

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/>



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

To get involved contact us at:

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