



## **Evaluation 2024**

***“When people ask what I do, I say End Poverty Edinburgh. It gives me purpose.”***

End Poverty Edinburgh member.



WORKING TOGETHER TO COMBAT POVERTY



***“Having a voice like End Poverty Edinburgh  
is vital for tackling poverty.”***

**Cllr Jane Meagher, City of Edinburgh Council**

2023-24 has been a busy year for End Poverty Edinburgh; an anti-poverty citizen group whose members all have lived experience of poverty. From meeting with councilors to put forward our views, sharing the reality of poverty by speaking at partner’s events and meetings, and holding our first conference as part of Challenge Poverty Week in October 2023, the group has been very active, striving to include the voices of lived experience in efforts to tackle poverty.

To conclude such a busy year, we have conducted an evaluation to measure impact on our aims and on the people we work with. To do this, we held 121 interviews with group members, an anonymous survey, and a full group discussion, as well as interviews with partners the group have worked with throughout the year.

Feedback from allies is overwhelmingly positive and shows us that EPE are influencing thoughts and actions through their work, EPE are inspiring others; EPE’s relationship with Poverty Alliance and Edinburgh Council is a key strength.

EPE members shared positive experiences when speaking about what it’s like to be part of the group, reporting common emotions of a sense of pride and purpose. All felt listened to, respected, and supported within the group however some also voiced frustrations at wanting to see faster progress in tackling poverty. We agreed we have strong foundations but must do more in the year ahead.

## **2023-2024**

This year, End Poverty Edinburgh:

- Held 22 of our own End Poverty Edinburgh meetings.
- Planned, organized, and delivered 2 citizen-led events – one attended by Council Leader Cammy Day.
- Contributed our expertise to 23 other meetings or events.
- Held 3 meetings with Cllr Meagher, convener of Homelessness, Housing and Fair work.
- Supported a member address a First Minister’s anti-poverty summit.
- Wrote 4 blogs reflecting our lived experiences.

## Working with End Poverty Edinburgh...

As part of our evaluation, we spoke to some of our allies about their experiences working with the group. These include colleagues from the third sector, Edinburgh Council, and an elected councilor. Here's some of what they told us:

On working with EPE:

- *I felt really inspired by the group. I think the fact that the group was already existing and well-connected with good support from you and Poverty Alliance – all of that being in place was in hand so it meant that we could skip to the building connections and learning from them [the group]...I talk about this a lot – some of the best conversations we have been in were the ones EPE were involved in – much richer.*
- *It's been mutually supportive, I think... I've welcomed being able to bounce off ideas with the group and strategies, especially in relation to homelessness.*
- *It's been informative and inspiring [working with EPE]. I do think that they are really, really, powerful and a huge asset to anyone who's involved them.*

On what EPE do well:

- *They give very credible perspectives on what it's like to live in poverty in a way that's compelling and eye opening.*
- *I think, just my opinion, keeping the issue alive, making it clear to councilors and decision makers elsewhere, that despite the fact we live in a superficially wealthy city that we have people living in relative poverty, and people forget... but you're very good at keeping that alive and enabling voices. For example, I thought your conference allowed a lot of voices to come together, focusing that energy in trying to make positive change. Positive engagement at a grassroots level is key and having that voice coming collectively brings it the strength, but it doesn't lose its strength as being grassroots.*

On making an impact:

- *The fact that they exist and are supported well is a big part of it. The fact that over time they have built up their confidence and are empowering each other to do things they wouldn't have done, this takes time and resource. The times I've had feedback saying how effective their contributions were are so many – and there's not enough of this happening.*

On influencing thoughts and actions:

- *Definitely! One thing in relation is we continue to promote real life living wage. Again, it's about the reminder about the importance of real living wage. The other is about the housing emergency we recently declared, and knowing underfunding of the housing is causing massive problems to the city, most acutely to the end where there are most poverty... having a voice like EPE is vital for tackling poverty.*
- *Yes, in particular how we train staff to have more understanding and to be more respectful and supportive when someone approaches them for help. And, checking with EPE members for their perspective when developing plans or policies.*

The feedback offered by those we work with above appears overwhelmingly positive. Ultimately, it shows us:

- **EPE are influencing thoughts and actions** through their work, as reported above.
- **EPE are inspiring others;** 2 of our partners reported they felt 'inspired' by their interactions with the group.
- **EPE's relationship with Poverty Alliance and Edinburgh Council is a key strength;** it appears this arrangement is potentially beneficial for both the group and those we work with, as the group is already supported and ready to go.

## Being part of End Poverty Edinburgh

Being part of the End Poverty Edinburgh (EPE) citizens group brings with it a lot of different feelings. Certainly, for the most part, members shared positive experiences when speaking about what it's like to be part of EPE:

- *I've enjoyed it - I can't believe how much we've grown as a group. They're all good, we've come so far, and it means a lot.*
- *It feels empowering to be quite honest, because instead of me sitting grumbling about what I can't change, I feel I am part of something where we can effect change.*

Furthermore, being involved with EPE commonly to bring with it a **sense of pride, or purpose**, with members reporting similar experiences:

- *When people ask what I do, I say End Poverty Edinburgh. It gives me purpose. ...it has also made me angry that the world is very desperately unfair. Alone, I don't have the power, but having the name EPE, and the group, helps lots.*
- *It feels really good. I feel as though I'm doing something worthwhile. And I'm spreading the word – it has boosted my confidence.*



*EPE's Linda Craik speaks with Edinburgh Council Leader Cammy Day*

All members interviewed said they felt **listened to, respected, and supported** within the group:

- *I feel very supported...in more than one way. I know if I have an issue, I can come to you [Poverty Alliance staff] or another way, other members, I know I can go to them for advice. As a group I feel we all support each other.*
- *I've not been to that many meetings and that so I'm still finding my feet a little bit, but I feel I am being listened to.*
- *Even things like having our meetings at the City Chambers, it shows how we are taken seriously. It's really important, recognition.*
- *Perfectly supported, I can phone you... or whoever. I don't hesitate about picking up the phone. Sometimes I think you do over and above with your checking in with people seeing if they're ok. I feel fully supported in all sorts of ways. To be able fire off a wee email. There's not many professional orgs where I can send off a wee poem and say this is what's happening in my head. Poverty Alliance do great, I wouldn't change anything at all. I let the group down once when I was ill, but everyone was kind and wished me well. I wasn't made to feel bad for missing the meeting, I was made to feel welcome and wished better.*

However, despite such positives, some members also voiced frustrations at wanting to see faster progress:

- *It can be frustrating, but that's just because things move slowly.*
- *It can be frustrating how slow things move, because of bureaucracy, but I'm seeing tiny changes.*

## Impact



EPE's Linda Craik speaks at the First Minister's Anti-Poverty Summit

Evaluating impact can always be a challenge. Nonetheless, members believed the group most certainly were making an impact:

- *Yes, I think some big signs of success can be seen in us simply being invited. We have now established the group and people are starting to approach us as standard practice. This is positive.*
- *I do [see progress]. Small and slow, but I do.*
- *I think we are. Very personally, I would like things to have moved quicker but I don't think EPE have much control over that. It's not moving as quick as I want to but that's not EPE's fault. We have started, let's keep going.*
- *I think it is, slow but steady.*

***“We bring awareness... to certain aspects of poverty that people may not think about.”***

End Poverty Edinburgh member.

## What Works Well...

Discussing our impact also allowed us to identify **strengths** of End Poverty Edinburgh, highlighting what works well:

- *Everyone in the group has a role to play, a special area of expertise.*
- *We have a good partnership with the council... which is very important, and they take us seriously.*
- *I think having the support of the Poverty Alliance makes a massive difference. People welcome the chance to talk about their experiences, but having Poverty Alliance there with all they bring makes a difference. it's more 'official'.*
- *We bring awareness to things, to certain aspects of poverty that people may not think about. I realised when we did the conference there were certain aspects of it that people weren't aware of, and we brought awareness to that.*

## What next?

After a busy 2023/24 and taking into account the feedback collected in this evaluation. During this next year, we aim to:

- Increase our membership so that is ever more representative of our city.
- Hold a second citizen-led Challenge Poverty Week event in October.
- Hold the city of Edinburgh to account in its mission to end poverty by working with people experiencing poverty, Edinburgh Council, elected councilors, and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector allies, to eradicate poverty in Edinburgh.
- Spread awareness and address stigma related to poverty.
- Provide increased training opportunities for EPE members, so they may continue to develop and grow.
- Engage with the Edinburgh Poverty Commission review to take stock on progress and redouble our efforts.