should take about 15 minutes. For more details about how to run this activity, see Meeting one.

2 NEVER HAVE I EVER...

30 - 60 mins

AIM: This is a gentle 'entry' into talking about experiences of poverty. It can move towards more difficult and complex issues depending on how the group feels.

It helps people to see similarities and differences in their experiences of poverty and to consider the impact of these experiences on themselves and others.

RESOURCES

A list of statements that begin 'Never have I ever...', ranging from light-hearted and non-intrusive to more serious. For example:-

Starter Statements:

Never have I ever...

- Forgotten my purse or wallet when I went out
- Forgotten that I'd already spent money I thought I had
- Wanted something which I couldn't afford

Mid-level statements:

Never have I ever...

- Been caught short of money when paying for something
- Had to ask a friend or family member to lend me money for something I didn't have
- Missed out on a trip or activity because I couldn't afford it

High-level statements:

Never have I ever...

- Felt embarrassed because I couldn't afford something other people I know had
- Been teased or made to feel ashamed because I didn't have money or something that other people have
- Lied to my friends or family that I didn't want something, because I didn't want to admit I couldn't afford it

TASK:

If meeting in person ask the group to either raise their hands or stand on one side of the room. If meeting online ask them to raise their hand.

Read out a starter statement, and ask group members to indicate if this statement is not true for them. The default stance is that the statement is true for them (this helps to reduce the stigma of actively having to identify as having had the experience described). For example, if you have been 'teased or made to feel ashamed because you didn't have money or something that other people have' you stay still or keep your hands down. If you have never felt like this you step forwards or lift you hand up

Ask for any comments on the statements as you go along. How do group members think each statement relates to poverty? How did it feel to experience something described in one of the statements? How might it feel to see someone else experience it?

Gradually start using the mid and then high-level statements, judging the mood of the group. Invite group members to add their own 'never have I ever' statements, and to explain why they have chosen them.

Allow plenty of time to discuss the responses to the statements and how it feels to acknowledge these experiences. Consider how the statements relate to poverty and the experiences that people living in poverty might have.

The purpose of this exercise is to help people reflect on what life in poverty has been like for group members, and/or what it might be like to experience poverty and these kinds of issues on a regular basis. The previous sections should have helped to build a safe and comfortable environment, but it is very important that facilitators use their judgement around doing this exercise to make sure the atmosphere remains safe and supportive.

3 LIFE MAPS

30 - 60 mins

Aim: To give group members the opportunity to tell their own stories in relation to experiences of poverty, to help identify points at which poverty created problems, as well as personal strengths and achievements.

This can help to build a greater understanding of poverty, as it is understood and experienced by different group members.

RESOURCES

IN PERSON:
- Pens and pencils in a range of colours
- Large paper or flip chart paper
- Other creative materials

ONLINE: ○○○
- Pens and paper
- Or access to Word or other creative platforms

TASK:

Working individually, each group member creates their own life map which shows how they have got to this point in their life and highlights points at which poverty, or access to resources, has had an impact on their life.

This can be done with people who have not experienced poverty, as well as with experts by experience, by asking group members to identify when having access to resources has helped them, and when they have encountered poverty in their lives.

Maps can take any form participants choose – for example a timeline, a road, a series of incidents set out chronologically, or anything else – be as creative as you like!

Remind group members at the start, and throughout, that they don't have to share anything they do not want to. They should only include things in their life map that they are comfortable to share with the group.

Share the maps in pairs and then invite group members to present their life map to the whole group. Once again, remind them that they do not have to share anything they do not want to. Encourage questions and discussion, with clear boundaries and reminders of the group agreement if necessary.

When everyone who wants to has presented their map, reflect on what this exercise has helped group members understand about the experience of poverty. What do different people's experiences have in common? What differences interest them?

4 REFLECTING ON TALKING ABOUT POVERTY

20 mins

AIM: This exercise is an opportunity to reflect on the process and decide on future actions.

RESOURCES

IN PERSON:

- Post-it notes
- Pens and pencils
- Three sheets of large or flip chart paper. Each sheet has one of the headings below:

ONLINE:

- Paper
- Pens and pencils
- A creative tool such as Jamboard which everyone can access, displaying the headings below:

One thing I've shared during the 'talking about poverty' group

One thing I've learnt from the 'talking about poverty' group

One thing I want to change in the world to prevent poverty

TASK:

Individually, ask group members write down responses to the three prompts above and stick their responses up under the relevant headings. They can write more than one post-it note for each heading if they wish.

Answers can be as detailed and ambitious as the group member likes, and answers which may not seem really ambitious but are important for individuals are very welcome. It is better to identify feasible actions than to come up with big plans which are not realistic. For example, something to do differently might simply be trying to remember that being in poverty is not a personal failing – this can still make a huge difference to the individual and to people they interact with

Take time to look over everyone else's answers, and to share reflections and thoughts.

Give the group the opportunity to make plans about what they would like to do next, and if they would like to continue their conversations about poverty.

5 DEBRIEF

15 mins

This should take about 15 minutes. For more details about how to run this activity, see Meeting one.

NEXT STEPS FOR ACTION ON CHILD POVERTY

This meeting outline includes activities and resources designed to help your group:

- *Decide whether* the group wants to build on what they have discussed in the previous sessions by campaigning on child poverty.
- *Explore what* kind of campaigning the group might like to do, and what resources they will need.

This does not have to be a big commitment. The group may decide to either join an existing national or regional campaign or plan something more local to themselves, or not to become involved in campaigning as their next step. It is entirely up to them!

## Before the session

REALITY CHECK!

Think about the resources available to support this group if they decide they want to develop and deliver a local campaign themselves.

If resources are not available say so explicitly at the start of the session, so that expectations are managed. Focus instead on the kind of campaigning which you *are* able to develop, for example playing their part in existing local, regional or national anti-poverty campaigns.

CONTACT THE END CHILD POVERTY COALITION

Get in touch via the coordinator, whose email address can be found on the End Child Poverty coalition website. They will be able to:

- Tell you whether the coalition has any resources that your group could access.
- Give you an overview of what End Child Poverty Coalition is itself doing, including national and regional campaigns which your group could join in
- Suggest speakers / trainers to help your group campaign
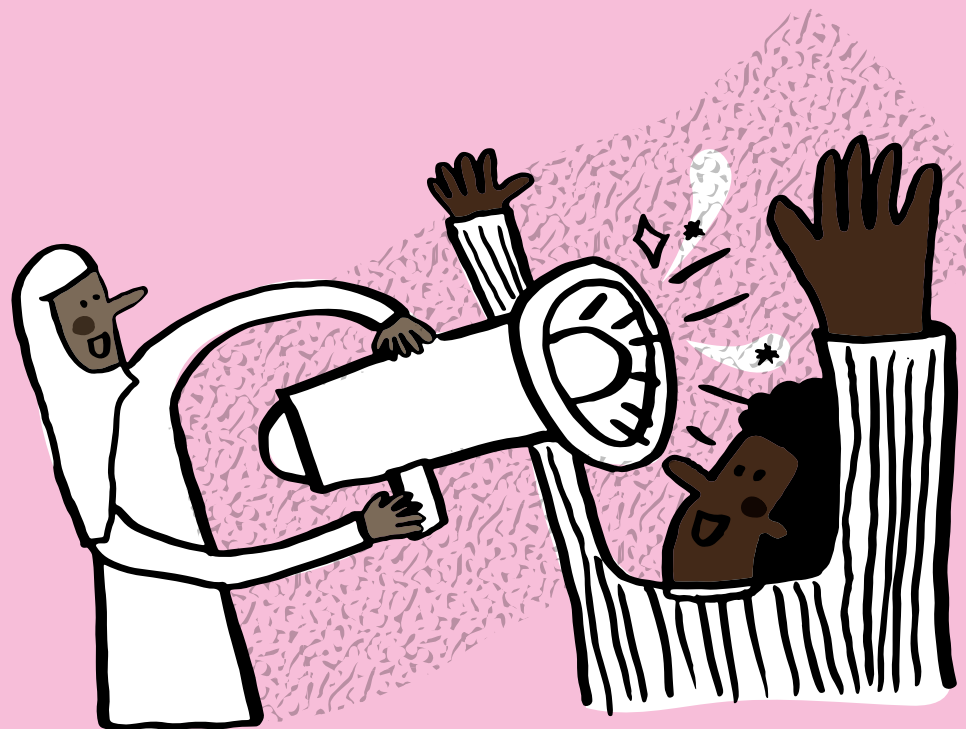
CAMPAIGNING AGAINST POVERTY

1 ICEBREAKER

15 mins

This should take about 15 minutes. For more details about how to run this activity, see Meeting one.

2 WHAT IS CAMPAIGNING?

20 mins

Aim: To ensure the group has an understanding of what campaigning is, and what it can achieve

RESOURCES

Campaigning logos and slogans to prompt if needed

IN PERSON:
- Pens or pencils and paper

ONLINE:
- Someone to take notes, either with a pen and paper or via Word

TASK:

Explain that a campaign is a way of using our power and influence to put pressure on people in power to make change happen.

As a group identify campaigns you are aware of such as Youth Climate Strikes, Black Lives Matter and Marcus Rashford's Ending Child Food Poverty work – list these for everyone to see.

Divide participants into smaller groups and ask them to think about:
- What each campaign sets out to achieve?
- What tactics did the campaigners use to try and achieve this?
- Has the campaign been successful?
- What do they think of the campaign?

3 Introducing anti-poverty campaigning

10 mins

AIM: To help put the group's campaigning in context and introduce sources of support and ideas.

RESOURCES

A copy of this statement, displayed either on flip chart paper, or on a shared computer screen which everyone can see:

"Our historic aim will be for ours to be the first generation to end child poverty. It will take a generation. It is a 20-year mission, but I believe it can be done."

Prime Minister Tony Blair, 18th March 2000

TASK:

Display the statement from former Prime Minister Tony Blair where everyone can see it. If needed explain who Tony Blair is, and why he would have made this statement.

Ask the group what their reaction is to hearing this? Now 20 plus years later do they feel this has been achieved? If not, why?

Individually, in pairs, small groups or all together, ask group members to complete the statement: **Ending child poverty is important because...**

4 What challenges have we identified in our local area?

20 - 30 mins

AIM: To focus the group on their shared motivations for campaigning.

RESOURCES

IN PERSON:
- Your map, if you have one, from Meeting three. You could make a copy of this for the group to continue writing on. If you don't have a map start with the mapping exercise
- Post-it notes
- Pens or pencils

ONLINE:
- Your map, if you have one, from Meeting three
- A note taker with access to Word or paper to write up comments from the group

TASK:

Divide participants into smaller groups and ask them to look at the map and summarise the themes that they can remember from their conversations during Meeting three. You may need to prompt them, with questions like:

What does child poverty look like in our area?

Thinking about the specific areas identified on the map, ask; What changes would you like to see in our real or imagined local areas? Write these on the map. Who has the power to make these changes? How could we get them to do this?

5 DECISION TIME!

60 mins

AIM: If the group has identified something that they want to change, then campaigning is an effective way that they can make their voices heard.

This activity introduces them to some campaigning ideas – some big, some small. These are just for inspiration, the group can come up with their own!

Contact the End Child Poverty Coalition to see if there is any upcoming national campaigning that you could join. The coalition often has an activity planned during October (as part of Challenge Poverty Week) and in May (publication of local child poverty statistics for every constituency in the UK).

You may also need to **revisit your group agreement** during the discussion and reassure people that there is never any obligation for them to share personal experiences publicly. There are many other creative and effective ways to campaign.

RESOURCES

Copies of the four campaign ideas below to look at in small groups.

IN PERSON:
- Pens or pencils and paper

ONLINE: ○ ○ ○
- Someone to take notes, either with a pen and paper or via Word

TASK:

Think about the ideas identified on the map, choose a couple which interest the group to focus on.

Look at the four ideas for campaign action below. Divide into four small groups and give each idea to one group to discuss:

Do you think this idea would work for the issue you have chosen?

What would you want to change about this idea to make it work better for this issue?

What support would you need to make it work?

Each small group then presents the idea they have been looking at back to the whole group.

Try to summarise some next steps for the group from the discussion and agree together with the group which ideas you will help them take forward.

INVITE YOUR MP, MAYOR OR LOCAL COUNCILLORS TO MEET YOU

Meeting people who have the power to change things is a really good way to raise concerns about an issue or to ask them to take a very specific action.

• Who are these people in your area?
• How could you meet to tell them about the changes that you want to see?

Is there somewhere that you could invite them to for a meeting, which could help get your message across? (For example, outside the local leisure centre to make the point that some children growing up in low-income families may not be able to afford swimming lessons or other out-of-school activities).

HOW COULD IT WORK?

In May 2021, the End Child Poverty coalition published local child poverty data for every constituency in the UK. MPs were invited to meet with representatives from the coalition on a single day – quick, 10 minute meetings with each MP. Young people joined many of these meetings to share their experiences of growing up in poverty and a video was played to the MPs who were unable to meet them in person.

FIND A CREATIVE WAY TO TALK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES

Sharing individual experiences is a really powerful way to get people involved in your campaign and encourage them to take action for change.

- Who are the people in your area able to make decisions?
- What creative ways could you find to tell them about your experiences and about the changes that you want to see?
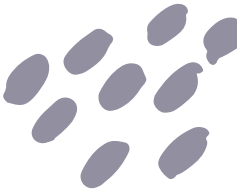
HOW COULD IT WORK?

Watch this video of Naomi and Amelia.

This video was sent to MPs by the End Child Poverty coalition.

A PUBLIC STUNT

Doing something creative to attract the attention of your local media, or to be shared on social media, is also a great way of getting a message across.

- What local media (websites, social media, radio stations or newspapers) are there in your area?

- What creative stunts could draw attention to the changes that you want to see?

- What social media platforms do people use to highlight campaigning issues?

HOW COULD IT WORK?

Campaigners held unfair football matches to show that international trade is biased against poorer countries. In the matches, one team had all the advantages (more players, bigger players, two goalkeepers) whilst the opposition were restricted (playing with legs tied together, smaller goal to score into).

It was a visual way of showing an unfair situation, which people who make decisions could be invited to take part in - without needing an expert or anyone to speak from personal experience. And it provided great photos for the local newspaper.
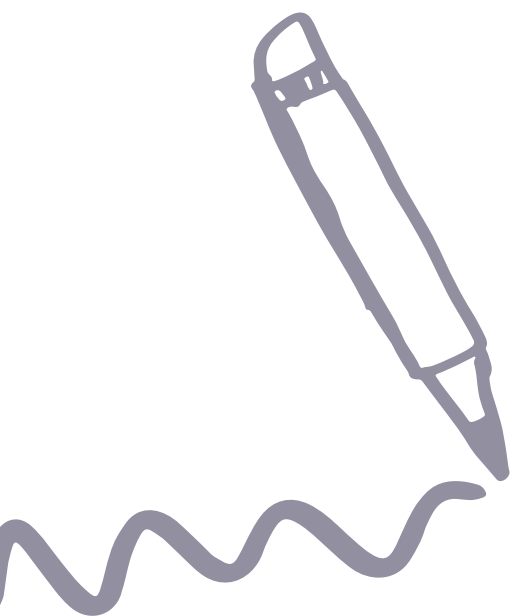
Starting a petition

People who make decisions can be influenced if they feel lots of people want something to change. A petition, lots of people's signatures in support of an issue, can be really helpful in demonstrating that many people want change.

HOW COULD IT WORK?

The footballer Marcus Rashford wanted to ensure that children did not go hungry, he wanted the government to expand access to free school meals and to provide meals and activities during the school holidays. He launched a petition on the government's own website which was signed by over 1.1 million people. As a result the government had to debate the issue, and decided to change their position – ensuring children were fed over the holidays.

6   Extra ideas and resources for a local campaign

45 mins

AIM: To understand if the group do want to campaign and work out what issues they would like to work on and how they want to do it.

TASK:

Look at the ideas from the previous activity. Are there one or two ideas which you would like to take forward? Get the group to think about the questions below to help focus the conversation. Write up the answers on the flip chart paper or on a shared computer screen.
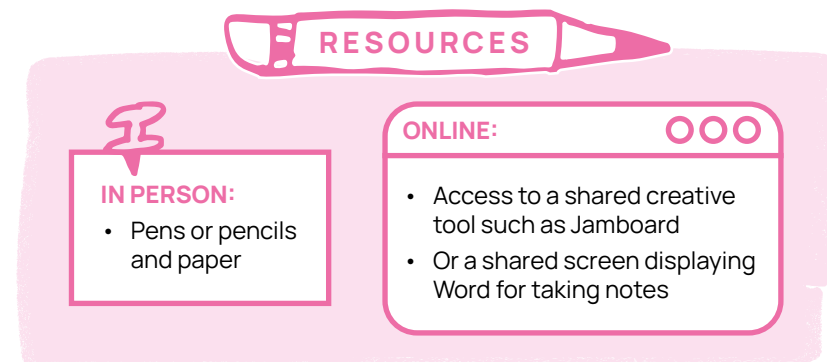
These are some of the questions the group would need to answer:

- Do we want to campaign?
- Do we want to campaign as this group?
- What do you want to see change?
- Why is it important to young people in the area?
- Who do you need tell and what do you want them to do?
- What's the best way of making contact with them? (through social media, in person, in the local newspaper, at a local council meeting?)
- Do we want to use to our personal experiences to get the message across? If so, what is the best way of doing that?
- How can we get others involved?
- What are the immediate next steps?

You could now begin to assign roles to members of the group to take the campaign forward. For example, someone could be nominated to approach a local decision maker to arrange a meeting, whilst someone else begins to write up their experiences of living in poverty for use in a press release.

You could also contact the coordinator of the End Child Poverty Coalition who may be able to help run and facilitate some campaign planning sessions, if this is something the group would like to take forward. Or they could provide support and guidance for local campaigning work generally.

RESOURCES

IN PERSON:
- Pens or pencils and paper

ONLINE:
- Access to a shared creative tool such as Jamboard
- Or a shared screen displaying Word for taking notes

7   DEBRIEF

15 mins

This should take about 15 minutes. For more details about how to run this activity, see Meeting one.

SUGGESTED ICE BREAKER ACTIVITIES

These activities work well either online or in person.
You can always adapt them to ensure they work for your group.

- **Going to a desert island** – everyone has a few minutes to think of three luxuries they would take if they knew they were about to be stranded on a desert island. Then each group member explains what these are and why they have chosen them.

- **What is your super power?** - Each group member has a few minutes to think of the super power they would most like to have. Then they can share this with the group, and explain why.

- **Three interesting facts** – divide the group into pairs or groups of three (use breakout rooms if working online), the pairs or groups interview each other to find our three interesting facts about the other person. The group then comes back together and the interviewer shares the facts they have learnt.

- **Truth, truth, lie** – each person has a few minutes to think of three 'facts' about themselves. Two of these facts must be true and the third a lie. Each person shares their facts and the rest of the group have to guess which is the lie.

- **Unique and in common** – divide participants into smaller groups (you can use breakout rooms if working virtually), ask each group to find out something the members have in common, and something which is unique to each member.

Talking about...

POVERTY

TOOLKIT

You can get in touch with the coalition by emailing the
Coordinator Rachel Walters at rachel@endchildpoverty.org.uk

Toolkit design by www.noble.studio

end child poverty

WWW.ENDCHILDPOVERTY.ORG.UK