

poverty is **many things**

Earlier this year, we supported groups of people from Salford to work together with professional writers, producing stories and poems about their personal experiences of poverty. Here is one of the poems that emerged from this 'Powerlines' project.

Poverty is not entertainment, it's not noble or romantic.
Poverty is... heavy.
It's heavy hearts and heavy legs.
It's sore skin and hollow eyes.
It's upset and downhearted.
It's hunger. Malnourishment. It's always thinking about the next meal.
Poverty is bailiffs, it's food banks, it's queues and lists,
it's never being told what you're entitled to but always being told.
Poverty is being shown up then put down.
It's missed payments and mistrust.
It's always answering questions but never answering the door.
Poverty is hiding in plain view. It's hiding.
Poverty is high bills and low pay.
It's higher costs and lower self-esteem.
It's invisible scars and visible pain.
Poverty is living nextdoor, it's living on your nerves, it's not living, it's... barely surviving.
Poverty is... everywhere. With... nowhere to turn
It's a gut-wrenching silence, screaming.
Poverty is depressing, demotivating and dehumanising.
It's degradation, desperation and despair.
Poverty is feeling... worthless, it's feeling anxious, it's feeling excluded,
it's feeling rejected, it's feeling ashamed, it's feeling trapped, it's feeling angry,
it's feeling frustrated, poverty is.... exhausting.
It's not feeling anything. It's... numb.
Poverty is... crushing. Empty. Lonely.
Poverty is cold. It's damp. It's ill health. Bad housing. Sadness, fear and human misery.
Poverty is ignored and abandoned. It's sanctioned and sectioned.
It's late payments and early deaths.
Poverty is not something that happens to... "others".
Poverty is our old people, our young people, our sick people, our disabled people,
our mentally ill people, our homeless people.
Poverty is people seeking asylum, it's people who are refugees,
people who are migrants. Poverty is overworked, underpaid everyday people.
Poverty is people. It's children. Babies. Not... "them". Us.
"Poverty is the worst form of violence." (Mahatma Gandhi)
Poverty is growing in our country. In 2016.
Poverty is many things, but
it is not
acceptable.



POWERLINES
STORIES FROM THE URBAN EDGE



This poem was taken from the Church Action on Poverty magazine, SPARK, Winter 2017

www.church-poverty.org.uk/about-us/about-us/spark-newsletter/winter2017