

# POVERTY TRUTH

# News

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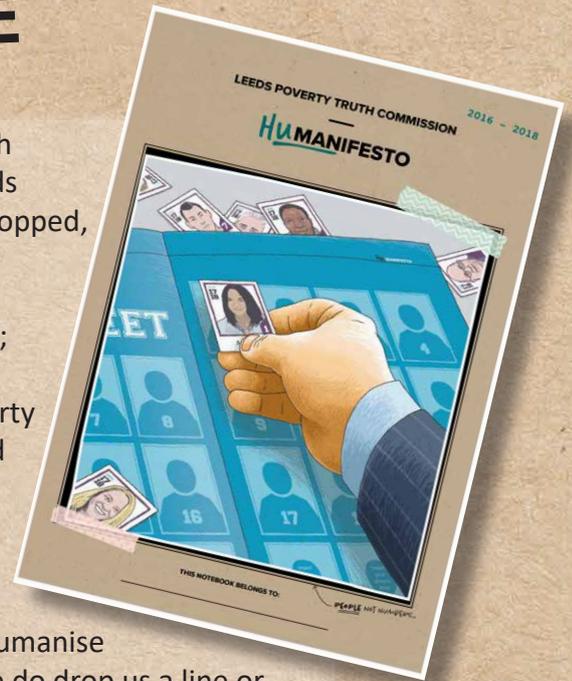
Summer  
2018

## HuMANIFESTO UPDATE

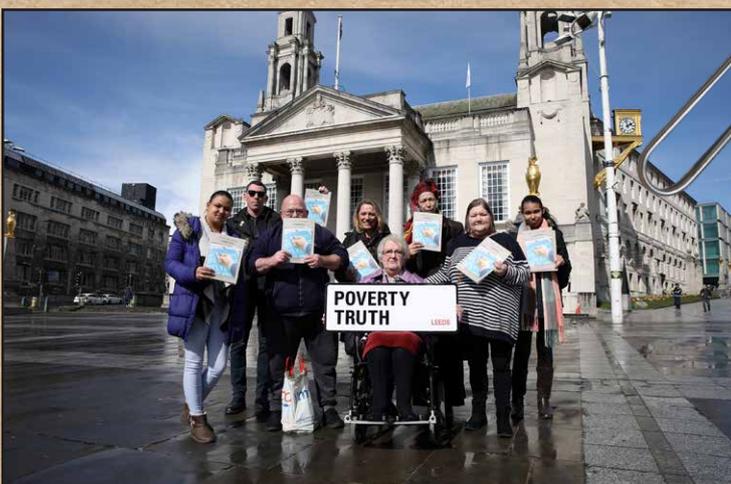
It has been five months since the launch of the Leeds Poverty Truth Humanifesto, and while that event was the closing of the 2nd Leeds Poverty Truth Commission, the work of the Commission has not stopped, in fact it has been busier than ever!

We've been engaging with the Department for Work and Pensions; made a deputation to Council; had numerous pieces of local and national media coverage; won a bid to make a film reframing poverty with partners Truevision Yorkshire; and begun thinking about a 3rd Commission in Leeds.

With all this and more going on, we thought we'd put together this little newsletter to share what has been happening and what is coming up. We'd love to know what you have been doing to rehumanise our city since the launch of our Humanifesto in February, so please do drop us a line or a tweet to let us know... #humanifesto #povertypledge



## DEPUTATION to *Council*



On 28th March, accompanied by four fellow commissioners in the chamber, (and a host of others in the public gallery), Maria Crosby presented the Leeds Poverty Truth Humanifesto to a full sitting of Leeds City Councillors. Speaking of the need to respect those experiencing poverty as equals, whether in the delivery of services or communications from departments, Maria asked the council to include those with lived experience of poverty in the planning and design of their work.

As she finished, Maria and the deputation received a standing ovation from the council and a commitment for the Communities and Neighbourhoods department to work with Leeds Poverty Truth Commission to explore our requests. Since the Deputation, Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer for Customer Access and Welfare in the Communities Directorate at Leeds City Council, (and Poverty Truth Commissioner), has taken up the task of developing workshops across departments to work through our Humanifesto asks.

# Poverty Truth *meets* The DWP

At the beginning of May a group of Leeds Poverty Truth Commissioners met with Department of Work and Pensions Service Designers from across the country. The meeting was an opportunity to build relationships and for Commissioners to share their experiences and frustrations of engaging the benefits system.



Commissioners shared many of their stories while DWP staff listened intently.

Following the presentations DWP staff said how important it had been for them to be there to listen; how vital it was to bring these life stories into the DWP to change bad processes; and how determined it had made them to see change happen.

It's hoped this first meeting will develop into some ongoing work including ways to encourage more people

into volunteering without fear of sanctions; continuing to build relationships; and a programme where Poverty Truth Commissioners can mentor senior DWP staff.

*It's so easy for people to become numbers, so it's important to humanise. Keep sharing.*

*DWP Staff member*

## We're in the Movies

On June 11th a group of female Commissioners from Leeds, together with friends at TV production company Truevision Yorkshire, travelled to the world renowned Sheffield Documentary Festival to pitch for the chance to make a film reframing the issue of poverty. Having been shortlisted to the last five, the group were to make a live presentation to The Guardian and The Joseph Rowntree Foundation in front of a packed Sheffield Town Hall audience... and WE WON!!

The group of Commissioners and staff at Truevision Yorkshire are now underway in creating a 20-30 minute film focusing on 10 women and 10 objects that tell a story about living in poverty in Leeds. The original idea emerged from a focus on 100-years since (some) women gained the right to vote. All the women involved are collectively producing the film, with Truevision filming and editing the piece which will hopefully be finished in the Autumn when it will feature on the Guardian website before being showcased at next year's Sheffield Documentary Festival.



The Yorkshire Evening Post ran a weeklong series of articles around the Deputation to Council

# In the Media Spotlight

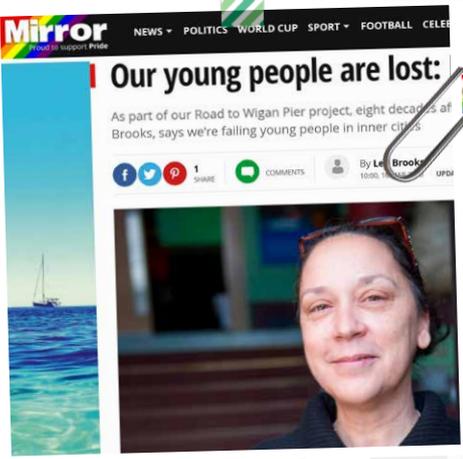
Since the Humanifesto launch Poverty Truth has had significant media presence, with papers, TV, Web publications and social media awash with stories from the Commissioners. Each piece of work with the media has sought to rehumanise those experiencing poverty and share some of the challenges that individuals face.

We have also been active on Social media with a campaign around the council deputation asking individuals and organisations to make their #povertypledge.

Sarah shared her story on ITV Calendar as part of the Humanifesto launch



The Weston family appeared in a Channel 5 news piece about child poverty in the North, and the Daily Mirror ran a series of articles retracing George Orwell's 'Road to Wigan Pier'.



# Media Relations

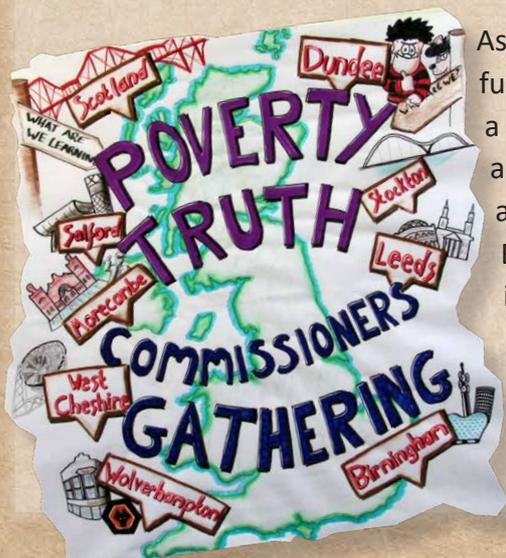
Two Commissioners from Leeds Poverty Truth (Amina and Amina - mum and daughter), have been selected to take part in a pilot programme with On Road Media and The Joseph Rowntree Foundation over the next year. The programme aims to building relationships with journalists, scriptwriters, and other media professionals with the hope that more positive stories of those experiencing poverty will filter through on national platforms. On Road Media have previous experience of such programmes on Child Immigration, Domestic Violence, and Transgender issues with 500 media pieces, soap-opera storylines and even a specific sit-com arising out of the Transgender work.



# From STRENGTH to STRENGTH

While the 2nd Commission in Leeds may now have drawn to a close, we know that it's 'Once a Commissioner, always a Commissioner'. Civic and Business Commissioners are continuing to find ways to put into practice their understanding and experiences developed through the Commission, and Testifying Commissioners continue to be involved in ways to share their stories and increase influence in Leeds and beyond.

Through some of the funding from The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and in partnership with 4 Spaces Coaching, we recently ran a Strengths Finder workshop and coaching sessions for Commissioners to discover and build on their natural strengths in pursuing opportunities beyond Poverty Truth.



As well as getting involved in the further developments of Leeds Poverty Truth Commission (see below), a number of Commissioners have had the chance to bring their skills and experiences into other bodies locally and nationally. Mariama and sister Amina are exploring one of them taking up a place on the Board of GIPSIL, working with children, young people and families in the most disadvantaged communities in Leeds to realise their potential. Meanwhile the other Amina has taken up a role on a UK wide group looking at the development of Poverty Truth Commissions across the country.



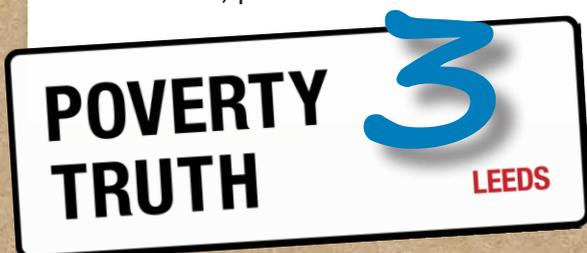
## LOOKING to the *Future*

In amongst all the activities described above, thoughts have also turned to a 3rd Leeds Poverty Truth Commission. While the work of the 2nd Commission continues, there is also an opportunity to go wider and deeper in developing transformative relationships to address issues of poverty in our city. In the Autumn we will begin recruiting both Testifying Commissioners (those with lived experience of poverty in Leeds), and Civic and Business Commissioners (those in positions of influence in the city). If you have any recommendations of people you know, who might be interested, please let us know.

To maintain a wider perspective on the work of the Commission, and to think about how the legacy of previous Commissions continue to impact Leeds and beyond, we have set up a reference group to aid us. The reference group comprises of 3 Testifying Commissioners (Jaimes, Maria and Mary) and 3 Civic and Business Commissioners (Lee, Mark and Sally-Anne). The facilitation team is reshaping too with Andrew and Jon continuing, Mike stepping into more of an advisory role in the reference group, and Vik Perrett joining us to help with co-ordination.



Meet Vik, our new co-ordinator.



As ever, get in touch by...

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