

Many people take part in Poverty & Homelessness Action Week in a simple way. You could run a church service or just take a Cup of Tea collection. But you might want to do something more ambitious, to really make sure that everyone in your area is counted and has a voice.

Here are some ideas for events and activities you might run in Action Week 2011. If you'd like more ideas, or more detailed guidance on how to plan and run an event, download the event guides from Action Week 2009 or 2010 at [www.actionweek.org.uk/html/history.html](http://www.actionweek.org.uk/html/history.html).

### Carry out a street count!

Since 1996 the Government has asked all local authorities to measure the extent of rough sleeping in the local area, if more than 20 people were thought to be sleeping rough. Since September 2010, they are only required to submit an estimate instead of actually doing a count.

Official street counts have regularly been criticised by independent observers because there was a perception that they undercounted the actual numbers of street homeless people. It was partly in local authority interests to do so, to show how their homelessness strategies were successfully keeping the numbers of street homeless people down.

For Action Week 2010, you could help to make sure that all homeless people in your area count, by carrying out your own street count and making sure the authorities are aware of the real extent of the problem.

**You can download a full guide to doing a street count from the 'Resources' page at [www.actionweek.org.uk](http://www.actionweek.org.uk). Housing Justice or Scottish Churches Housing Action (contact details overleaf) can help if you want to do your own street count.**

### Hold a poverty hearing!

A poverty hearing is a public event, where people experiencing poverty and homelessness tell their stories. MPs, councillors, the media and other decision-makers are invited to come and listen, and challenged to take action.

A poverty hearing is a great way to raise awareness of the reality of UK poverty, and to reach people who have the power to change things. But they have to be planned and run very sensitively.

**For more ideas on running poverty hearings, see <http://bit.ly/poverty-hearing>**



### Have a sponsored sleep-out!

Many groups raise large sums of money each year by sleeping on the streets and collecting sponsorship.

This also raises awareness of how difficult life can be for people living on the streets.

Choose a local service such as a drop-in centre to raise funds for – and please make a contribution to the national Action Week partners too (see overleaf).

*A sleep-out in Rochester for Action Week 2010*



## Put on a performance!

Drama, music and the arts are all good ways of exploring the theme of Action Week. In previous years, many groups have used drama as a sensitive way of telling the stories of people experiencing poverty and homelessness. You could encourage children to explore the theme through art, or hold a fundraising gig.

For ideas on using drama, check out the resource pack from Action Week 2009, still available free at [www.actionweek.org.uk/html/history.html](http://www.actionweek.org.uk/html/history.html).

*Actor Simon Callow appeared in the play 'Voices from the Edge' as part of Poverty & Homelessness Action Week 2009.*



## Fundraising at Action Week events

Events in Poverty & Homelessness Action Week are primarily about raising awareness of the problems of poverty, homelessness, poor housing and related issues in Britain – and promoting positive solutions to them. However, events also offer opportunities for raising funds.

One option is to use our prayer calendar, run a 'Cup of Tea' appeal, or otherwise take a collection for the Action Week partners at your event. You should have received a flyer with details of the Cup of Tea appeal.

We do appreciate that Action Week is also a great chance to support local projects making a difference in your community, or to raise funds for your own work. However, we ask you to recognise that your fundraising benefits from the work put in by the Action Week partners in creating a UK-wide awareness opportunity.

If Action Week is to happen in future years, the partners need financial support from local groups.

Therefore, if you plan to hold a collection or other fundraising effort for your own purposes at your Action Week event,

we ask that you make a contribution of at least 25% of the money raised to the national organisers.

We do appreciate your support in this. We understand that some groups raise substantial sums during Action Week. If 25% of your proceeds seems an excessive amount, you could consider making a smaller donation in advance and becoming a sponsor of Action Week. To discuss this, please contact Alison Gelder on 020 7920 6441.

See the separate fundraising guide for more ideas about fundraising.

## Contact the Action Week partners



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