



Evaluation Report



2024-25

supported by



WORKING TOGETHER TO COMBAT POVERTY

End Poverty Edinburgh Evaluation 2025



End Poverty Edinburgh's second conference taking place in October 2024

“I feel like I can change the world” **EPE Member**

End Poverty Edinburgh are an anti-poverty citizen group aiming to raise awareness of poverty in Edinburgh, influence decision-making, and hold the city to account. Formed back in 2020, they have three core aims:

1. Working with the Council, the Edinburgh Partnership and others, from the outset to share their wealth of experience.
2. Holding those who have the power to account by influencing decision-making and providing advice and guidance.
3. Working with other groups and organisations working to tackle poverty in the city to lend our support and share their experiences

In the last year, the group hosted many of their own meetings, as well as attending a range of external meetings and events, aiming to ensure the voices of lived experience are included. Alongside these regular meetings, the group held an online hustling, and their own citizen-led Challenge Poverty Week event, which saw individuals from a wide array of organisations in attendance, including Cllr Jane Meagher, now leader of Edinburgh Council.

In the later part of the year, the majority of members participated in one-to-one discussions to share their experiences of being part of End Poverty Edinburgh. Participants were also offered to share feedback anonymously. Additionally, one-to-one discussions were held with two external individuals who worked with the group this year; one council employee, and one from a third sector organisation. This report presents what came from these conversations in an attempt to evaluate the End Poverty Edinburgh group so we can identify areas of strength, development, and so on, going forward.

2024-25

This year, End Poverty Edinburgh:

- **Held 28 End Poverty Edinburgh meetings**
- **Contributed their expertise in 35 external meetings / events**
- **Planned, organised, and delivered their 2nd annual Challenge Poverty Week event**
- **Planned, organised, and delivered an online hustling**
- **Wrote 3 blogs and were featured in several media articles and videos**
- **Were joined by 4 new members**

Despite accomplishing so much within the year, EPE felt it was important to highlight that a lot of time went into growing the group during this period:

This year has been a lot about getting used to the new set up. Some long-standing members left, some new came in. It's a much more complex group, it's great, but it's a year of getting to know each other and working together.

If you're going to write a report, I think it's important to mention that. In many ways it was like starting from the beginning.

EPE Member

As noted by the member above, End Poverty Edinburgh's accomplishments this year stand alongside substantial change within the group. Although some established members moved on to other things, the group continued to gradually grow and develop with new members joining throughout the year.

Working With End Poverty Edinburgh...

We wanted to know what others thought about working with End Poverty Edinburgh, so alongside discussions with our members, we also spoke to two individuals who've worked with the group. They are member of the Poverty Commission and Head of Insight and Impact at the Robertson Trust, Zoe Ferguson, and Lead Policy and Insight Officer at the City of Edinburgh Council, Eleanor Cunningham. Here is what they shared:

What's it like working with EPE?

- Genuinely collaborative. Open and honest. Genuinely, because it's based on mutual trust we've developed through working together.
- I worked as part of the original Edinburgh Poverty Commission... It's really good to come back in at this point and see how established they are and what a strong fixture they are in Edinburgh, it's quite impressive to see.

What do EPE do well?

- I think it's quite a diverse group, encompassing different people with different experiences, but a cohesive group that's building on those experiences to bring a kind of collective voice, and I think they do that really well.
- I found their critique of the annual report was very welcome as it was really thoughtful and well informed. It was good and that's what they're there to do, it was an example of them delivering that. Their contribution so far to the [Poverty Commission] review has been excellent.
- I think they've got a genuine and positive relationship with the council. My relationship is very positive, and I learn a lot from what they say.

Do you think EPE are making a difference?

- Yes, I do. I think they've got credibility and they've got good channels and that's partly the way they've worked with the council. They had access to Paul [Lawrence], Jane Meagher, and they've established credibility with them, and so they're able to make a difference. I think the meetings with Jane go well and she obviously respects them and trusts them.
- I think the report shows how much worse it could be if all these things weren't happening, and I do think EPE played a role in that, of holding the city to account. I think the thing about it being a fixture, and that the council has to respond, I do think that makes a difference. I think there's lots of different contributions that are needed, and EPE are definitely a part of that.

What do you think could be a priority for EPE?

- Supporting culture change in the council – my personal perspective. For me that's huge.

What could make being part of EPE a better experience?

- As far as I'm concerned, it's working really well.
- Widening the membership, perhaps. What's noticeable is the development of the individuals, the confidence and sense of purpose is really noticeable. Something about widening and opening that to more might be beneficial.

Being part of End Poverty Edinburgh

It's clear from the feedback we receive that being part of End Poverty Edinburgh (EPE) brings many different feelings along with it. This section highlights some of these feelings shared from group members themselves, via one-to-one discussions and an anonymous form.

We are happy to share that amongst these multiple feelings, members hold an overwhelmingly positive experience of their involvement when **sharing how it feels being part of EPE:**

- I really enjoy being part of the group... it gives me something to focus on as I don't work, it's good to focus on something and feel like you're making a difference
- [It's] challenging, frustrating sometimes, but overall, very positive. It makes you feel included. It's part of something bigger.
- I feel very comfortable, like it's my little family. I feel calm.
- Very included, and it gives me a boost, gives me a purpose.
- Excellent, welcoming – feel it's a good cause.
- Joining this organization is one of the best things I feel has happened to me... it is one of the best things that happened.



EPE members outside a polling station on General Election Day 2024

I think our group is like a little parliament, a mini parliament. We talk about everything, all types of problems, it feels like we do the same job as people in parliament. It's interesting feeling, I feel like I do something very big. I feel like I can change this world. This group does a very big job for all people who live here, and I hope it can make life better.

EPE Member

Members also **report feeling supported, respected, and listened to within the group:**

- We've learned more about each other personality wise, we can now agree to disagree... there is a respect there for everyone having their own opinions.
- I feel others listen to me and take me seriously.
- Everyone's at the end of the phone... I never feel I can't turn to you and say I don't know what I'm doing here, 100 percent, I think we are in a lucky position coz there's a lot of groups don't have what we have... and just that reassurance we get from everyone, we are well briefed before we do something.
- When I ask something you very quickly give answer. I don't have any problem with info, all info I can ask and you very quickly answer.
- When I tell something, I get feedback and I feel as if my mind is important and people respect my think, what I'm thinking. I'm not scared to talk like in school... people very seriously listen to me with respect, it's very good.

What could make EPE a better experience?

During the evaluation process, members were asked for suggestions on how to further improve being part of End Poverty Edinburgh. The majority of members had no suggestions, however some did offer ideas:

- Weekly Recap email: With email being one of the groups primary forms of contact, there can sometimes be multiple emails sent to EPE members each week. One member suggested this means some emails can be missed. It was suggested that we end the week with a recap email, stating what emails were sent throughout the week along with their date and time, with a brief recap of their content.
- Something social: members suggested more opportunities to engage with each other socially. Some feel meetings can go fast, and there often isn't much time to talk on subjects other than our primary objectives, which is seen as important.



EPE member and Poverty Alliance staff hold an information stall at the University of Edinburgh

Alongside these, members shared their ideas for desired **training opportunities**:

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------|---------------------|
| • Media | • First Aid | • Mental health |
| • Social media | • Basic IT | • Leadership skills |

We aim to take these suggestions forward and incorporate into our standard practice. We will also look into the desired training opportunities requested from the group.

Making an Impact

Knowing if End Poverty Edinburgh are making a difference can be difficult, especially regarding influencing decisions. When asked directly if they felt they were making a difference, it was clear that the majority of EPE members believe they are, albeit slowly:

- I think we did [make an impact], a big impact as well. For me the big thing is putting through about dignity. I think we managed to put that in the agenda of other organisations, and that's important.... If you think about our goal, it's very difficult to achieve. We are having an impact and getting known by other organisations.
- Every person in EPE, even if they are not full members, but they feel their voice represents more than 100 people. So EPE is defo meeting what it set out to do.
- Getting invited to these meetings, it's not just one off, it's regular, so it must be making a difference, it's hard to tell with these things, but yea.
- Yes... we are making a contribution to making a difference. We are not standing alone, obviously with the backing of poverty alliance, I think we are making a difference, it's just not in your face... it's a slow a burner.

There is an awareness that EPE's goals are not just difficult to achieve, but also hard to measure. As exemplified above, members generally accept this; *'if you think about our goal, it's very difficult to achieve', 'it must be making a difference, it's hard to tell with these things, but yea'*.

However, some members are more reserved on this than others when asked if they felt EPE were making an impact:

Yes and no. I'm much more of a yes than a no.

We are getting well known in the city, that's quite cool. And when people want lived experience, they often come to us first. But how much tangible change was made is hard to ascertain.

We have definitely elevated the voices of some of those in poverty. And we've been able to build up good relationships in the council and the 3rd sector. And the event [End Poverty Edinburgh conference] and how many people showed up and want to come to another is positive.

EPE Member

Overall, End Poverty Edinburgh believe:

- **They are making impact, albeit slow.**
- **The regular meetings and events they are continually invited to show positive impact.**
- **They have brought values like dignity into the agendas of other organisations which is important for their goals.**
- **Attending and speaking at meetings, representing lived experience, is success to some degree.**
- **Strong relationships and support from the Poverty Alliance, Edinburgh Council and others are important for achieving impact.**

What Next?

During our discussions we asked EPE members what they felt their top priorities should be going forward. Here's what they said:

- Keeping the pressure on: EPE believe they must keep applying pressure by continuing to engage with the council and others, ensuring the voice of lived and living experience is regularly included in discussions.
- Continue to work with the council and connect with new departments.
- Continue expanding the group to capture new distinct voices.
- Aim higher: EPE believe there are reasons to aim higher and engage with others, such as Scottish Government, for example.



EPE Member speaking at their 2nd conference

Similarly, EPE members identified several particular issues they believe to be priorities going forward:

- Housing: Following the housing emergency declared in late 2023, this continues to be a priority area for EPE. They believe this is one of the most important issues to get right as it effects every other part of someone's life.
- Income and spending: EPE continue to campaign for adequate income and fair costs. Whether that be in relation to paying the real living wage or raising universal credit, or in line with the cost of living such as lowering the costs of groceries, energy and other household needs, EPE believe there is a crucial area.
- Funding cuts: Like many in Edinburgh, EPE are concerned at the high level of funding cuts likely to hit many crucial services in the city. EPE believe this could have catastrophic effects and that this is one of the city's most import issues right now.

If they're cutting funding... I can see that tipping a lot of people, not just elderly and disabled, but children as well... I think the ramifications are gonna cause problems elsewhere, resulting in more people in poverty.

EPE Member

Other Information

End Poverty Edinburgh are supported by the Poverty Alliance, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

You can contact End Poverty Edinburgh by email:
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Alternatively, you can reach the group through Poverty Alliance's Community Participation Officer, Steven: steven.drew@povertyalliance.org, 07881982882