




Challenging Poverty

Together, as a Diocese, we will be responding to God's call to Challenge Poverty by:

1. Working together to address **Child & Youth Poverty**;
2. **Responding to isolation**, particularly among the elderly;
3. Reaching out and responding to the needs and gifts of **Asylum Seekers & Refugees**.





'Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Isaiah 58:6-8



The Diocese of Durham contains significant areas of deprivation – a third of our parishes are in the 10% most deprived communities nationally and face significant inequality of income, employment, health, wellbeing and opportunity.

Child poverty, isolation, and below average educational attainment are all elements of this. As local churches, chaplaincy teams and schools, we are uniquely placed to engage with this. And, **as God's people we are uniquely charged, and resourced, to be part of the response.**

The Waymark survey showed the majority of parishes responding to poverty in some way, ranging from food collections to foodbanks, summer holiday hunger and activity clubs, debt advice, advocacy and many other initiatives. Each of these are really valuable.

Over the next five years we want to build on this, making a special effort to strengthen our ministry in three key areas, taking action to Challenge Poverty by:

1. Working together to address **Child & Youth Poverty**;
2. **Responding to isolation**, particularly among the Elderly;
3. Reaching out and responding to the needs and gifts of **Asylum Seekers & Refugees**.

Working together, as churches, schools, deaneries and with others, we can all contribute to and participate in God's transforming work of bringing hope, healing and justice. Doing so will require that we raise awareness of Jesus's call to be with the last, the least and the lost; find ways to help our congregations respond practically (working with their community for the wellbeing of all) and that we act together as a Diocese in order to reform the underlying systems & problems.

In engaging with Child & Youth poverty, isolation and issues of asylum & refuge, finding ways to act collaboratively will often be important if we are to be really effective.

The Challenging Poverty priority includes:

- Work with Citizens UK to increase the number of people being paid the **real living wage** in the region;
- Work to become a **dementia friendly diocese**, developing support and capacity for 'hospitality' projects;
- Support to increase engagement with *Poverty Sunday, holiday hunger, holiday clubs* and other initiatives.

As a Diocese we are committed to:

- Audit local need/church engagement with and of refugees and asylum seekers, integrating this with our work on race and diversity;
- Promote a greater understanding of the asylum system and developing new support networks to resource churches engaged in serving refugee/asylum seeking communities;
- Developing **Community Sponsorship** in each Archdeaconry;
- Promoting the ministry of asylum seekers and refugees within the whole community,
- Supporting congregations to understand local poverty using the CUF look-up tool;
- Piloting work with toddler groups to **develop intentional approaches to improving life chances**;
- Multiplying **Places of welcome, Dementia Friendly church, CAP money** and other debt action projects.

We will encourage:

- Partnership to provide more debt advice centres;
- Churches to identify and share the ways in which they support older people, in order to extend this further and more widely;
- **'Poverty proofing'** of our parish activities, ensuring they are accessible to those living in poverty;
- Extension of online provision to improve accessibility and engagement among the immobile, housebound and isolated (including teenagers, parents/carers and the disabled etc.);
- Engagement with **Refugee week** as churches, schools and chaplaincies.