

# Authorship and dissemination

This slide deck is an outline of the learning from Ilfracombe Poverty Truth Commission. It is one of three inter-related slide decks:

- Learning from Ilfracombe PTC 2024-2025
- Ilfracombe PTC Products and Impact 2024-2025
- Ilfracombe PTC Developing a Theory of Change

Do use and distribute these slides in any form or combination you feel is most useful to share the learning. Please do not edit the content of any slide without discussing with the Research Team.

We'd be interested in hearing any context of how they are being used or any feedback. Do contact us if you'd like to let us know, or would like to discuss the learning.

## Research and learning team

- Author: Dr Jennie Hayes, Research Fellow at the University of Exeter ([jennie.hayes@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:jennie.hayes@exeter.ac.uk)) in collaboration with
- Prof Katrina Wyatt, Professor of Relational Health, University of Exeter ([k.m.wyatt@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:k.m.wyatt@exeter.ac.uk))
- Dr Nicola Frost, Head of Impact, Insight and Learning, Devon Community Foundation ([nfrost@devoncf.com](mailto:nfrost@devoncf.com))

# Products and Impact

Ilfracombe Poverty Truth Commission  
2024-25

poverty truth Ilfracombe



University of Exeter



# Themes and working groups

Based on learning from the experiences of Community Commissioners, the Ilfracombe PTC worked across three broad themes: **Humanising Services, Housing and Adult Education, Skills & Employment**. Four working groups came together to explore ideas, develop design briefs and co-design different initiatives. The Commission developed 15 'products' or outputs. In addition, there were other outcomes captured that helped us understand how the Ilfracombe PTC changed thinking, behaviours and actions.

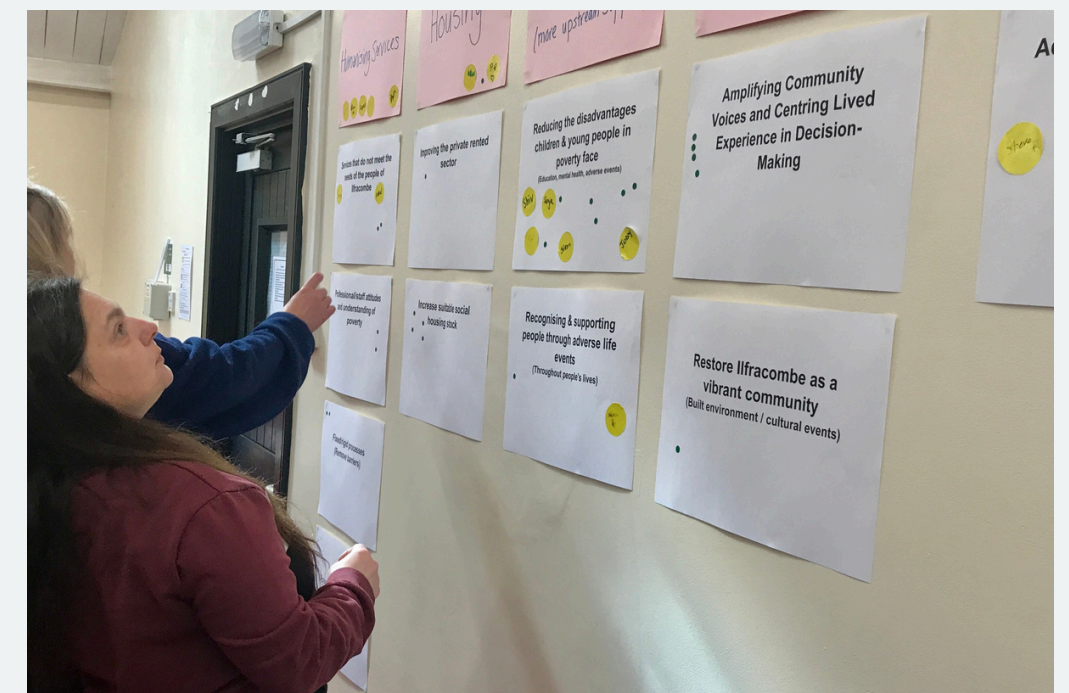


## Humanising Services

(overarching theme, including early intervention and understanding of and attitudes towards poverty)



## Housing



## Adult Education, Skills & Employment



# Humanising Services

In the **Discover** phase, the PTC learned that people experiencing poverty are often let down by services meant to support them, feeling forgotten, misunderstood and dismissed.

Services - such as housing, employment, health, education or welfare - can feel cold, bureaucratic, inaccessible, judgmental, constrained by unsuitable eligibility criteria ('ticking boxes') and lacking a timely compassionate, human response.

The Commission **Defined** four problems:

1. People struggle to access and understand information and navigate the system (services)
2. Fixed and rigid processes are harming people
3. Staff attitudes and understanding of the impact of poverty can be a barrier to accessing services
4. Many services in Ilfracombe are not available, ineffective or disconnected

*'Poverty started in 1994 when I hurt my back doing care work...I had to leave because I was having health issues... I wish that I could go back to work because I enjoy working... I went to the Jobcentre, ...and the lady was really rude to me saying that there's nothing wrong with you ... you can do care work, you can do cleaning, don't make excuses that you've got back issues and knee issues and in other words, get back to work now... If she hadn't been rude and listened to what I said it wouldn't make me anxious... I just want people to listen to me and say, just take your time and hopefully one day you'll be able to go back to work'.*

Quotes throughout from Community Commissioners' timelines and narratives

# Humanising Services

*'I would like the people and the community in Ilfracombe to be far more understanding of situations that they haven't perhaps come across, to be able to embrace concepts of poverty, homelessness and to be able to understand how this doesn't just impact the individuals, it impacts the people around them, their friends, their families, their neighbours, their community'.*

*'Nobody's really interested as they think alcoholics and drug addicts can't be helped. And if you throw a few scraps under the table, it's just a token gesture. ..As an addict and an alcoholic, what I think most people don't understand is that when you're addicted, your addiction makes your choices for you'.*

# Humanising Services

Ilfracombe PTC worked to consider a range of **inter-related actions, principles and products** that, together, help to address these four problems.

At the end of Phase Two, these actions will continue, with Civic and Community Commissioners pledging support to continue this work and realise the ambition.

The ambition is that the ideas, design briefs and initiatives under the heading of **'Humanising Services'** will transform the experience of those facing poverty in Ilfracombe.

*'This is to try and help people understand that poverty is not a choice I made, it is a place you find yourself in, a place that is not always easy to get out of and a place you can find yourself moving in and out of...For me poverty is related to a series of traumatic events and life experiences. Trauma and poverty have affected my mental health and I have felt unsupported and lost many times in my life'.*

# Humanising Services

**Problem 1:** People struggle to access and understand information and navigate the system

**Possibility:** Moving from confusing to clear and accessible information

## Ifracombe PTC Actions

Ifracombe Town Councillors agreed to dedicate a window at the Ifracombe Centre to be used as an **information window** to display relevant information. One Civic Commissioner worked with Community Commissioners on design and content.

Ifracombe PTC developed a **design brief for a wellbeing hub** that builds on work in the area to enable people to access information and navigate services from within trusted social spaces that already exist. This work will continue to be developed over the next phase of Poverty Truth.

*'Where do I go? What do I do? Where do I go for information? ... I've got no criminal record, I've got no criteria to tick their boxes, what do I do? Where do I go?' You're basically on your own'.*

# Humanising Services

**Problem 2:** Fixed and rigid processes are harming people

**Possibility:** Moving from fixed and rigid processes to flexible processes

## Ilfracombe PTC Actions

Receiving a 'no' ('we can't help' or 'that's not our job' or 'you're not eligible') can worsen a situation. There is a need for a 'warm' response, a handover to a relevant service and supported, alternative offers. The Ilfracombe PTC called this the **'No, but' approach**. This approach recognises a person still has needs and that services have a responsibility.

This principle is interwoven with all the Humanising Services actions.

*'Had I been fairly judged, I think it would probably have done more for my personal feeling of self-confidence, self-worth, self-respect, and also, I believe, for my own personal safety, given that I was basically turned away and sleeping homeless on the streets, never knowing if I was going to be attacked, mugged, or something else'.*

# Humanising Services

*'When I came out of hospital, a couple of years ago, after a fire I was in... in the middle of January when it was ice cold. There was snow around, my arms were still bandaged up... I wasn't their responsibility... they just met me on the doorstep of the closed council office with the tent and sleeping bag. And I had absolutely nowhere to go'.*

*'That PIP form needs to change. And then the phone call that comes after it, which it usually lasts an hour, and that is degrading... If you don't have an understanding of mental health/illness, then it's going to be a little bit difficult for them to actually understand what the person the other end of the phone's going through and being asked specific questions. It's degrading, it's humiliating, and that needs to change'.*

# Humanising Services

**Problem 3:** Staff attitudes and understanding of the impact of poverty can be a barrier

**Possibility:** Moving from transactional to compassionate interactions rooted in dignity and understanding

## Ilfracombe PTC Actions

Ilfracombe PTC created **staff resources** which include a video on 'Understanding Poverty', a Photovoice exhibition, 'personas' (anonymous narratives based on each Commissioner) based on lived experience to support service design and a reflective practice prompt card tool for staff (piloted with North Devon Homes).

With RDUHT and Devon County Council, Ilfracombe PTC supported the development of '**Your Story**', a user-owned tool to help reduce the times a person has to repeat their experiences of trauma, adversity, or personal history when engaging with services. Piloted with Combe Coastal GP Practice.

Ilfracombe PTC created a **quality improvement proposal** for the Ilfracombe Centre - the offices of Ilfracombe Town Council - to help people navigate services and access information.

Ilfracombe PTC recommended a '**team around the person**' approach, promoting person-led support to ensure people get the support that matters to them.

# Humanising Services

**Problem 4:** Many services in Ilfracombe are not available, ineffective or disconnected

**Possibility:** Moving from out of reach and fragmented services, to available and connected

## Ilfracombe PTC Actions

Devon County Council and the Integrated Care Board, with the input of the PTC, co-created a set of **Commissioning Principles and Standards** initially to inform the commissioning of public health services. A survey circulated to providers and commissioners found variations in the level of readiness to adopt the principles and helped to identify actions and resources required to enable organisations to be fully compliant. The principles will be included in the next substance use competitive process and will be promoted within Devon Public Health department.

Ilfracombe PTC developed a proposal for building an integrated, accessible network of cross-sector groups, organisations and individuals across Ilfracombe, to provide a safety net for people experiencing poverty. This **'Campus Model'** will ensure that 'any door is the right door' and will work with shared humanise principles and standards so people don't feel like they are in the wrong place or being left alone.

Ilfracombe PTC made a commitment to develop a set of humanising principles (a **Humanise Charter**) with the aim of working differently to support people experiencing poverty.

Poverty was identified as a risk factor when developing a new **Population Health Management Neighbourhood Framework** that identifies people at risk to increase their opportunity of accessing support.

# Housing

In the **Discover** phase, the PTC learned that there are challenges in both the provision of social housing and in private rentals.

There is a severe shortage of **social housing**, out of reach of many who need it most. People are trapped in unaffordable, unsafe or overcrowded living conditions. There are long waiting lists and a mismatch between available properties and people's needs.

The **private rental sector** can be insecure, unaffordable and disempowering. There are poor housing conditions, short-term tenancies and lack of accountability from landlords. There are limited rights and few safe alternatives. Current systems offer little protection or support for renters on low incomes.

The lack of secure, affordable housing contributes to poor health, instability and ongoing poverty. **Everyone needs a safe and stable place to call home.**

*'So, when I sought help, the only help was to go into refuge and be rehoused... you've got to keep yourself together with your two-year-old and five-year-old and be seen to be doing all the correct things so you can then be released from social services to then be placed in a safe home. When you bid on the system, you might have three bids that are in different towns. You don't know any of them, and I felt so isolated. I was on my own'.*

# Housing

The Commission **Defined** the challenge:

How might we increase the availability and quantity of suitable **social housing** ensuring that people experiencing poverty have access to safe, stable and affordable home that meet their diverse needs and provide long-term security?

How might we transform the **private sector** into a more secure affordable and supportive environment for people experiencing poverty, ensuring tenants have fair treatment, stable housing and a voice in their living conditions?

The Ilfracombe PTC worked on two initiatives: **Healthy Homes Ilfracombe** and a **Landlords Charter**

*'And they always hold... an eviction notice over you if you continue to question them, you know, you're not a co-operative tenant. That's happened several times with me, only just over basic queries'.*

*'I was made homeless because I couldn't afford the rent. So I ended up sleeping in a tent... Slept in that for nearly six months. But every time I went to the council, or try and get help to get somewhere to live, it was always red tape. You're not ticking the boxes, you're not ticking the criteria that you need to'.*

# Housing

## Healthy Homes Ilfracombe

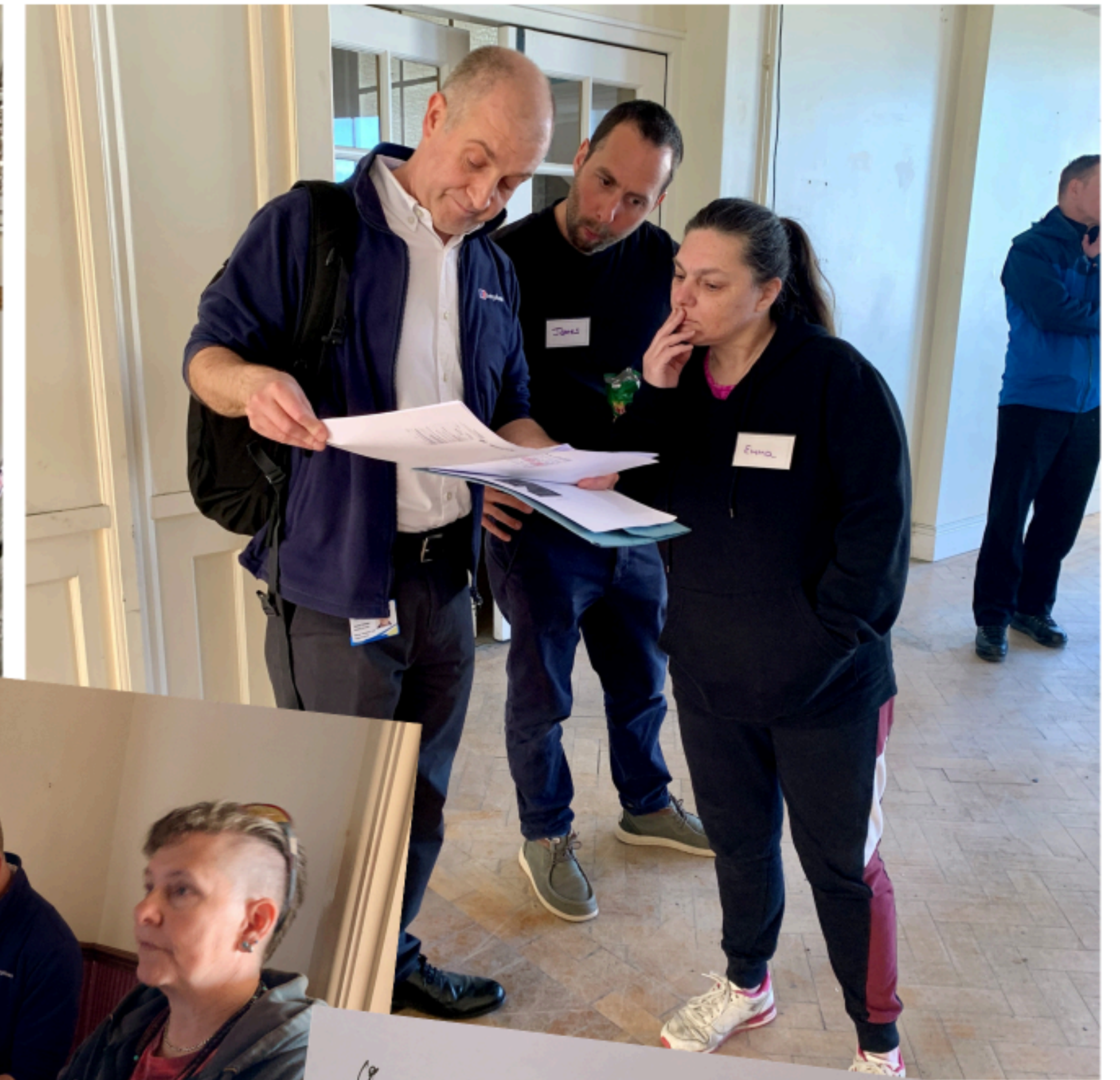
Creating the first **new social housing** in Ilfracombe for many years, North Devon District Council (NDDC) purchased the old Post Office and buildings on Oxford Grove for retro-fit. The IPTC helped NDDC ensure these new homes meet a specification that **improves the living environment** to achieve better social, physical and mental health outcomes for tenants.

### **Ilfracombe PTC Actions**

The PTC housing group:

- Enabled the District Council, Community Commissioners, North Devon Homes and 361 Energy to work together, incorporating the learning from the experiences of Community Commissioners.
- Supported Commissioners to visit the acquired properties with a senior building surveyor
- Considered architect drawings with the Head of Environmental Health & Housing
- Received reports on progress from the Senior building surveyor
- Co-created a retro-fit specification

- NDDC is raising additional funds to meet specified requirements
- Housing will be in place by end of 2026
- NDDC and North Devon Homes intend to continue to involve people with lived experiences in planning in future social housing initiatives



"There's no way that NODC would have involved lived experience in the housing project in Ilfracombe without the Commission"  
Ken, CEO, NODC '91

# Housing

## Landlords Charter

Ifracombe PTC aims to create a **Landlords Charter** that helps to build a trusted relationship between Tenant and Landlord. The Charter includes responsibilities of both Tenants and Landlords, communication, support for Landlords (not just penalising), protection for Tenants and highlights good practice and communication.

### **Ifracombe PTC Actions**

The PTC housing group:

- Outlined aims and opportunities for a Charter, including existing and emerging legislation opportunities
- Created draft 'I will' statements for Tenants and Landlords to guide an ideal Tenant/Landlord relationship
- Discussed support for Landlords
- Invited Letting Agencies to join the PTC to begin to build in a new perspective

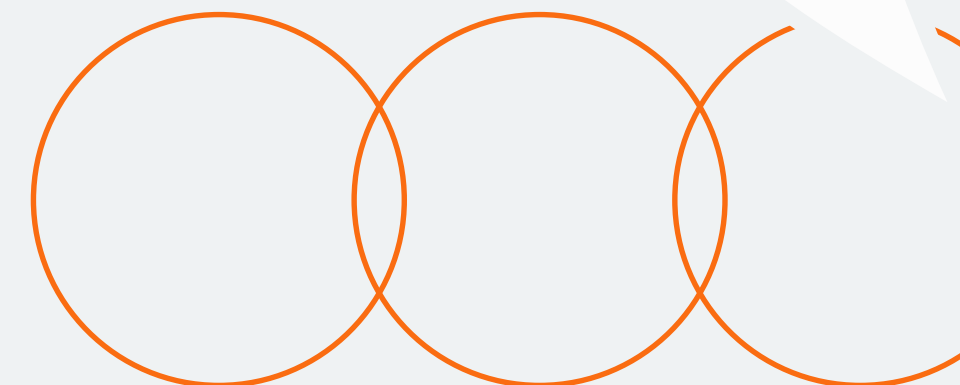
- 361 Energy submitted a funding bid to support Landlord/Letting Agency engagement
- The Housing working group will continue through 2026 to involve more Landlords and Letting Agencies
- Review of NDDC policies to promote voluntary adoption of charter.

# Adult education, skills and employment

In the **Discover** phase, the PTC learned that many people facing long-term unemployment encounter **systemic barriers** that prevent them from accessing training, skills development and re-entering the workforce. This is particularly the case for those dealing with disability, mental health issues, age-related challenges, and living in poor social and environmental conditions.

Existing support systems, like Jobcentres, can fail to provide adequate resources and can show a lack of empathy, leaving people feeling unworthy, unheard, and unsupported. Opportunities can be inaccessible due to financial pressures, fear of benefits being affected, travelling distance, health concerns, or lack of flexibility in existing programs.

*'Its difficult to develop skills or attend courses because they don't happen here, they are often in Barnstaple or further afield. This means it costs money I cannot afford to travel and means I cannot access them'.*



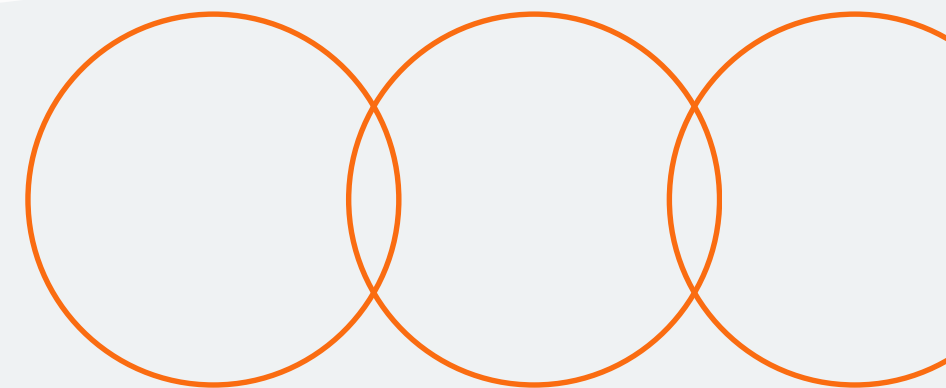
# Adult education, skills and employment

The Commission **Defined** the challenge:

How might we support individuals experiencing long-term unemployment and disability, with a focus on dignity, empowerment, and the development of skills for self-sufficiency?

Providing long-term stability, pathways to employment and personal growth opportunities for people who are often overlooked by traditional employment systems.

*'I'd be too worried to access a course, if they found out I'm attending one, it could change my Universal Credit. The Jobcentre might assume I'm fit to work, overlooking the multiple appointments and clinics I have to attend'.*



# Adult education, skills and employment

## **Ilfracombe PTC Actions**

The PTC working group contributed to the development of new free **adult education courses** delivered by Petroc and Learn Devon, held in Ilfracombe's Junior School (Maths and English for parents and carers) and Academy (Art and Design and Woodwork skills). This is the first time in 20 years that free adult learning courses have been held in the Academy. The group:

- Considered skills gaps, places to promote courses and how people can access support for their learning and next steps into education
- Connected with One Ilfracombe Work & Skills group to share insights.
- Worked with the DCC employment hub to support individuals to access courses
- Wrote a letter of support for a transport bid to improve access to offsite courses
- Organised for the Library and DCC employment hub to support people to sign up for courses if unable to access online
- DWP outreach service was extended and connected with the DCC employment hub

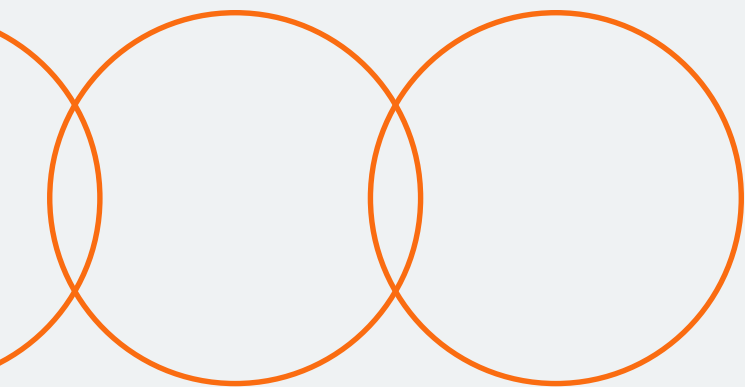
*'I would like the people of Ilfracombe to know they're valued and their lives and their communities are invested in. To be treated with more respect and understanding, and to generally just feel more joy for living here and not have the restrictions and difficulties that coastal communities have'.*

# Community voice and vibrancy

Community voice and vibrancy was not prioritised as a formal themed working group, given the importance of other areas of concern. However, Community Commissioners spoke passionately about the lack of investment in Ilfracombe, and the perceptions of the town.

Many deprived neighbourhoods lack investment in the built environment and in inclusive cultural activities that could strengthen community identity, pride, and wellbeing.

Opportunities to create vibrant, welcoming public spaces - designed with and by community members - are often missed, leaving environments that feel neglected rather than empowering.



# Community voice and vibrancy

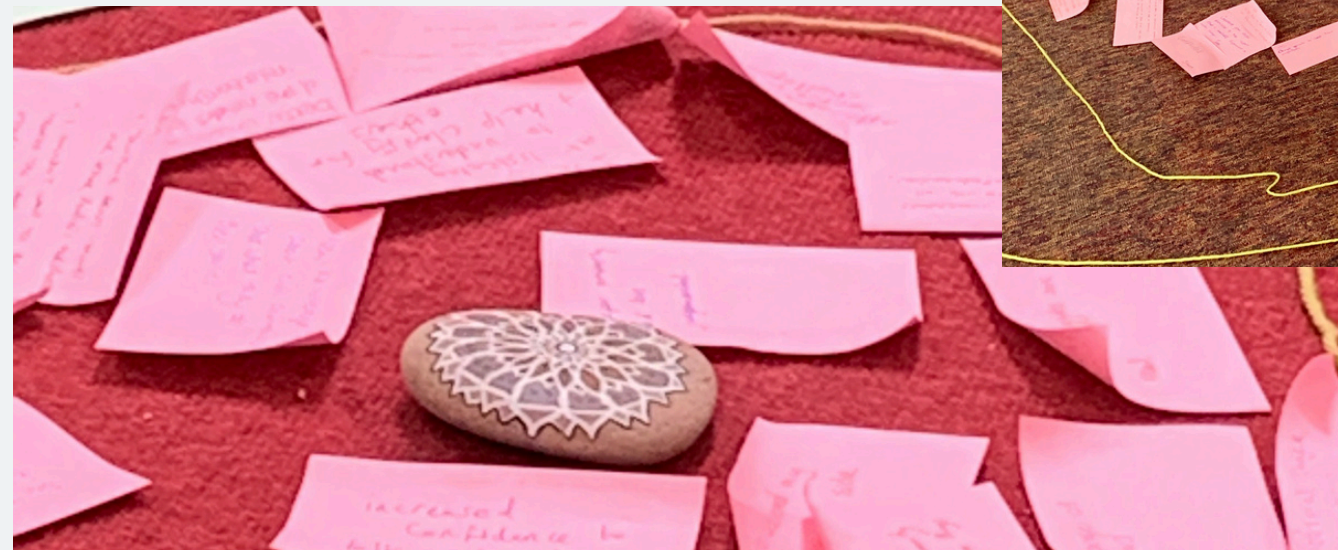
Connected to the Northern Devon and Ilfracombe cultural plans, an **Arts Council England (ACE) bid** was created, drawing on the Poverty Truth Commission model - centring people with lived experience - to run a cultural commission in Ilfracombe that would build relationships and co-design cultural activities to reduce social and health inequalities. A Community Commissioner attended the ACE interview.

Although the bid as a whole was unsuccessful, some cultural activities have taken place informed by the bid and PTC, and alternative funding is being sought. There is an ongoing commitment to including people with lived experience into decision making and building the voice of lived experience into funding bids and co-production.

*'I'm growing increasingly frustrated with how our town is spoken about. The constant sharing of damning statistics constantly shifts the focus to deprivation and other issues. Of course, these are important but Ilfracombe is so much more than that. We should be celebrating all that is good here!'*

# Understanding the Impact: Mapping change (Gatherings 9 & 10)

Around half way through the Commission, we ran two 'ripple mapping' workshops, to explore how the relationship building, new learning and understandings were leading to changes in behaviour and tangible outcomes.

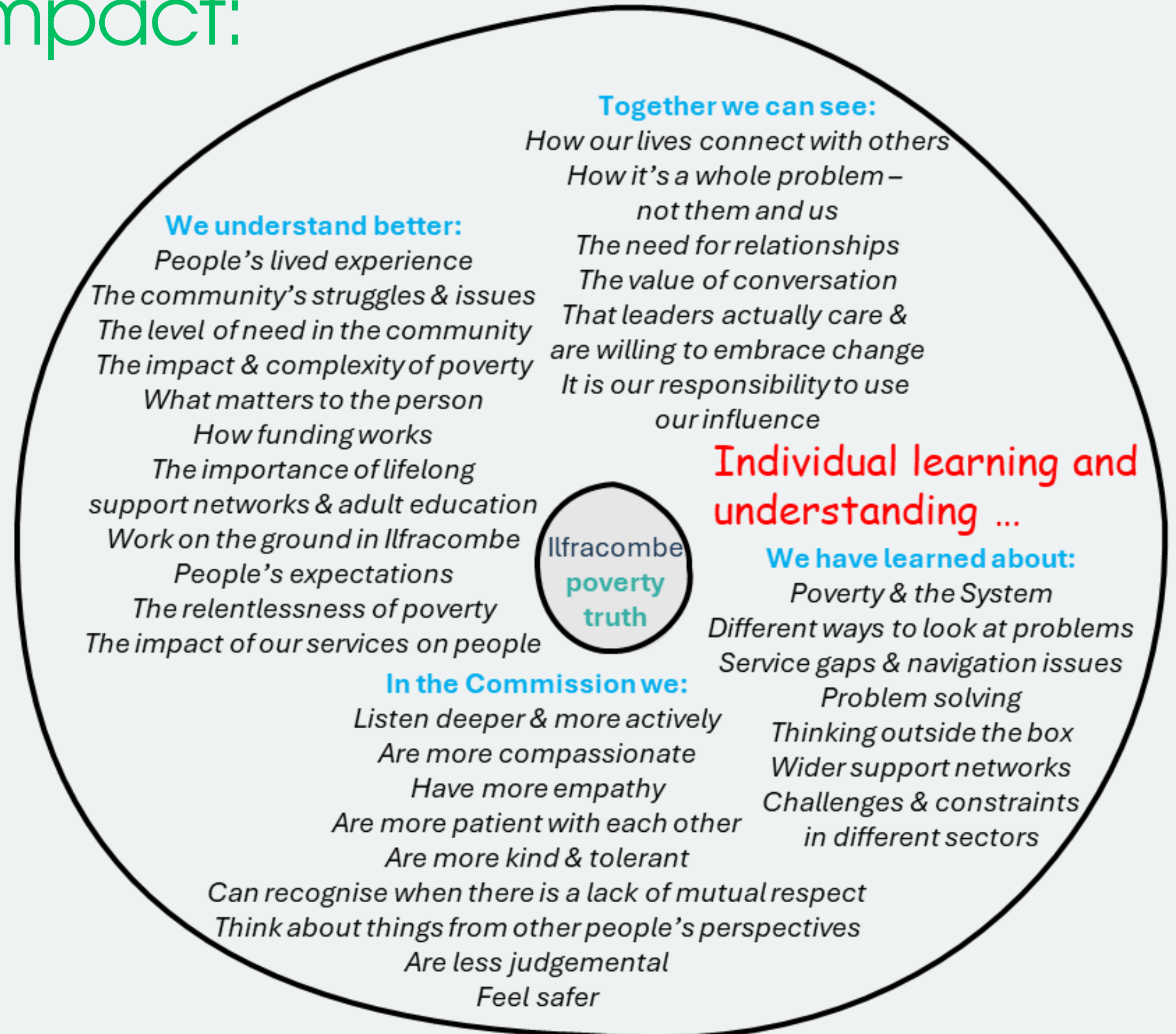


# Understanding the Impact: Mapping change (Gatherings 9 & 10)

Participants said they felt able to **listen more deeply and actively**, were more **compassionate**, and understood people's lived experience better, including the complexity of poverty.

Participants talked about how they **could see how their lives connected together**, the need for relationships, the value of conversation.

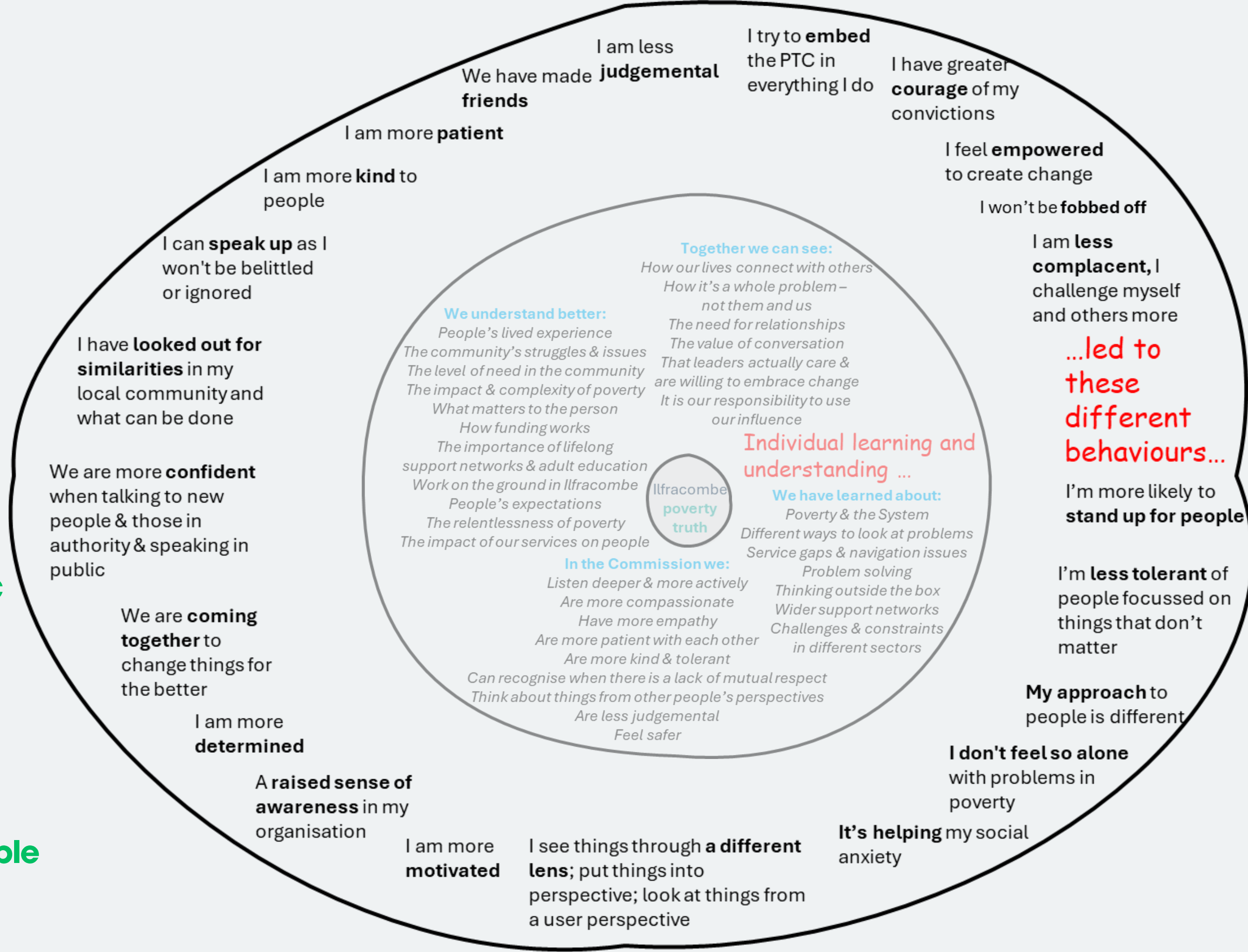
Participants said they had **learned about the challenges and constraints** in different sectors as well as wider support networks.



This individual learning and understanding led to different behaviours:

- more **confidence** when talking to new people and those in authority
- more **determination**
- more **likely to stand up for people**
- **less judgemental**
- trying to **embed the PTC in everything they do**
- a **different approach** to people

**Then these different behaviours led to tangible things out in the world...**



**Developing information window in Ilfracombe Centre**

I signpost people to access information & support

I'm thinking of changing patient booking systems

I talk to people about the PTC – people want to be part of it

I am less judgemental  
We have made friends

I try to embed the PTC in everything I do

I have greater courage of my convictions

I challenge staff about language & hurtful comments

Informed large funding application for cultural activity in Ilfracombe

I am more patient

I feel empowered to create change

I practice listening to understand with my family & neighbours & in work and talk about PTC

Bringing plans forward to look to reduce levels of temporary accommodation

I am more kind to people

I won't be fobbed off

I've tried not to confront those trying to help me; my outlook to those people in services is changing

**Involving people in the design process of 'Healthy Homes'**

Incorporating PTC in the structures of the Council

I can speak up as I won't be belittled or ignored

**We understand better:**

- People's lived experience
- The community's struggles & issues
- The level of need in the community
- The impact & complexity of poverty
- What matters to the person
- How funding works
- The importance of lifelong support networks & adult education
- Work on the ground in Ilfracombe
- People's expectations
- The relentlessness of poverty
- The impact of our services on people

Ilfracombe poverty truth

**In the Commission we:**

- Listen deeper & more actively
- Are more compassionate
- Have more empathy
- Are more patient with each other
- Are more kind & tolerant

**Individual learning and understanding ...**

**We have learned about:**

- Poverty & the System
- Different ways to look at problems
- Service gaps & navigation issues
- Problem solving
- Thinking outside the box
- Wider support networks
- Challenges & constraints in different sectors

**...led to these different behaviours...**

I'm more likely to stand up for people

**...and these tangible things out in the world**

I am fired up to get more resources into Ilfracombe, got NHS funding for mental health in school

We have plans to develop a youth hub, pitched to Town Council

It has strengthened other areas of improvement I'm working on

I have looked out for similarities in my local community and what can be done

We are more confident when talking to new people & those in authority & speaking in public

I have promoted & brought insights and learning into organisational developments e.g. integrated neighbourhood teams, charity work, workways

I am more confident to propose Ilfracombe as a priority area in OND, NDF and Devon ICB; we're getting agreement to do that

We are coming together to change things for the better

I am more determined

A raised sense of awareness in my organisation

Sharing information about PTC (in strategic meetings and with DCC councillor)

I am more motivated

I see things through a different lens; put things into perspective; look at things from a user perspective

It's helping my social anxiety

I don't feel so alone with problems in poverty

My approach to people is different

I've found out more about certain children's family situations

**I'm keen to support better adult education**

# Most Commissioners felt positive about the PTC achievements and hopeful for the future

*'It's a good conversation and individuals in the room are richer for it... it would be a missed opportunity if it didn't make a difference'.*

*Civic Commissioner*

*'Getting us all together (was a success) and making us feel comfortable to share our stories and now seeing there's classes at the academy, there's classes at junior school, there's something going on at the library... But seeing all these things coming and they are accessible to people who live in Ilfracombe... So it's actually in Ilfracombe. It's wonderful'.*

*Community Commissioner*

*'And what's kept me coming is that you can see progress and you can also see that the Civic Commissioners are committed to the process, which is really important because I think if they'd have blown in and blown out and been a bit flaky... I'd have felt like it was a waste of time. And all credit to them, I think our Civic Commissioners have been fabulous'.*

*Community Commissioner*

## But some felt expectations hadn't been met (yet)

*'Some things have come out of it, but there are also things that I feel were not changed, such as some of the things from my experiences... and I know other people's experiences as well... I feel like we've focused on certain areas more so than others. I know that we were on a time scale, but I feel that we need to work on those other areas as well'.*

*Community Commissioner*

*'I'm still 50/50 about it... what is going to happen in the future?... because it'd be interesting to see... stuff in black and white, so we know what's in place... I just need to have everything that the (Civic Commissioners) are telling us. They may be just saying that because its what we want to hear?'*

*Community Commissioner*

*'I don't feel that all of my expectations have been met ...we managed to establish relationships with our Civic Commissioners based upon trust... and the willingness to strive for a mutually achievable goal. Unfortunately I feel that much of what has been proposed there has been a shortfall in those promises'.*

*Community Commissioner*

## And impact through the town has yet to be felt

*'We were a bit naive thinking there would be changes that will be perceptible after what is actually quite a short time. We haven't seen anything in terms of results about that, but then I'm not surprised... in that this is almost the beginning, isn't it?... But I think I think it's definitely shone a light' ...*

*Steering Group Member and VCSE leader*

*'The situation isn't getting better on its own. Real, real changes need to be made. We are talking about the way entire systems are run... the slide into poverty will continue unless some real changes are made because at present we are still on the slope and the slope is getting steeper'.*

*Community Commissioner*

*'And just from from the outside, it just looks like another Council project. So I think that, you know, working with the people we do work with, most of them are blissfully unaware that there is a Poverty Truth Commission'.*

*Steering Group Member and VCSE leader*

# Understanding the impact on people with lived experience of poverty

## Community Commissioners told us they:

- were more **confident** and happier to speak up, especially with people in authority
- **felt listened to** and that their experiences and opinions were **valued**
- had made **new friends** that they felt would last
- had a **greater understanding** of how complex some of the decision making in services can be, and the dilemmas Civic Commissioners faced
- felt they could be **more open and honest** about their situation and experiences, and had valued having people they could be open with, without judgement or guilt
- felt they were **making a difference**
- felt they had a **sense of purpose**

*'I think it has helped me develop... my listening skills have improved and to hear other people's insights into how they've dealt with situations that I've been in myself and just to walk a mile in their shoes, you know'.*

*'It's been a bigger thing, with more impact to me than I thought it would be'.*

# Understanding the impact on civic leaders

## Civic Commissioners told us they:

- have a **new mindset or 'lens'** that they took back with them into the work and home lives. They imagined how their decisions would affect the people they had come to know in the Poverty Truth Commission.
- felt they had a **greater understanding** of how poverty impacted on people's lives, of how difficult it is to get out of poverty and of how precarious people's lives can be.
- valued the opportunity to **create relationships** with people who are most impacted by the services they provide.
- **reconsidered their own service and support** in the light of how it might better service those impacted by poverty.
- were **more likely to challenge** colleagues about language or hurtful comments.

*'On a personal level, it reconnects me to my values'.*

*'Hearing the passion and desire to change how poverty is perceived has really changed my thinking'.*

*'It has led me to think differently about barriers to getting people involved.. and challenged my thinking on how, when and where we can vary what we do to be more reflective of the experience that someone is having'.*

# Understanding the impact on organisations

Civic Commissioners told us they have found different ways to embed the learning into their work and services:

- Incorporating learning from the Commission into **staff induction, staff meetings and training.**
- The Commission has been used as a **case study** in proposals for Government Reorganisation and is mentioned in the Devon Health & Wellbeing Strategy.
- A Community Commissioner has been invited to **participate in future drug and alcohol commissioning**, bringing the voice of lived experience into service commissioning.
- Helping to **influence decisions** and developments in health provision, Neighbourhood Team bids, homelessness and addiction through learning from the PTC.
- Learning from the PTC has helped to **inform a new Department of Work and Pensions outreach service** and employment hub in Ilfracombe.

*'Listening to lived experiences brings awareness of the issues at hand which in turn provides a focus and opportunity to assess how these can be improved or alleviated'.*

*'We know that plans are better when we listen to people who have lived through these problems. Projects like the Ilfracombe Poverty Truth Commission have shown how important it is to hear real stories from real people'.*  
Devon Health & Wellbeing Strategy

# Understanding the impact on organisations

## Civic Commissioners and PTC Guests told us they:

- Are considering how people with lived experience can be **offered more opportunities** for the voices of people with lived experience to be at strategic tables to influence decision making.
- Are planning to continue to **involve the Commission** in future housing plans.
- Have **simplified language** on their organisation's website, newsletter and other communications.
- Have **better working relationships** with other agencies, which will enable them to provide better, more informed and timely responses for those they support.
- Are **considering future work** on neighbourhood health, ten year health plans and strategic developments in the light of learning from the Poverty Truth Commission

*'The PTC is beginning to connect us around some tangible things that can help us to help individuals and communities differently'.*

# Understanding the impact on organisations

Civic Commissioners and PTC Guests told us they are:

- **Considering how to link the learning to different strands of work** such as Ilfracombe Futures (including youth work and a future bid), library developments, Elected Member briefings and Sport England Place Expansion Partnerships. Hopeful that PTC learning and partnerships will help inform successful bids for future funding opportunities.
- Including details of the **impact decisions, delays and errors** have on service users when dealing with queries to try and make processing teams aware of the impact they can have when they get things wrong.
- Planning to be **more personalised** in how they deliver and to continue to use the shared experiences to consider the difficult decision choices that they are forced to make from a poverty lens.

*'The PTC has helped me in how I interact with patients, taking a more holistic approach... trying to get to the root of issues rather than providing a sticking plaster approach'.*

# Understanding the impact on changing the conversation

Civic Commissioners and PTC Guests told us they are:

- Speaking about the PTC at **local and regional meetings** and raising it at staff inductions.
- Speaking about the PTC at **different forums** in primary/secondary/community care interface, including foundation and trainee doctors and the national community of practice.
- Taking the opportunity to **coalesce (with other agencies)** around the agenda of poverty based on the teamwork established through the PTC.
- Taking part in **networking** and joint working that has been set up or reinvigorated through the PTC.
- **Sharing the learning** with System Change Action Alliance (SCAA) and considering how to safely involve people with lived experience to be part of the SCAA.

# Understanding the impact on services and policy

Civic Commissioners and PTC Guests told us:

*'What the Poverty Truth Commission has made me think and feel, is that it's really important that those voices are represented in the decision making bodies'.*  
Steering Group member

- The PTC has helped to keep Ilfracombe as one of the **main focusses of NDDC**.
- RDUHT have put the **'Campus Model'** and **'No, but' approach** forward as a Neighbourhood Health pilot.
- Community Commissioners will be invited to **One Ilfracombe working groups** to ensure the continued sustainability of the PTC. Other organisations are considering how people with lived experience of poverty can be included in decision-making and policy development.
- Learning from the PTC is **informing discussion** around location of mental health support in Ilfracombe.
- The PTC has emphasised the **value and importance of involving people with lived experience** in improving their offer. People with lived experience will now be involved in their service delivery commissioning process. It is also expected that Public Health and/or Devon County Council will adopt commissioning principles/standards. Colleagues in Public Health are producing a good practice guide to present to Public Health Leadership with recommendations or suggested ways in which they can agree how we will involve people with lived experience in commissioning.

# And...

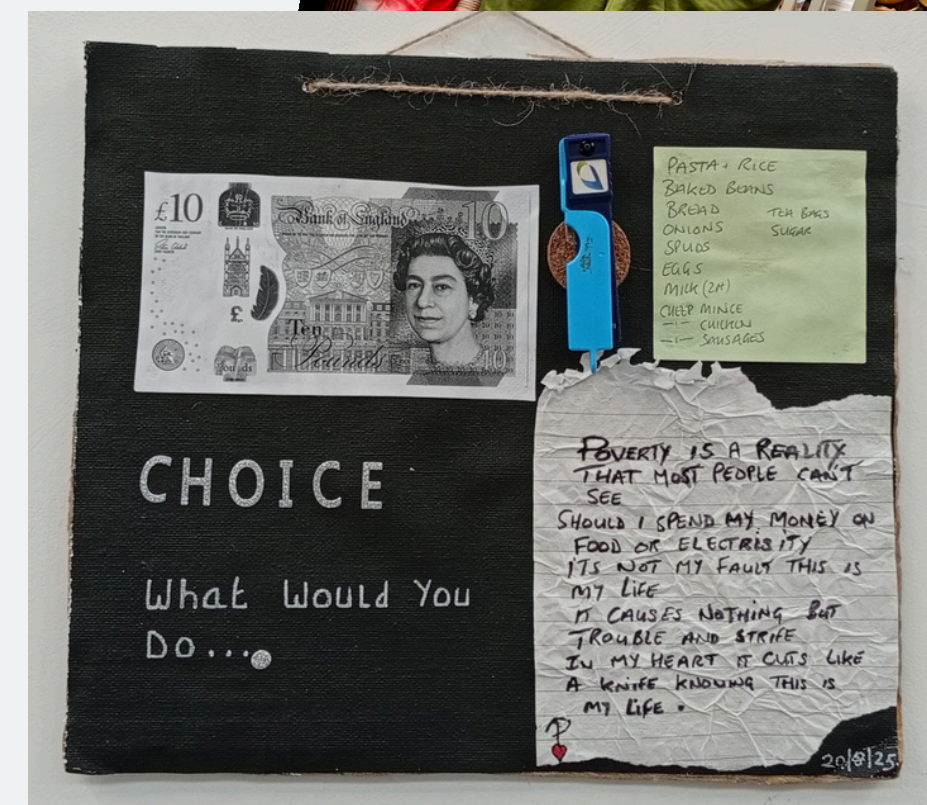
Three Community Commissioners **exhibited their artwork** as part of 'Together Stories', an exhibition at Studio Kind in Barnstaple.

One Civic Commissioner from Devon Partnership NHS Trust made a **short film** about the PTC and shared it with 800 staff across the Trust at 'Our Journey' staff engagement event. Poverty Truth - Our Journey film

There are plans to rekindle an **idea for a youth hub** in Ilfracombe, along the lines of PTC principles.

A **thrive initiative** to support children's emotional and social development in school was brought forward and extended when a Community Commissioner shared her experience of living in housing where there isn't room for her children to play

A **successful lottery funding** bid by Encompass will help support a volunteer peer support programme in Ilfracombe, integrated with the Campus Model development.



# Moving into the future

**One Ilfracombe** has committed further staff time to continue to embed the work of the PTC through 2026. This will include working on continuing tasks around the products, embedding the learning, ensuring the community voice continues to influence the decision making process, and enabling system changes that better support those experiencing poverty. Whilst 'Poverty Truth' will look different, and have fewer resources to support it, this increased investment could make the difference to ensuring the work so far does not dissipate or get forgotten.

**Devon Mind (Devon Mental Health Alliance)** has also committed staff time which will help to support and develop the ideas around wellbeing and networked support in Ilfracombe.

*'The thought that it is ending is impossible to conceive of, it doesn't make sense to not carry on in some way... we feel like a whole, not individual people... we can't go back'.  
Community Commissioner*

# Moving into the future

The achievements of the PTC have been many, and are testament to the hard work of everyone involved. The PTC has met its purpose - with better understanding of poverty, of the system and what it can influence, it has begun to *'create the conditions to take multi-level action to enhance quality of service delivery, reduce inequalities and improve the living conditions and health and wellbeing outcomes of people experiencing poverty in Ilfracombe'* (Ilfracombe PTC Purpose).

However, the timescale of the PTC is short in terms of system change: **continuing to progress the work of the PTC**, and continued (and expanded) commitment by people with lived experience of poverty, and civic and voluntary sector partners, will help to achieve the PTC vision for Ilfracombe - to help people experiencing poverty to have the physical and emotional resources they need to thrive.

More broadly, with creative insight and continued motivation, the learning from the Commission can help to **shape plans and funding bids locally and regionally** around Neighbourhood Teams, Local Government Reorganisation and future developments in culture, health, communities, youth and employment and skills.

*'I honestly didn't think we'd get to this point at the beginning. I don't know what I was expecting at the beginning, but looking at where we are now, I do feel like the group as a whole has created something'.*  
Community Commissioner

*The success won't be at the end of this, 'What have we done? Or 'we've achieved this and something has changed'.*

*It's: 'What have we set in place to keep that change that we've made?...how do we keep that change going?'*

Civic Commissioner

# Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank all the Community Commissioners, Civic Commissioners, Guests, Facilitators and local people who contributed to the learning of the Ilfracombe Poverty Truth Commission. Everyone was very generous with their time, and willing to readily engage with the learning process.

Research to capture the learning from the Ilfracombe PTC was funded by One Northern Devon, Devon County Council and the University of Exeter ESRC Impact Accelerator Award Fund

The research is a partnership between Devon Community Foundation, NIHR Applied Research Collaboration SW Peninsula (PenARC) and the University of Exeter School for Public Health Environments Research (SPHERE)

To learn more about the Ilfracombe Poverty Truth Commission and to view films about the work see <https://onenortherndevon.co.uk/our-work/reducing-health-inequalities/health-inequalities/work-in-northern-devon/poverty-truth-commission/>

poverty truth Ilfracombe