Beyond 'them' and 'us' to "a Bigger Us" ... Poverty Truth Network Strategy (2025-2030)

Our Dream

Our dream is of a UK where poverty is a thing of the past.

Our purpose



Poverty is wrong and it isn't inevitable. If poverty is to become a thing of the past in the UK, then the wisdom of those impacted by it must be at the heart of a movement to end it. PTN exists to enable people with that wisdom to collaborate with those with the responsibility for alleviating poverty at a local, regional and national level. "Nothing about us, without us, is for us." To achieve real and sustainable change we passionately believe that we need to end the division of 'them' and 'us' – to strive instead for 'a bigger us.'

Our history

The roots of the Poverty Truth Commission are found in historical and global social movements. Civil rights, feminism and disability rights are all movements led by those who had suffered most. The UK's first PTC was launched in Glasgow in April 2009. Building upon the initial impact in Scotland, the model spread organically over the next decade. At the request of commissioners, the Poverty Truth Network was established as an independent charity in September 2019.

The Network has grown significantly over recent years, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of May 2024, Poverty Truth Commissions have now been established in over 27 locations across the UK, and in 6 of those places multiple commissions have taken place. A further 8 commissions are currently in the pipeline.

Over 800 people have served as Poverty Truth Commissioners and are now putting the lessons they have learned into practice in their communities and organisations, tackling both the symptoms of poverty and its underlying causes. This has happened – and continues to happen – enabling change for individuals, in communities, across organisations and in wider society.

Alongside supporting change through local Poverty Truth Commissions, the Network is also working nationally, bringing commissioners together to tackle some of the underlying challenges which require UK as well as local and regional solutions.

We are a Network that gathers around our values – Living Wisdom, Humanising Everyone, Paying Attention, Deepening Relationships, and Seeing More Clearly (see *Appendix 1* for their descriptions). These enable us to be clear about our approach, and authentic about how we negotiate the next phase of our development.

The context

The UK context is one where there is great inequality, deep poverty, and too few examples of positive change. Too often, people who experience poverty are scapegoated and stigmatised in dialogue about poverty. Short term answers are sought that do not address the underlying conditions in which poverty flourishes. Despite this, the Poverty Truth Network chooses to resist the cynicism that change is not possible.

Indeed, social change is happening. There is a greater acceptance of the necessity to involve people struggling against poverty in the movement to overcome it. The #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements have shone a bright light on ongoing injustice and the need to tackle it. There is an increased willingness for agencies and organisations within all sectors to work together to eradicate poverty. There is a growing appetite for devolution of power from Westminster with increased powers being given to regions, combined authorities, and nations. All these factors combine to create the climate where lasting change may be possible.

Our Practice of Change

Relationships are at the heart of cultivating lasting social change. Our approach is grounded in developing relationships between those experiencing the struggle against poverty and civic and business leaders. This is what marks out Poverty Truth Commissions and the Network as unique. Together, we create a collaborative space to grapple with what needs to change and explore how this might be done. By testing these ideas in practice, we collectively work to integrate the insights gained into organisations, communities, and wider society.

Our tasks

We believe that the momentum we have as a growing network means we are well placed to respond to the current context. To achieve our ambition, we have set out 6 key *programmatic tasks* and 1 *organisational task* to deliver on over this next period (2025-2030). They form our specific contribution to the wider generational change that is necessary if poverty is to become a thing of the past in the UK.

Programmatic Tasks

Task 1: To build a Network of Poverty Truth Commissioners across the UK.

We will strengthen the network of existing and former commissioners, enabling them to embed poverty truth 'practices' in their communities and workplaces. Through this network, opportunities to cultivate social change across a variety of sectors will emerge.

Task 2: To build the influence of poverty truth 'practices' nationally.

We will continue to develop our amplify work enabling national solutions to be found to key issues that have arisen out of local PTCs. We will develop a politics alongside programme that brings the core of Poverty Truth into the way that politics is practised. Our goal is that the principle

of bringing together people with direct experience of poverty with key national decision makers to address core challenges will become the normal way of doing things.

Task 3: To establish regional poverty truth hubs across the UK.

The influence of local PTCs often spreads to surrounding areas. We will provide a mechanism for this organic group to develop by establishing regional hubs across the UK. These hubs will support the development of local PTCs and begin to ensure that the processes and practices of Poverty Truth Commissions (PTCs) are a core way of working for public and civil society bodies operating at a regional level.

Task 4: To resource local areas to develop, deliver and embed poverty truth 'practices'.

We will continue to explore the potential for local Poverty Truth Commissions to exist across the UK making impacts upon local institutions and communities. Alongside this, we will support local places to embed the findings and practice of Poverty Truth beyond their time as a commission.

Task 5: To learn as we develop and to share transparently the differences and challenges being discovered

We will gather the impact of our work, ensuring that we remain a learning and teaching movement. We will effectively communicate the commissions and commissioner's testimonies of change.

Task 6: To contribute to a changed narrative about poverty in the UK, focused on the resilience and positive contributions of people struggling against poverty.

We will work with other organisations to challenge narratives in the media/ academia/ politics that stigmatise those experiencing poverty by providing alternative frameworks, examples and experiences.

Organisational Task

Task 7: To ensure that we have the organisational structures and resources to deliver effectively, efficiently and safely.

We want to be an organisation guided by our values, operating within budget, led by Poverty Truth Commissioners who reflect the reality of poverty in the UK, which will enable change and contribute to a wider social movement to end poverty.

We have set out the planned operationalisation of these tasks within our Milestones Plan (see Appendix 2).

Staffing [updated May 2025]

To deliver our tasks effectively, we anticipate a significant increase in staffing across the organisation, although most of this increase (5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts) will happen as a direct consequence of the development of the regional hubs, where partner organisations will become the employer. In 2025-26, we anticipate an equivalent of at least 7 FTE posts, an increase from the current 3.6 FTE. By the end of the strategy, we are planning for an additional 10 FTE posts, focused primarily on growing our work regionally.

To date, the PTN has operated largely with a growing pool of part-time staff. To maximise effectiveness as the organisation increases, it is anticipated that key roles will move to being more full-time positions.

Identified roles are:

- Director (full-time) with overall leadership responsibility
- * Partnership Manager (full-time) responsible for development and management of external partnerships, including regional hubs
- * Operations Manager (full time) responsible for day-to-day operations, including finance
- Support & Development Team (1 FTE) responsible for supporting PTCs out with regional hubs
- Amplify Team (1 FTE) responsible for the development and delivery of theme-based work at a national level
- * Parliamentary Officer (0.4) responsible for the development and coordination of Politics Alongside work
- * Communications Officer (0.6) responsible for internal and external communications
- Learning & Evaluation Officer (0.5) responsible for the coordination of learning and evaluation
- Administrative Co-ordinator (0.5) responsible for administrative coordination of the Network, working closely with the core leadership team

It is anticipated that an additional 10 (FTE) regional posts will be established in 2025-30, although though most, if not all, will be hosted by regional partners.

Posts marked with * are new posts and will be recruited in 2025-26.

Funding [updated May 2025]

We have set an indicative budget of £600,000 (2025-26), rising to £1,100,000 by the end of the strategy (2030-31). Staffing costs will continue to be the Network primary cost (£350,00 [2025-26], rising to £850,000 [2030-31]). In the early years of the strategy, our aim is £250,000 (31%) will resource regional hubs, rising to £500,000 (45%) of the Network's overall budget by 2030. As well as continuing to provide opportunities to bring commissioners together nationally, we will also aim to continue to provide seed funding (up to £100,000 per year) to support the establishment and embedding of 'poverty truth' practices. These figures are based on 2024-24 costs.

Our intention is to work with a relatively small number of national funding partners, learning alongside them in the development of the Poverty Truth Network, as well as regional funders focused on learning and impact regionally.

Appendix 1 (Values) [updated May 2025]

Poverty Truth Network Values & Practices

All our work is underpinned by a set of values that are worked out in our practices. At the same time, by expressing our practices in this work, we discover more of what we value.

Living Wisdom

We create environments where everyone participates so that a deeper wisdom may emerge.

- We know that people who know the struggle against poverty frequently have the missing wisdom and so their hopes and concerns set the agenda.
- We recognise that specific groups of people are much more likely to struggle against poverty and so we ensure they are included.
- We invite senior leaders and decision makers to offer their wisdom alongside those who struggle against poverty.

Humanising Everyone

We encourage and support one another, recognising that our conversations often require bravery and courage and include laughter and tears, hope and despair.

- We leave our titles at the door; meeting as people rather than professionals or service users; as human beings and not as labels or lanyards.
- We deliberately start with a check-in and end with a check-out so that we connect our time together with the rest of life.
- We try not to blame one another or others who aren't in the room for the problems we face. We do what we can rather than focus on what's outside our influence.
- We use creative exercises to enable participation that allows us to bring all of ourselves into the room.

Deepening Relationships

We encourage supportive relationships that focus on hearing rather than addressing each other's circumstances.

- We start by taking time with one another to build relationships and friendships; only when there is enough trust between us can we examine problems. We recognise that during our work *all* of us may experience significant life challenges.
- We ensure that the environment we meet in, and all our activities encourage flourishing relationships; food is often central to this.
- We make decisions together, encouraging each other to decide what we should focus on and how best to do it.

Paying Attention

We encourage a slow and deliberative approach so that we may listen with our hearts as well as our heads before we set our hands to action.

- We give everyone the opportunity to participate by creating brave and safe spaces for honest debate.
- We recognise that in grappling with deep issues we may experience discomfort and become aware of our prejudices. With humility, and respect for one another, we address them together.
- We are flexible in following where the energy of the conversation takes us, trusting each other to discover the right path.

Seeing More Clearly

We are open to be changed by this work; our perceptions of people in power and people in poverty will not be the same again.

- We understand that the causes of poverty are systemic, it is not enough to be simply concerned with its symptoms. At the same time, the causes and symptoms are linked and so practical progress matters.
- We explore how poverty affects communities and society as well as individuals.
- We examine the local context, realising that whilst there are no quick fix solutions, we often discover signs of hope there.

Enabling Lasting Change

We want to change how society understands poverty and those who experience it.

- We embed the changes we have discovered in organisations, institutions and communities trusting that these will ripple out to others.
- We allow each other to move on at the end of the work. Some of us may wish to continue to work together. Others will want to find ways of applying what they have learnt in other contexts.
- We will seek to be constantly learning through our work; recognising that we will never have the final word on a subject and that we should be curiously searching for new ways to tackle the issues.

Appendix 2 (Milestones Plan, 2025 – 2030)

The development of the Poverty Truth Network will continue to be flexible, reacting to changed circumstances, opportunities and challenges. Nonetheless, we consider it important to lay out in some detail our plans over the next five years, in order that we (and others) can monitor our progress against these.

Poverty Truth Netwo	Poverty Truth Network Milestone Plan (2025 – 2030)					
Aim	Year One	Years Two & Three	Years Four & Five	Notes		
	Task One: To bu	ild a Network of Poverty Truth Co	ommissioners across the UK			
We will strengthen	To develop an active	To maintain and develop the	To review the PTN database,	Whereas in the initial phase		
the network of existing and former commissioners, enabling them to	database of current (and where possible past) PTC commissioners, with an initial target of 350.	database, sub-dividing into a range of geographical and topic specific groups.	maximising opportunities for collaboration between PTC commissioners.	of the PTN the focus was on the establishment and delivery of PTCs, in the next phase additional emphasis will be on supporting		
embed poverty truth 'practices' in their communities and workplaces. Through this	To continue to host an annual in-person Commissioners' Gathering involving up to 120 commissioners.	To pilot the development of PTN festivals at national (and regional) levels.	To embed the learning from earlier festival pilots to inform the delivery of key opportunities for PTC commissioners to work collaboratively.	commissioners to embed PTC practices in their communities and workplaces; and in building a movement of PTC commissioners across the UK to deliver		
network, opportunities to cultivate social change across a variety of sectors will emerge.	To develop a series of up to 3 bespoke online PTC Commissioners' events. To pilot an initial mutual mentoring programme for up	To deliver a series of up to 5 in- person (and online) PTC Commissioners' events. To develop a mutual mentoring toolkit, available for PTC	To embed and grow the mutual mentoring programme for up to 50 additional commissioners. To deliver the mutual mentoring toolkit with up to 3 external	lasting and sustainable change. Over a five-year period, this work will develop nationally and regionally.		
J	to 20 commissioners. To develop and pilot a programme for PTC Commissioners embedding	commissioners and across the anti-poverty networks. To review and update the training programme offered to PTC Commissioners and promote to the wider sector.	partners. To fully consider the value of having PTC Commissioners' training accredited.			

the practices they experience as commissioners.		

	Task Two: To build the influence of poverty truth 'practices' nationally					
We will continue to	To maintain up to 6 Amplify	To demonstrate policy and	To review the influence of	This work builds upon some		
develop our amplify	(theme) groups, maintaining a	practice impact nationally in at	Amplify work within the broader	of the initial Amplify work		
work enabling	balance between concluding	least 3 activity areas per year,	policy environment; and to seek	which has been undertaken		
national solutions to	established work and	including the production of	to embed learning more broadly	by the PTN over recent		
be found to key	developing new areas of activity.	national resources.	across the sector.	years, bringing people together to work of issues		
issues that have	activity.			which require to be		
arisen out of local	To support up to 2 new	To work with new national	To work with up to 10 national	addressed nationally whilst		
PTCs. We will	partnerships with national	partners to effect policy change,	organisations over the five-year	maintaining the relational		
develop a politics	agencies to influence broader	increasing the number of	period to influence the way anti-	approach at the heart of the		
alongside	policy with Amplify themes.	partnerships annually.	poverty work is developed &	PTC model.		
programme that			delivered, including in the fields	As part of this the sim is not		
brings the core of			of health, education, social security and public service	As part of this, the aim is not only to influence specific		
Poverty Truth into			reform.	issues but to develop a more		
the way that politics				relationally focused process.		
is practised. Our	To involve up to 50 PTC	To increase the number of PTC	To support up to 3 external			
goal is that the	commissioners in national	commissioners involved in	organisations to establish Amplify			
principle of bringing	work, with a target of 30%	national activity by a further 50%	groups to shape policy and			
together people with	being civic & business commissioners.	annually.	practice change within their specific spheres of interest.			
direct experience of			specific spheres of interest.			
poverty with key	To conclude the initial					
national decision	partnership with Carnegie UK					
makers to address	Trust on measuring wellbeing.					
core challenges will						
become the normal	To establish a cohort of up to	To model the work of Politics	To have established Politics			
way of doing things.	20 parliamentarians operating within the UK and devolved	Alongside at the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, the	Alongside structures in all four nations (Westminster, Holyrood,			
	administrations developing	Welsh Senedd and to	Cardiff and Belfast), as well as			
	Politics Alongside	establishing work within the	within regional/combined			
	approaches.	Northern Ireland Assembly.	authority settings.			

	Task Four: To resource local areas to develop, deliver and embed poverty truth 'practices'					
We will continue to	To support up to 8 places to	To support annually up to 10	To support, over a five-year	Whilst the new strategy is		
explore the potential	establish PTCs in areas out	new PTCs in areas out with	period, up to 40 new PTCs.	focused on growing regional		
for local Poverty	with regional hubs.	regional hubs.		capacity, at least during the		
Truth Commissions	To develop and deliver a	To develop and deliver a series	To develop a series of good-	initial years there will continue to be a requirement		
to exist across the	bespoke programme and	of national facilitation tools to	practice resources, providing	for the PTN to support areas		
UK making impacts	tools to support local	support PTCs and regional hubs.	support to a range of partner	seeking to develop and		
upon local	facilitation teams to host		organisations.	deliver PTCs.		
institutions and	effective PTCs.					
communities.	-	-		As the numbers grow, the		
Alongside this, we	To provide support to a cohort of PTCs to embed good	To support 10 places to lead further commissions and/or	To support PTC commissioners to engage effectively with the	increasing emphasis will be on embedding best practice		
will support local	practice after the conclusion	embed PTC practices.	wider PTN community; to learn	and learning in areas which		
places to embed the	of their PTC(s).		together and to effect change	have hosted PTCs; and in		
findings and			locally and nationally.	supporting commissioners to		
practice of Poverty				continue to effect change.		
Truth beyond their						
time as a						
commission.						

Task Five: To learn as we develop and to share transparently the differences and challenges being discovered					
We will gather the	To develop best practice	To provide regular online and in-	To provide regular online and in-	The experimental nature of	
impact of our work,	advice to PTCs to support	person learning events for local	person learning events for local,	the PTN means that it is	
ensuring that we	them to monitor and evaluate	and regional partners.	regional and national partners.	essential to be constantly	
remain a learning	their impact.			learning and sharing that	
and teaching		- · · ·		learning with others.	
movement. We will	To refine how we articulate	To develop the necessary			
effectively	our practice of change and our values and explore how	safeguards that ensure our practice of change and values		A distinction should be made between:	
communicate the	we might ensure these are	are embedded across the		monitoring – assessing	
commissions and	practised across the Network.	network.		against agreed quantitative	
				targets;	
commissioner's	To undertake an internal	To develop the next phase of	To undertake external evaluation	evaluation – judging the	
testimonies of	evaluation of the Amplify work	Amplify work based on the	of Amplify work as part of wider	impact of work; and,	
change.	of the PTN.	learning from internal evaluation.	development of future PTN	learning - responding to what	
			strategy.	is happening and changing to	
				achieve the overall vision.	
	To recruit an external	To carry out and publish an	To publish external evaluation		
	evaluation partner to work	interim evaluation, pivoting the	with core recommendation for		
	with the PTN over the five-	work based on interim findings and recommendations.	future strategy.		
	year cycle of the strategy.	and recommendations.			
	To explore the potential of a	To work with at least two post	To deliver a national conference,		
	cohort of post graduate	graduate students per year,	in collaboration with PTN external		
	students to accompany key	focused on key areas of internal	evaluation partner, bringing		
	elements of the PTN's work.	and external interest.	together academic learning about		
			the work undertaken by PTCs		
			and the PTN.		
	To contribute at least 2	To have co-authored a series of			
	articles to journals,	articles around the work and			
	highlighting learning	learning emanating from PTCs			
	emanating from the work.	and the PTN			

	Task Six: To contribute to a changed narrative about poverty in the UK, focused on the resilience and positive contributions of people struggling against poverty					
We will work with other organisations to challenge narratives in the media/ academia/ politics that	To contribute effectively to key alliances challenging the misrepresentation of people struggling against poverty (e.g. Let's End Poverty).	To support PTCs, as well as regional hubs and Amplify work to contribute impactfully to anti- poverty alliances.	To provide key leadership – led by commissioners – in at least 1 national alliance highlighting the positive impact of people struggling against poverty to national renewal.	This is the most speculative element of the strategy. The work locally, regionally and nationally is designed to contribute to a wider narrative which encourages attitude change.		
stigmatise those experiencing poverty by providing alternative frameworks, examples and experiences.	To scope regional and national partners focused on delivering change. To identify key creative partners to work alongside in highlighting the resilience and efforts of people struggling against poverty. To develop a series of at least 3 individual and issue-based case studies demonstrating	To work with at least 3 national partners in multi-year change programmes; and to support at last 3 regional hubs to do likewise. Working with creative partners to host, at least annually, creative industries events highlighting the brilliance and creativity of people struggling against poverty. To produce, in a variety of formats, at least 3 case studies per annum demonstrating	To work with at least 2 additional national partners in multi-year change programmes; and to support at last 3 regional hubs to do likewise. Working with creative partners to host creative industries events highlighting the brilliance and creativity of people struggling against poverty. To bring together, in a variety of formats, the case studies in previous years to highlight to	It builds upon the creativity evident within PTCs (and amongst commissioners) but will require collaboration with a range of creative partners and working across a broad alliance.		

Task Sev	Task Seven: To ensure that we have the organisational structures and resources to deliver effectively, efficiently and safely.						
We want to be an	To develop a set of national	To ensure that all elements of	To review and refresh standards	To achieve its vision and			
organisation guided	standards and processes for	the PTN are following agreed	and processes to ensure that	ambition, the PTN needs to			
by our values,	PTCs, regional hubs and PTC	standards and processes whilst	they continue to support and	be well led and managed;			
operating within	Commissioners.	encouraging local and regional	serve the work.	and operate in line with the			
budget, led by		flexibility.		values and principles of the			
Poverty Truth	–	-		social movement it is			
Commissioners who	To secure the necessary	To set balanced budgets on an	To begin, during year four, to	nurturing.			
	funding to secure a balanced	annual basis, whilst identifying	identify the necessary resources	It requires to secure the			
reflect the reality of	budget over the five-year budget.	additional resource requirements as necessary.	and partners to deliver future financial sustainability.	It requires to secure the necessary resources,			
poverty in the UK,	buuget.	as necessary.	linanciai sustainability.	financial, staffing and			
which will enable	To explore social enterprise	To grow the income generation	To ensure that income	relational, to build and			
change and	models to maximise income	arm of the PTN by up to 10%	generation represents up to 20%	support the wider movement.			
contribute to a wider	generation.	annually.	of future budget.				
social movement to				It requires to build			
end poverty.	To recruit additional staff roles	To recruit new regional roles and	To shape future staffing structure	sustainable ways of working			
	to implement regional and	to TUPE (transfer) existing staff	to maximise resources being	for the long term, including			
	national plans within a balanced budget.	to regional hubs as appropriate.	deployed regionally and locally.	through income generation.			
				Income generation will help			
	To refresh and deliver an	To evaluate the effectiveness of	To agree the best ways to	to seed new initiatives, giving			
	effective grants programme to	the PTN grants programme in	support financially future 'poverty	ongoing capacity for			
	support the development and	helping PTCs to secure other	truth' ways of working as they	innovation over the course of			
	embedding of PTCs across	resources; and in guiding its	develop locally, regionally and	the strategy delivery.			
	the UK.	activity.	nationally				
	To update the PTN		To review and refresh the PTN				
	constitution to reflect		constitution as it develops more				
	refreshed priorities and		fully as a social movement.				
	structure.						
	To push a data a secolat diverse 'i						
	To embed the racial diversity recommendations approved	To review the extent to which the PTN reflects the lives of people	To continuously ensure that the intersectionality of poverty is				
	recommendations approved		intersectionality of poverty is				

 by trustees (2024) across the PTN.	living in poverty within its membership, staff and trustee body; and to make changes as	reflected in the work of the PTN, and its support of PTCs and regional hubs across the UK.	
	required.	To maintain the development of	
To refresh trustee body, ensuring key skills are maintained to deliver planned work in ways consistent with PTN values and practices.	To ensure an appropriate turnover of trustees to maintain the correct level of skills and experience, providing training and mentoring as appropriate.	the trustee body, ensuring appropriate turnover and the maintenance and development of skills and expertise.	
	To support, as appropriate, regional hubs in the development of their trustee bodies, ensuring that these reflect PTN values and practices.		