



STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE ON RURAL POVERTY

ACT believes:

- Nobody should be disadvantaged by where they live.
- Rural poverty is hard to measure and often hidden in communities where visitors, second homes, and retirement properties contribute to the impression of general affluence.
- There are higher levels of 'poverty denial', self-reliance and stigma associated with rural poverty, which can lead to under-representation.
- There are pockets of high deprivation in rural areas, nationally, rural poverty is growing fast.
- Rural poverty is made worse by a lack of affordable housing, lower pay, poorer digital connectivity, lower benefit entitlement take-up, higher self-employment, the scattered nature of some communities, and poorer access to appropriate advice and information.
- Local and national governments, communities, individuals and businesses can all take action to help tackle rural poverty.
- Rural proofing is important as it helps all tiers of government consider rurality when making policy. This should allow both strategy and delivery to address rural poverty.

ACT supports communities to take action on poverty through:

- Work with local people to provide support in communities, without stigmatising people in need.
- Exploring the potential of rural wealth redistribution (for example, through community energy projects) particularly through the social economy.
- Improving resources (particularly digit access) and leadership.
- Working in partnership with statutory authorities to improve local provision.
- Sharing good practice about what works well.

ACT will champion locally led action to address poverty issues and we will work with strategic partners to influence policy, where possible.

- We will provide local and national evidence, and expertise for communities to assist them to reduce rural poverty.
- We will help communities to have their lived experiences heard.
- We will ensure that communities can access the professional and peer support they need as they develop their ideas and interventions.
- We will hold partners to account and continue to advocate on behalf of communities so that local actions have greatest impact.

ACT as an organisation will continue to work towards reducing local poverty through:

- Proactively supporting initiatives across Cumbria that seek to address poverty.
- Making the hidden nature of rural poverty, and the inherent higher cost of living in rural areas, more clearly understood by policymakers, service deliverers and communities themselves.
- Advocating strategic coordination and ensuring that consideration is given to rural wellbeing when all public policies, plans and strategies are being designed, agreed and implemented.
- Focus on addressing the causes of rural poverty as well as the symptoms.
- Advocating for fairer rural funding to reflect higher service costs and identified need.

Supporting communities since 1948

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Registered Office: Office Q, Skirsgill Business Park, Penrith CA11 0FA (