

Local Real Unemployment Campaign Toolkit

A resource for Corps and supporters



The Salvation Army UK and
Ireland Territory

Public Affairs Unit
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Introduction

‘Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.’

Proverbs 31:8-9

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is a Christian church and registered charity, working in over 650 communities across the UK and Ireland. For more than 150 years, The Salvation Army has stood alongside people facing poverty and exclusion.

As Proverbs 31:8-9 reminds us, we are called to put faith into action by serving others, defending human dignity and seeking justice for those who are pushed to the margins. As Christians, we believe every person is made in the image of God and has inherent value.

As such, The Salvation Army believes in meeting people where they are. That is why our Employment Plus service takes a compassionate, person-centred approach, helping people overcome the barriers that can keep them out of work.

We know that being unable to access suitable work can affect every part of life. It can lead to financial insecurity, isolation, poor physical and mental health, and a greater risk of poverty. Good work can bring dignity, purpose and stability, but many people need the right support before work becomes possible.

Let’s put our faith into action by shining a light on people who want to work but are being overlooked. By speaking up locally, sharing what you see and asking decision-makers to act, you can help push this issue up the agenda.

Purpose of this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help you take simple, practical action in your local area. It explains the issue, gives you ready-to-use templates, and helps you speak with confidence about why better employment support matters, and why helping



people move towards suitable, sustainable work benefits individuals, families and communities.

Whether you write to a local councillor, MP or other politician, post on social media, or start a conversation in your community, your voice can help make sure real unemployment is taken seriously.

Here are some ways you can help:

- Write to your local councillors, mayor, or other politicians using the templates in this toolkit.
- Share messages on social media to help more people understand what real unemployment means.
- Talk to local businesses, community and faith leaders about the barriers people in your area are facing.
- Ask what support exists locally, who is missing out, and what could be improved.

The Salvation Army's Public Affairs Unit (PAU) can support you with further guidance or advice at any time: Public.Affairs@SalvationArmy.org.uk

What is real unemployment?

Real unemployment is about the people who want to work but are not fully reflected in the headline figures. It includes people who are officially unemployed, as well as people who are not currently looking for work but still want a job.

The Salvation Army's 'Real Unemployment' report shows that many people who want to work are not being reached by employment support delivered through the benefits system. This work-first approach may help those who are ready now and do not face multiple or complex barriers. But for others, barriers such as poor health, caring responsibilities, homelessness, debt, low confidence or a lack of suitable local jobs can make it much harder to engage.

Being locked out of work can also mean being locked out of financial security, stability and opportunity. It can lead to poverty and make it harder for people to live with dignity.



That is why we are calling for tailored support that reaches the right people with the right help at the right time. This means more local and specialist support, better access for people outside the benefits system, and a stronger focus on helping people into suitable, sustainable work.

Local campaigners can help by encouraging politicians and community leaders to recognise the scale of real unemployment in their area and back practical action to address it.

Ultimately, this is about ending poverty in the UK and ensuring everyone can live in dignity, not despair.

This toolkit is designed to support local conversations and campaigning alongside The Salvation Army's report on real unemployment and poverty.

Engaging with politicians

Your local councillor

Councillors can raise concerns on behalf of residents, ask questions locally, and connect this issue to council priorities such as jobs, skills, health, housing and community support. Writing to a local councillor is a good way to highlight what people in your area are facing and ask for action.

Below is a draft letter/email. You can find your local councillors [here](#).

For further support, please email: Public.Affairs@SalvationArmy.org.uk

Dear Councillor [Surname],

I am writing to you as a resident of [location] because there are a number of people in our community who want to work, but are missing out on the vital support needed to help them. This is increasing poverty in our community.



The Salvation Army's new report on real unemployment shows how many people are outside the official unemployment figures or the main benefits-based routes into employment support, even though they still want to work.

People in this situation may face barriers such as poor health, caring responsibilities, homelessness, debt, low confidence or a shortage of suitable local jobs. Many need flexible, tailored support before work becomes realistic.

I would encourage you to raise this issue within [council name] and call for stronger partnerships with specialist voluntary and community organisations, more flexible local provision, and approaches that reach people outside the benefits system.

This is a local community issue. When people are shut out of work, it affects families, neighbourhoods and local economies. It can mean greater financial hardship, fewer opportunities and a higher risk of poverty for people who want to contribute but are being held back by barriers. With the right support, more people can move away from poverty and towards employment and greater stability.

I would be grateful if you could raise this issue on my behalf and share the attached report with council leaders.

Thank you for your time and for your work on behalf of our community.

Your mayor or local authority leader

Mayors and council leaders can help set priorities across economic development, skills, transport and local partnerships. They can champion more joined-up action and make sure this issue is considered in wider local plans.

You can adapt the template below for a mayor, combined authority mayor or council leader.

Dear [Mayor/Council Leader Surname],



I am writing to you as a resident of [location] because there are a number of people in our community who want to work, but are missing out on the vital support needed to help them. This is increasing poverty in our community.

The Salvation Army's new report on real unemployment highlights how many people are outside official unemployment figures or outside the main benefits-based routes into employment support, even though they still want to work.

This is a local community issue. When people are shut out of work, it affects families, neighbourhoods and local economies. It can mean greater financial hardship, fewer opportunities and a higher risk of poverty for people who want to contribute but are being held back by barriers. With the right support, more people can move away from poverty and towards employment and greater stability.

I ask that you use your strategic leadership role to champion joined-up local action. This could include strengthening partnerships with specialist employability providers, improving access to flexible support for people with complex barriers, and making sure local jobs and skills strategies focus on suitable, sustainable work.

I would be grateful if you could raise this issue on my behalf and share the attached report with your team.

Thank you for your time and for your work on behalf of our community.

Your local MP

Your MP can raise this issue with UK Government ministers, ask parliamentary questions, speak in debates, and press for changes to employment support policy. Writing to your MP is one of the clearest ways to call for national action.

As a constituent, your voice matters. You can encourage your MP to help make sure people in your community are not overlooked.

We've created an online campaign page. Simply enter your postcode and an email to your local MP will be generated for you.



Please click [this link](#) or visit:

<https://action.salvationarmy.org.uk/page/193560/action/1>.

If you would like further support, or would like this template in a different format, please email: Public.Affairs@SalvationArmy.org.uk.

Your MSP, MS or MLA

MSPs, MSs and MLAs can raise concerns with devolved ministers, ask questions in their parliament or assembly, and press for stronger links between employment support and devolved responsibilities such as health, skills, education, housing and local services.

As a constituent, your voice matters. You can encourage them to help make sure people in your community are not overlooked.

Please click [this link](#) or visit:

<https://action.salvationarmy.org.uk/page/193561/action/1>.

If you would like further support, or would like this template in a different format, please email: Public.Affairs@SalvationArmy.org.uk.

Social media posts

Feel free to use or adapt these posts. The most effective messages are clear, respectful and focused on why people need better support to move towards work.

Please do tag @salvationarmyUK and use #endpoverty or #dignitynotdespair.

Draft posts

- I'm supporting @SalvationArmyUK's campaign on poverty. Too many people who want to work are being missed by support. We need better help for people facing real barriers. #endpoverty #dignitynotdespair

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- Real unemployment is about more than headline figures. People need support to overcome the barriers keeping them trapped in poverty. #endpoverty #dignitynotdespair @SalvationArmyUK
 - In the UK, 7.1 million people living in families with children are in poverty. They deserve dignity, not despair. I'm supporting @SalvationArmyUK's campaign for better employment support.
 - Poverty is found across the UK and employment can be a route out. We need support that is local, flexible and focused on suitable, sustainable work, not just any job. #endpoverty #dignitynotdespair @SalvationArmyUK

Useful links

[The Salvation Army's Employment Plus page](#)

[The Salvation Army's Employment Policy page](#)

[The Salvation Army's Real Unemployment report](#)

If you need any additional help, advice or guidance, please contact Public.Affairs@SalvationArmy.org.uk.