

Taking Voice Seriously- Reply & Response Policy.

Thank you for contacting the APLE Collective. We are always pleased to hear from groups and organisations that are interested in our work.

The APLE Collective is a national collective of individuals and organisations with lived experience of poverty. Our aim is to create a sustainable, grassroots network across the UK to raise awareness of poverty, reduce stigma, and eradicate it. As a network, we promote the voices of those with lived experience of poverty and work collaboratively with others to influence change. Core to our mission as a collective is addressing poverty with lived experience in a meaningful and participatory way.

We, like many in the voluntary sector, have limited funding and capacity. We are a small grassroots organisation, governed and co-created by volunteers. As such, we are committed to ensuring that every action and involvement we move forward with builds on our mission to have lived experience voices taken seriously.

Taking Voice Seriously

As an APLE Collective we aim to address poverty with lived experience, ensuring that our voice has maximum impact in all the work that we do. We have a commitment to adopting a fully participatory approach to our work within the APLE Collective. This commitment and approach informs our partnership working relationships, APLE Collective work with partners in spaces that value all areas of expertise equally when collaborating on anti-poverty initiatives.

If you invite us to a one off event as a speaker , we would request that we have a pre-meeting and discuss the aims and intentions of the event to ensure it aligns with our vision and mission statement. If you would like APLE Collective to work on a partnership initiative or activity we request to participate fully in the planning, delivery, presentation and (where appropriate) analysis of the work.

Covering our costs

If you would like to involve APLE Collective members in your event or to invite APLE Collective members to attend your event we ask that all costs [travel / subsistence] are covered by your organisation. We can provide a quote in advance for this. We charge at £300 per day.

If you would like us to offer advice / consultancy to your organisation in relation to your participation and voice approach then contact us directly contact@aplecollective.com

Taking Voice Seriously: The Value of Voice

Addressing poverty with lived experience means valuing the power of voice, listening, taking action and making change together. Taking Voice Seriously builds on the work of APLE Collective, which has demonstrated the participatory imperative behind lived experience activism (Goldstraw et al, 2021).

Lived collective expertise holds strong benefits for the social sector and for collective expertises by experience. Sandhu (2017:17) lists over fifteen benefits for the voluntary and community sector of listening to lived collective expertise within change making. These benefits are focussed around strengthening community credibility, community connection and demonstrating organisational values. There are wider benefits to the community, which include benefits for community cohesion, building of equality and dignity for all and a raising of community consciousness (Sandhu, 2017).

Value for collective expertises by experience sit around the sense of dignity built by holding equality of voice as well as practical improvements to mental and physical health through inclusion within the community. Newton (2022) lists the benefits to the individual with lived experience as a route to finding meaning and purpose within our experiences, increases in self-esteem, an increased sense of belonging and an appreciation of other as well as increased skills, knowledge and opportunities.

Principles for action

These four principles for action summarise the collective expertise gathered by APLE Collective activists throughout our many collective years of experience.

It is vital to **acknowledge the skills and collective expertise within the lived experience community**. We are more than a story, lived experience is an collective expertise that can inform debate and lead to positive change.

Involving lived experience voices in your work **needs to have real world outcomes that are accountable**. We need to ensure that people are invited to participate because you want them to be there. Ensure all people know what their part brings to the meeting.

Person Centred Practice is key. Addressing Poverty with Lived Experience has to be people centred and based on relationships of mutual respect. It's important to be flexible, one size doesn't fit all people and people want to be involved in a variety of ways. Let people know that they are valued and the actions that are linked to their input. Share thank you's and ensure that travel and other expenses are paid up front.

Inclusion of all voices is essential. Addressing Poverty with Lived Experience needs to ensure equality of representation, and involve inclusivity. Consider the accessibility of the venue, time of the session and accessibility for all and avoid jargon.

Further Learning:

For a copy of our briefing paper, to watch our webinar or to read our full literature review of the research around the value of voice see our website.

www.aplecollective.com

References.

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