

poverty truth Ilfracombe

1.0 Introduction

One Northern Devon (OND) and One Ilfracombe (OI), commissioned by Devon's Integrated Care Board, are working together to better understand how decision makers can better respond to the needs of people experiencing poverty. Drawing on the Poverty Truth Network's model of a Poverty Truth Commission (PTC), we intend to establish a Commission to enable collaboration between 12-15 people with lived experience of poverty and 12-15 civic/organisational leaders from across Devon, North Devon and Ilfracombe.

To address root causes of rural/coastal poverty we need to better understand what issues these communities face and where there are gaps or deficiencies in services. To achieve this OND and OI will work in partnership to setup a Commission in Ilfracombe.

Using a relational place-based approach, The PTC aims to achieve a shared understanding of poverty, drawing on the experiences of those who have experienced it (Community Commissioners), leading to improved support.

Exeter University and Devon Communities Foundation are leading on the learning and evaluation and will also help the Commission proactively learn through reflection and learning sessions throughout the commission.

1.1 Purpose of commission

To create a set of collaborative leaders who will have a shared understanding of:

- Poverty including:
 - the nature of poverty (including the data)
 - the drivers of poverty
 - the effects of poverty
- The civic and business system we're working in including:
 - opportunities
 - constraints
- What we can influence at a variety of levels such as:
 - process and practices
 - policy
 - culture and mindset

2.0 Background

Since 2009, Poverty Truth Commissions have been organised across the UK. Poverty Truth Ilfracombe will be the first in Devon, offering us a more informed approach to address the needs of those living in poverty.

The Devon ICB commissioned One Northern Devon to pilot a Poverty Truth Commission which would allow the learning needed to be mirrored across other deprived communities and to influence policy across the patch.

Using the index of multiple deprivation and other public health data, Ilfracombe was chosen by One Northern Devon as the target town due to it having the highest level of income deprivation in Northern Devon as well as other issues identified by public health:

- 38.9% of children in Ilfracombe are living in poverty
- High levels of private renting, less secure tenures, HMOs and living alone
- Low wages and greater cost of living impacts resulting in fuel and food poverty
- Complex patterns of deprivation largely centred on High Street / privately rented areas
- Higher levels of smoking, obesity and substance misuse, lower physical activity
- Higher levels and an earlier onset (older working age) of long-term conditions and multi-morbidity reflected in health expectancies
- Higher levels of serious mental illness and self-harm
- Housing conditions and affordability, including hazards and health impacts
- Job insecurity and seasonal patterns of employment/unemployment
- Lower educational attainment/workforce skills and limited social mobility
- Distance for health and care services and employment opportunities

Public health Data shows that poverty in Ilfracombe is concentrated within specific areas of the town and also dispersed across more affluent areas, making it less 'visible' when looking at Devon and Northern Devon averages.

This document provides a framework for how the Commission intends to approach this.

3.0 Our Aims

An integrated, quality improvement response, reflecting the needs of people experiencing poverty, to reduce the effects, and tackle the root causes.

Phase 0: Recruit, prepare and launch (7-months)

Aim: Recruit, prepare and maintain Commissioners. Launch Commission.

1. Recruit and maintain 12-15 people with lived experience of poverty from the Ilfracombe area.
2. Prepare Community Commissioners to share their experiences at a launch event.
3. Plan and deliver a launch event where Community Commissioners share their lived experience with civic/organisational leaders.
4. Recruit and maintain 12-15 Civic/Business leaders based upon the emergent needs of those with lived experience.

Phase 1: DISCOVER (3 months)

Aim: The Commission understands, rather than simply assumes, what the problem is by viewing it from multiple angles and at different levels.

1. Co-produce a shared vision and goals
2. Enable meaningful conversations, promote deep listening, setting the culture and building positive working relationships that invite real collaboration
3. A shared understanding of the impact and root causes of poverty in Ilfracombe based on local lived experience
4. A shared understanding of 'the system' (incl. potential to influence [power], levers and barriers to change, decision making processes, resource distribution).

5. Enhance understanding by creating opportunities for external organisations and people to share insight.

Phase 2: DEFINE (2 months)

Aim: The insight gathered from the discovery phase is used to define the challenge

6. Model shared decision making, through inclusive and participatory processes, recognising Community Commissioners as key contributors to tackling poverty in Ilfracombe.
7. A defined set of themes/areas are agreed - Identifying what are the issues they would like to address
8. Themed working groups setup and create their own design brief

Phase 3: DEVELOP

Coming together to influence the system (7-months) - Encourage experiments in a complex system – we don't always know what will work till we try it.

Aim: The Commission seeks solutions to address the clearly defined problems across multiple levels (individual, community, organisation, regional, national).

9. Following the same design process, working groups will develop ideas for solutions to their problem
10. Working groups will come together as a full Commission to update on progress and share learning
11. Each working group will create recommendations that inform proposal generation, commissioning intentions and encourage wider organisational/system change.

Phase 4: DELIVER

12. Test out different solutions at small-scale, rejecting those that will not work and improving the ones that will.

Phase 5: EMBED (3+ months).

Aim: Embed learning, ensuring the community voice continues to influence the decision-making process, enabling system changes that better support those experiencing poverty.

13. Support civic commissioners to continue to implement shared decision making and the recommendations within their organisations
14. Final report to communicate the findings of the commission, including outputs, outcomes and the effect that the process has had on commissioners.
15. A closing event
16. Share the learning of the Commission across communities and organisations.
17. Use this learning to help inform how we look to scale this up across the district and beyond.
18. Create a sustainability plan that defines how progress and outcomes will be monitored going forward.

4.0 Assumptions

- Solutions are more effective and readily owned if they are created by the group (Commission).
- Involving people with lived experience will support more effective decision-making

- New possibilities will emerge by creating new connections.
- Conversation matters – instead of looking at discussion as a barrier to action, we think of it as an indispensable preliminary to wise action. Allowing time to build relationships that invite real collaboration.

5.0 Which civic/organisational leaders are being invited to attend the commission?

Working with the Community Commissioners, we are inviting:

- Children and Family Health Devon (CAMHS, Autism services)
- Commissioner of Drug & Health services
- Devon County Council (Social Care, Transport, Public Health, Learn Direct)
- Devon Partnership Trust
- DWP/Jobcentre
- Devon Integrated Care Board (Health and Care commissioning)
- Ilfracombe Junior school
- North Devon Member of Parliament
- North Devon District Council
- North Devon Homes
- One Ilfracombe
- Devon and Cornwall Police
- Royal Devon University Healthcare Trust

6.0 Project timeline and milestones

1. Sept 2024 Recruited and prepared Community Commissioners
2. Sept 2024 Launch event
3. Feb 2025 Commission has developed a shared understanding and collectively identified issues and agreed on areas of focus
4. Oct 2025 Themed working groups finalise recommendations and actions
5. Dec 2025 Closing event (tbc)
6. Jan 2026 and beyond - embedding learning into local community, organisations and institutions to enable system changes

7.0 Frequency of meetings (See appendix)

- 1 x 3.5-hour meeting (includes lunch) every month from Nov '24 to Feb '25
- 2 x 3.5-hour meetings (includes lunch) every month from March 25 to Oct 2025. This will either be a full commission meeting or a working group.

8.0 Outcome and Findings

- One Northern Devon and One Ilfracombe to produce a report on the findings and outcomes of the Commission to be presented to One Northern Devon and Devon Integrated Care Board
- Consideration on whether report should be shared with a wider audience.

Appendix 1 - Requirements

To attend the full Commission sessions and a themed working group.

Time: 1000-1330 in person (incl. lunch)

Venue: Lantern Community Centre, High St, Ilfracombe EX34 9QB

Day: Thursdays

Date	Session	Commissioner requirement
21/11/24	Commission 1	1 x 3.5-hour meeting (includes lunch) every month from Nov '24 to Feb '25
19/12/24	Commission 2	
16/1/25	Commission 3	
13/2/25	Commission 4	
13/3/25	Commission 5	
27/3/25	Working group 1	Commissioner requirement: 2 x 3.5-hour meetings (includes lunch) every month from March 25 to Oct 2025. This will either be a full commission meeting or a working group.
10/4/2025	Working group 2	
24/4/25	Working group 3	
8/5/2024	Commission 6	
22/5/24	Working group 4	
5/6/2025	Working group 5	
19/6/25	Working group 6	
3/7/2025	Commission 7	
17/7/25	Working group 7	
31/7/25	Working group 8	
14/8/25	Working group 9	
28/8/25	Commission 8	
11/9/2025	Working group 10	
25/9/25	Working group 11	
9/10/2025	Working group 12	
23/10/25	Commission 9 (final)	One-off event
5/12/2025	Closing event (tbc)	