



**APLE Collective's
Achievements 2023-24**





APLE Collective's Achievements 2023-24

This report details APLE Collective's work October 2023 - September 2024.

The report begins with a summary of the highlights of our year as a Collective and continues offering a summary of how APLE members have met the objectives agreed with our Funder, Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The report includes quotes from members of each of our sub-groups and a summary of their achievements over the last year.

Contents:

- Chair's Welcome.
- APLE's Highlighted Achievements over the last year.
- APLE updates on Sub-Group Work.
- APLE updates on achievements mapped against funding objectives
- Summary of our year.


Welcome to the APLE Annual Report 2024

Introduction:

Hello everyone and I hope you are keeping well. So far 2024 has been a busy, exciting and fruitful year for the APLE Collective. Let's have a look at what we've done since the last Annual Report in 2023.



- ▶ APLE co-hosted a joint conference with Church Action on Poverty in York. This event took place in York and was run in a similar fashion to the previous year's conference in Leeds. APLE introduced delegates to our "Taking Voices Seriously" briefing paper in a workshop as well as hosting workshops on the International Day to End Poverty and APLE Collective member, Thrive hosting a Thriving Women Poetry workshop. The workshops were well attended and a lot of interest in the work of APLE Collective was expressed.
- ▶ We were approached by the Social Policy Unit of Cardiff University and in September 2023 we took part in an event hosted by them in Wrexham. There, we had the opportunity to work, not only with the Policy Unit but also the Swansea Poverty Truth Commission. We rolled out an activity that compared and contrasted the lives of various scenarios depicting living with poverty to the real lives of those present. It was a successful event and the thing that stayed with me from that day was that several pupils from a local Secondary School were present and played a very active part in the day. I sense that sometimes, the voices of young people are not heard enough and I feel that we should be looking to include their voices at every opportunity. Following that day, we've worked with the Policy Unit on several occasions – especially in working towards setting up a Wales-wide poverty forum, bringing groups together from all over the nation.
- ▶ Trussell Trust: We've been working closely with the Trussell Trust this year and hosted a training day for the participation team in Birmingham. Since then, we've been in joint meetings with them – introducing the 'Taking Voices Seriously' paper, both to the participation coordinators and to the wider participation team. This work is ongoing and, the feedback from Trussell Trust has been very positive.
- ▶ APLE Face-to-Face Meetings. As well as APLE members meeting regularly online (via Zoom and, usually, once a month for the various sub-groups) we've managed to meet face-to-face. These are usually held in York but since the last Annual Report we also managed to meet in Cornwall as APLE has a member down there. Unfortunately, the meeting scheduled to take place at the ATD property Frimhurst in June this year had to be cancelled due to a particularly nasty outbreak of Covid at the facility. Thankfully, all those who caught the virus all recovered and are 'fighting fit' again. The June meeting has been re-scheduled to September 2024.

- 
- ▶ The Face-to-Face meetings are always well received by members and are where most of the work and planning for the year gets done. I find it's where the ties between members get stronger and we no longer see fellow members as 'colleagues' but as friends. I am very proud to say that I have made a great many friends since joining APLE. At these meetings we have the opportunity to get together socially and, unfortunately, my friends in APLE have had the misfortune of listening to me play guitar and sing at these events. In January, we met in York, as it took place on Robert Burns' Birthday (he is Scotland's national poet and celebrations are held every year on 25 January to commemorate him). I had the pleasure of introducing those present to Haggis (both normal and vegetarian) and did the address to the haggis poem. I also gave a talk on the life of a haggis in the Scottish hills, where it lives, the oddness of having 2 legs longer than the other to help it stand on the hills and on the mating habits of the little animal. The feedback was mixed with some people not believing me – which took me totally by surprise!!
 - ▶ Now the biggest change taking place in APLE during 2024. We are becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). APLE is becoming a well respected and a well known group giving a voice to those with lived (and living) experience of poverty. As such, we are increasingly being approached by various organisations asking for our help and advice – which can take many forms from hosting workshops, giving talks, taking in part in the preparation of Government policy etc. APLE receives funding in the form of grants from various organisations but, to help secure APLE's future, we have begun asking groups for a fee when hosting workshops/training/talks etc. There are costs involved when running these events from travel expenses for APLE members who are taking part, accommodation if needed, meals etc and so on. To help facilitate funding and help secure APLE's foundations it was felt the best way forward was to become an Incorporated Charity. I'll not get into the depth of detail here (I've rambled enough) as this will be covered elsewhere in the Annual Report. APLE asked for volunteers to come forward as Trustees of the planned charity, which I did. The majority of the Trustees are those of us with experience of poverty and represent groups nationwide i.e. Poverty Truth Community (Glasgow), ATD 4th World (based in London), Expert Citizens (Stoke-on-Trent). We also have external Trustees who we have invited onto the Board of Trustees. These Trustees bring with them experience and expertise in working with various groups and charities. During 2023/24 all the Trustees representing lived experience groups underwent training in the intricacies of being a Trustee and what our roles would be. This prepared us before 'going live' so to speak, as a Charity. I had the honour of being asked to become the Chair of the Board of Trustees and here I am, writing this for your entertainment.

As you can see, APLE has had not just a busy year but a 'very busy year'. We have achieved a lot this year and I've only covered a small percentage of the work we've done. As individuals APLE members have been asked to attend and speak at events all over the UK. Looking forward to 2025 I can see lots of work to be done. Politics wise there is a new Government in Westminster and I can see lots of opportunities to work with them and the many new MP's who are now in the House of Commons. Unfortunately, poverty is not going to disappear overnight. There is still a cost of living crisis, when we head into winter the fuel bills will inevitably rise, there is still food poverty in the UK and, let's not forget, the UK is going through a housing crisis which means that mortgages and rents continue to rise. So our work goes on. With the experience and voices of the APLE Members we are giving a voice and hope to those with lived and living experience of poverty from Land's End to John 'O'Groats and in whatever guise of poverty we are experiencing. So 'bring on 2025'.

Brian Scott

Chair of APLE Board of Trustees

August 2024.





APPLE Collective

We are the APPLE Collective - a national collective of individuals and organizations who have experienced or are experiencing poverty.

Our aim is to create a sustainable, grassroots network across the UK to raise awareness of poverty, reduce stigma and work together with others to eradicate it

We are network that promotes the voice of those with lived experience of poverty but that works collaboratively with others across society to use that voice to affect change.

Our Values: As part of the APPLE Collective everyone in the network has an equal opportunity to have their voice heard. We;

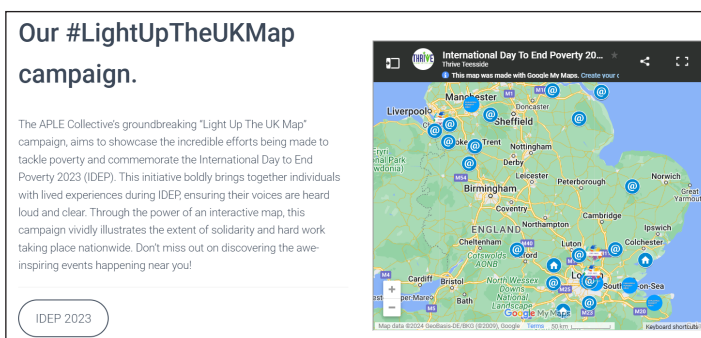
- Create a supportive space for the coming together of individuals with direct experiences of poverty to build relationships of trust and mutual understanding.
- Build the capacity of individuals with direct experiences of poverty to share their insights through peer support, training and knowledge sharing.
- Work together at a national, regional or local level to promote the voices and influence of those with lived experience of poverty on the decisions that impact them and to raise awareness of and reduce the stigma associated with poverty.
- Respect the dignity of people from all backgrounds and actively seek to promote equality and diversity in our work.

In line with our commitment to equality and diversity we actively seek to amplify the voice, challenge discrimination and take action against oppression of people who hold protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act, including socio-economic disadvantage. As such we align ourselves with JRF's mission to support the work of anti-racist organisations.

APLE's Highlighted Achievements over the last year.

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 17th October 2023.

To commemorate the 17th October, International Day to End Poverty and Challenge Poverty Week APLE Collective members lit up the UK Map with projects that are addressing poverty with lived experience. The Light up the UK Map Campaign is run each year by APLE Collective to highlight anti-poverty action by groups with lived experience of poverty. The campaign runs during Challenge Poverty Week and on the United Nations day for the Eradication of Poverty, 17th October. APLE Collective members each year share face to face and online events and twitter support to Light Up the UK Map with anti-poverty action on the UN day for the eradication of poverty. This activism was mapped onto an interactive UK Map which enabled users of APLE's aplecollective.com website to scroll over icons on the map and see what anti-poverty activism by lived experience was happening across the UK. There were a variety of icons used, to denote face to face events for International Day to End Poverty and Challenge Poverty Week. A blue @ symbol was used to denote online social media by groups or individuals with lived experience. This was often a re-tweet or an activity 'like' on social media. The Light Up the UK Map had a high social media presence, the Light Up the UK Map was viewed over 7,000 times and has 50 entries.



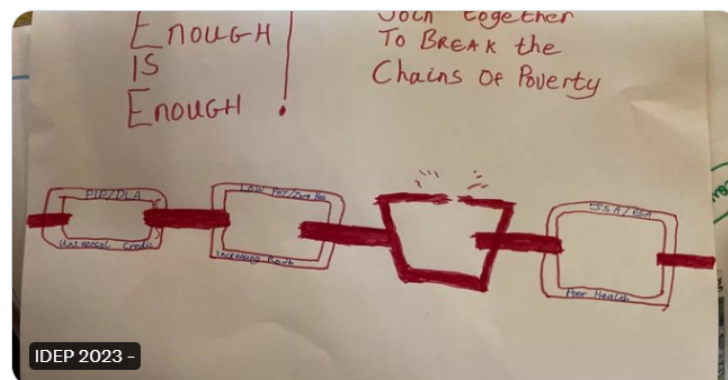
APLE Collective members took part in several successful events which were logged onto the Light Up the UK Map Campaign. These campaign events were added to a range of events that foregrounded anti-poverty campaigning by lived experience. Some of these events were hosted by larger organisations such as End Child Poverty, Just Fair or Joseph Rowntree Foundation but all events that featured on the Light Up the UK Map foregrounded anti-poverty campaigning by lived experience which is APLE Collective's primary aim. The range of events, activism and social media support for the Light Up the UK Map is a strong sign that the voices of those with lived experience of poverty are growing, campaigning at local level can have a national voice and the APLE Collective has a strong background of supporters on whom to call for national anti-poverty campaigning by lived experience. APLE Collective took over our partner APPG Poverty's twitter account to focus in on our new campaign Taking Voice Seriously.



APPG on Poverty @APPGPoverty · Oct 17, 2023

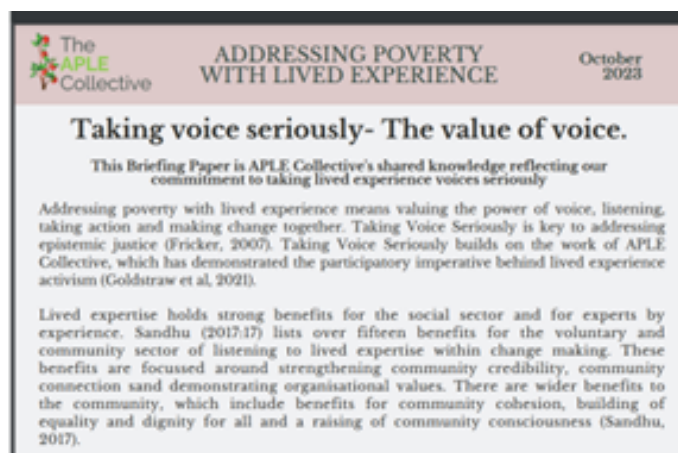
We are showing solidarity on the International Day To End Poverty with the @APPLECollective. The #LightupTheUKMap campaign aims to amplify and showcase the voices of those who have been silenced. #IDEP2023 #DignityForAll

Get involved here:



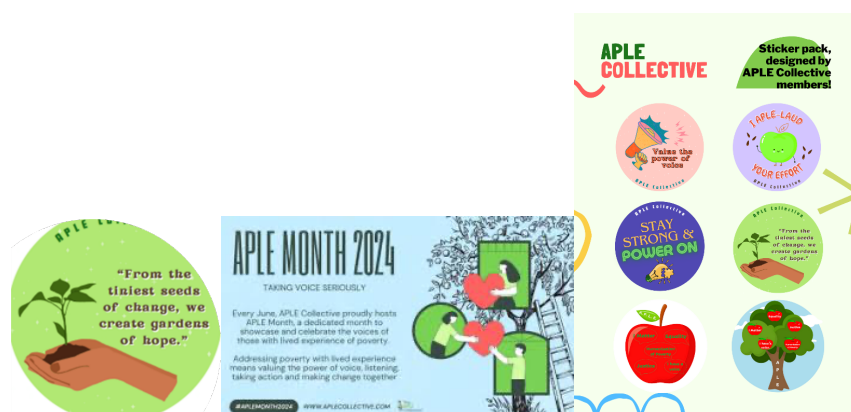
From aplecollective.com

The aim of the light up the UK Map campaign and other events hosted by APPLE Collective for 17th October, was to raise awareness of the voices of anti-poverty campaigning by lived experience, in sharing the variety and depth of activity on the IDEP 17th October the campaign achieved this.



APPLE Collective hosted a social media campaign leading up to 17th October, using quotes from APPLE members that sought to address the theme for the 2023 United Nations Day for the Eradication of Poverty; Decent Work and Social Protection: Putting dignity in practice for all. APPLE Collective published two blog posts; Brian Scott wrote about Culture Wars and Katy Goldstraw wrote about the Politics of Poverty. This year, in addition to our usual activity amplifying voice we co-hosted a webinar with the APPG on Poverty to launch our Taking Voice Seriously Briefing Paper. This webinar was attended by over 50 participants and launched our new APPLE Collective Taking Voice Seriously campaign. More about our Taking Voice Seriously Campaign is discussed later in this annual report.

APPLE Month

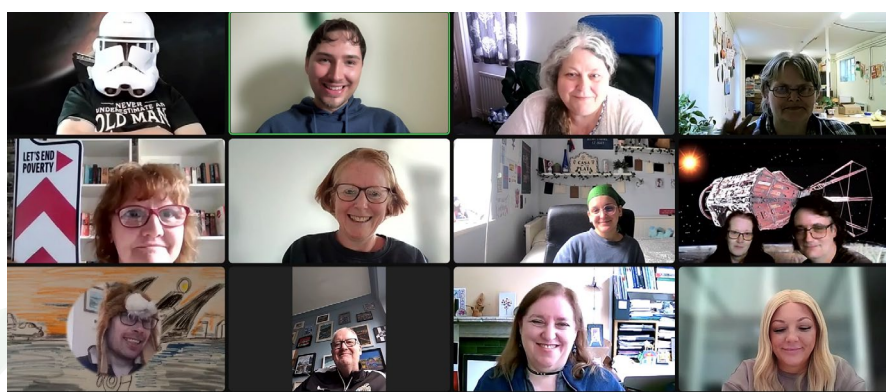


APPLE Month was first introduced in 2021 as a way of celebrating the work of APPLE Collective members and as a time to draw together, build membership solidarity and share ideas. APPLE Month has a twitter hashtag and began with celebrating the work of APPLE Collective volunteers, as part of National Volunteers Week. Throughout the month we spotlighted APPLE Collective member's work and the work of other lived experience led projects. We themed the month linked to Volunteers week, Learning Disability Week and Empathy Day. We published three blogs to celebrate various themes during APPLE Month including learning disability week, the launch of our Taking Voice Seriously Campaign and Kintsugi as an approach to reflecting on Trauma. For this year's APPLE Month, we decided on the 'Taking Voice Seriously' theme. Taking Voice Seriously builds on the work of APPLE Collective, which has demonstrated the participatory imperative behind lived experience activism.



As part of building our profile and national voice for APPLE Month we co-hosted a national conference with Church Action on Poverty and the Joint Public Issues Team in York. This conference was attended by over one hundred people, was themed around Dignity for All and shared good practice and campaign approaches to addressing poverty with lived experience. APPLE

Collective members spoke at the keynote and final plenary as well as leading workshops on Thriving Women, Taking Voice Seriously and how to address poverty with lived experience.



We had planned to meet in-person at the end of APLE Month at Frimhurst Family house in Surrey but had to move online due to an outbreak of Covid at Frimhurst. We held an online two-day residential that drew together our work on APLE Month and built on our Taking Voice Seriously project, which will establish APLE Collective as a centre for best practice in addressing poverty with lived experience.

Our social media presence on X (@APLECollective) has been steadily growing throughout the year, helping us amplify the voices of those with lived experience of poverty. While we don't have access to detailed analytics, we've seen increased engagement across our posts, with more people interacting, sharing, and joining our conversations, especially in June for APLE Month and October for IDEP. A key contributor to this growth has been our official Artist in Residence, Chris Burns, whose powerful paintings and reflections on disability rights have helped amplify our message.



Taking Voice Seriously

At the core of APLE Collective's work is the need to address knowledge equality. APLE Collective work

hard to address some of the tokenism and tick boxing that has built up around the terms 'lived experience,' working with the APPG on Poverty to host in-person and webinar events which seek to share principles for action around how to take lived experience led voice seriously. APLE Collective have developed the Taking Voice Seriously campaign, publishing a Taking Voice Seriously Briefing paper and literature review which shares the background to equality of voice and sets out key principles for taking voice seriously; recognizing the importance of grassroots led participatory activism, in change making. APLE Collective members have co-written a chapter of a policy press book, sharing our Taking Voice Seriously expertise. APLE Collective have been developing the Taking Voice Seriously profile, seeking to establish APLE Collective as specialist centre for lived experience led knowledge.

For APLE Collective the principles for action in addressing poverty with lived experience sit around person centred practice, accountability, voice and experience.

P Person Centred Practice: To address poverty with lived experience it is vital that people are front and centre with relationships based on mutual respect. We have to acknowledge that each and everyone of us is different. In that regard we have to be flexible. It is important to let participants know they are valued and their views and values will be respected.

A Accountable: When involving voices with lived experience in project there has to be real world outcomes. Projects can't just be 'one-offs' then forgotten about. This links in with 'Person Centred Practice'. We need to know that we're there because we're wanted and that our experience and views are valued. In anything else would just appear to be tokenistic.

V Voices: All voices need to be included, heard and valued. There needs to be an equality of voices heard and representation. The voices of lived experience need to be involved in all stages of a project. To ensure inclusivity, consideration needs to be given to access for all at venues, date and time of meetings and the accessibility of language.

E Experience & Expertise: Lived experience activists come from a variety of backgrounds with important and knowledgeable life experiences behind us which we are more than willing to share.

APLE Collective are working with partners to share our expertise in Taking Voice Seriously and are co-creating a toolkit for other organisations to use to build lived expertise into anti-poverty work.

Key Campaign Work with Partners.

APPLE Collective have been working in partnership with larger charities focussed on our mission to address poverty with lived experience.

APPG Poverty

APPLE Collective have been working alongside the APPG on Poverty, hosting an online APPG event for International Day to End Poverty in October 2023 to launch our Taking Voice Seriously Paper and developing a partnership where lived experience voices can be heard. This partnership has involved working with the APPG, sharing knowledge at APPG hosted events and hosting an APPLE Collective event annually.

"In October last year, the APPG on Poverty helped to host an online event launching the APPLE Collective's Taking Voice Seriously Briefing Paper to coincide with the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October). The Taking Voice Seriously Briefing Paper shares APPLE Collective principles for action in addressing poverty with lived experience. The meeting was chaired by the Co-Chair of the APPG, Baroness Lister and members of the Collective were invited to present each section of the briefing paper. There was time for questions from the virtual audience after the briefing presentation. The APPG very much values its collaboration with the APPLE collective as a means of hearing from those with lived experience of poverty. The APPLE Collective also took over the APPG's Twitter account to mark IDEP and posted a number of Tweets which signposted users to their 'Light Up The UK Map' campaign. The interactive map showcased events taking place across the UK to mark the IDEP."

Baroness (Ruth) Lister of Burtersett
House of Lords

Lets End Poverty

APPLE Collective have been working in partnership with larger charities focussed on our mission to address poverty with lived experience.

Trussell Trust

APPLE Collective are working with Trussell Trust to support and influence their strategy. APPLE Collective have hosted training and awareness sessions with Trussell Trust staff and have worked with the Participation Team at Trussell Trust to support the inclusion of lived experience voices.

"APPLE collective continue to provide inspiration and guidance to the Trussell Trust's participation team, challenging us to place lived experience experts at the centre of our work. APPLE recently held a workshop for staff from across the organisation, offering the opportunity for staff to learn how to work in positive collaborations with lived experience partners to achieve anti-poverty action. This opportunity for a frank and open conversation on working with lived experience experts was greatly appreciated and impactful."

David Coffin, Head of Participation,
Trussell Trust

Structural Inequalities Alliance

APLE Collective work with the Structural Inequalities Alliance to add lived experience in addressing poverty to the work of the alliance. The Structural Inequalities Alliance aims to develop a consensus on a programme for equitable renewal as the UK emerges from the COVID-19 crisis.

"I first met APLE collective through their work with the APPG on poverty and reached out to explore possible collaborations. As a newly established network, keen to embed and value lived experience in our work, this seemed like a good fit for the Structural Inequalities Alliance. Given our time limited project and wide remit, it was difficult to develop our own lived experience panel, we didn't want to start building relationships and expectations that we couldn't satisfy but still were very determined to ensure that people most affected by the issues being tackled were present in the room and that their ideas and expertise were valued and core to our agenda and strategy. APLE were able to facilitate some of this through their network of members.

Many initiatives are not set up to work with people with lived and living experience. This collaborative working takes time and resources. Due to years of co-production, APLE Collective is uniquely placed to offer support for organisations or projects to establish themselves appropriately, alongside brokering relationships when resources or time don't allow for embedding this practice.

Over the course of the year APLE collective has been a great ally and has served as a critical friend and a gentle but firm challenger to ensure best practice, dignity and respect at each stage of engagement.

As a result of our work together, our alliance members have a greater understanding of not only the process of working with lived experience advocates but also the value that people bring as architects of change."

Caroline Tosal- Suprun,
Structural Inequalities Alliance, Network Manager

Wales Centre for Public Policy

APLE Collective members are working with the Welsh Policy Team to support them to reflect on Lived Experience Activism and build their anti-poverty approach so that it is framed in lived experience of poverty.

"Over the past 12 months we have been working with members of the APLE Collective to explore poverty stigma; where it comes from, what impact it has and what can be done to address it. The aim of this work is to support public services in Wales to prevent and address this damaging dimension of poverty. The APLE collective have made a significant contribution to this project, by working with us to co-design, co-facilitate and present at two workshops in 2023, and further workshops in 2024. Members have been invaluable in sharing insights into the ways that poverty stigma harms people's mental health and can act as a barrier to accessing support. They have also helped us to ensure our workshops are accessible and inclusive. A huge thank you to everyone involved and we look forward to continuing to work together through the Poverty Stigma Insight Network."

Amanda Hill-Dixon. Senior Research Fellow.
Wales Centre for Public Policy

Kings College London

APLE Collective have been working with Kings College London on their Welfare Experiences project. APLE Collective have used our lived expertise to offer lived experience led research insights on the Welfare Experiences: Secure, Dignified and Just? A paradigm shift in the comparative study of social protection project. This project will achieve a paradigm shift in comparative social protection research. Previously this has focused almost exclusively on income or work, but this ignores broader, crucially important claimant experiences: some systems may provide dignity, a sense of security, and feel fair; others may leave people stigmatised, insecure, and feeling unjustly treated. These experiences are both important in themselves, and crucial for understanding the impact of social protection on health and work. We will study experiences across five welfare regimes (Norway, UK, Spain, Hungary and Estonia)

"Working with APLE has been brilliant for our project. Many of our different grassroots partner organisations from around Europe are inexperienced with coproduction – APLE have been instrumental in helping develop their skills. And more broadly, APLE's concrete suggestions for how we do our research, and how we think about the experience of claiming benefits, have shaped our thinking and practices."

Professor Ben Baumberg Geiger
Professor in Social Science and Health

Campaigning on the Digital Divide.

Over the last year the APLE Campaign has focussed on the changing landscape of the digital divide, amplifying the voices of people with experience of poverty. In 2022 APLE Collective member published an updated briefing paper, detailing the changing lived experience of the digital divide. This year APLE Collective members have built on existing partnerships with Good Things Foundation and Ada Lovelace Institute, Discover Digital and Digital Poverty Alliance.

Campaign Asks.

In the short term, we believe that steps can be taken to tackle this digital divide by:

- Encouraging the telecommunications industry to lift the data caps on a pay-as-you-go and rolling pay monthly tariff.
- Making mobile 'hot spots' available free of use and accessible to all.

In the longer term, we ask for participation, voice and connection.

- We ask for free Wi-Fi for Low-Income Groups.
 - The opportunity to discuss how people with lived experience of socioeconomic disadvantage and who directly face this challenge of digital division are able to ensure support packages to build skills, knowledge and confidence are designed to the best effect.
-

Key Campaign Work with Partners.

APPLE Collective have been working in partnership with larger charities focussed on our mission to address poverty with lived experience.

Good Things Foundation

APPLE Collective have partnered with the Good Things Foundation since 2020 to tackle the Digital Divide. In 2021 APPLE Collective co-developed a participatory approach to working with Good Things Foundation, co-designing a piece of research into Digital Access around the acronym CHES; Cheap, Handy, Enough and Safe. The learning from this work has now been published. We have also contributed and supported the development of the Good Things Foundation guide to supporting people with connectivity. We have continued to work with Good Things Foundation supporting the recruitment of their new research fellows and working with the research fellows to add lived experience knowledge to their research. In 2023 and 2024, our partnership with Good Things Foundation has contributed Lived expertise to Good Things Foundation.

Digital Inclusion APPG

APPLE Collective have been working with the Digital Inclusion APPG, feeding in lived experience knowledge and attending events to bring the voices of lived experience to Members of Parliament and Members of the House of Lords. APPLE Collective are campaign partners of the Digital Inclusion APPG. APPLE Collective have attended several events at the House of Commons and the House of Lords. APPLE Collective have contributed to the Digital Inclusion APPG State of the Nation report for the third year in a row.

As a campaign partner of the Digital Inclusion APPG, the APPLE Collective continue to provide crucial insight into the lived experiences of digital poverty for the Group's parliamentary members. The Digital Inclusion APPG exists as a forum to bring politicians, industry, the third sectors and other interested stakeholders together to discuss solutions for the eradication of digital exclusion in the UK.

The APPLE Collective form an important part of this ecosystem, and we are grateful for their time and expertise which has informed the Group's latest State of the Nation Report.

Digital Inclusion APPG Secretariat

Participatory Approaches. Develop APLE Collective's Participatory Governance Approach.



APLE Collective meet four times a year in-person and regularly online. Throughout the year APLE Collective members have met the first Thursday of the month 12-1pm Zoom. The first meeting of each month is a formal feedback session from each sub-group.. These meetings have an open attendance approach to offer a relaxed friendly welcome to new members and to share our work with each other. Sub-groups also met regularly throughout the year taking a variety of participatory and discursive approaches to their work planning.



Around these online dates, in-person meetings have been arranged. Each of these are two day residential style meetings that are a variety of participatory workshops, sessions delivered by invited partners and networking opportunities. This year we have met in York in January, Manchester in March, we met online in June and in Frimhurst Surrey in September. It is important that we meet near the home base of members to share our work.



It has been central to the APLE Collective's participatory values that our work remains participatory. Individual sub-groups have used a variety of participatory approaches online such as padlets, jam boards and creative poetry sessions. As a whole Collective it has been important to stop, reflect and discuss our action plan and future activity using participatory approaches. Developing a participatory approach to our Governance work has been the next stage in our development as a Collective. This year APLE Collective have been working to develop APLE Collective lived experience led participatory governance with an aim of becoming a CIO; a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Sub-Group Work.

APLE Collective work within sub-groups; Communications and Campaigns, Governance and Learning Together. APLE Collective members are supported by our lived experience coordinator; Corrina Eastwood.

As we delve into this year's report, I'm thrilled to share the incredible strides our members have made. Their dedication and passion have been nothing short of inspiring. Let's explore some of the ways we've supported them:

Preparation for Engagement: Before every meeting—whether it's a lively Zoom call or a heartfelt phone conversation—we ensure our members are well-prepped. From travel arrangements to addressing any additional needs or barriers, our goal is simple: enable their full participation in all aspects of work.

Amplifying Voices: External requests frequently come our way. Organisations often want our members to share their experiences, speak about their involvement with Aple, and shed light on the issues that perpetuate poverty. My role involves careful coordination, passing on essential details, and ensuring everyone is satisfied with the outcome.

Creating Informal Spaces: This year, we introduced a more informal first of the month meeting—a safe space for our members to check in, chat, and share. It's where they discuss their Aple journey, organisational contributions, and even personal triumphs. These moments foster camaraderie and strengthen our collective bonds.

"Taking Voice Seriously": Our flagship initiative has ignited a fire within our members. They've dedicated their time and energy to amplifying voices that often go unheard. Our aim? To become a leading organisation to help others in working with those who've lived through poverty, to harness the insight and knowledge of our members to give a better understanding to other organisations on how to do it right and in a full meaningful and participatory way.

Anticipation of In-Person Meetings: Ah, the joy of face-to-face interactions! Our members eagerly await our in-person gatherings. Frimhurst in London—a cherished favourite—provides the perfect backdrop. It's where we reflect on our achievements, plan for the future, and build lasting relationships. As we move forward, let's celebrate these achievements and continue championing the power of collective voices. Together, we're making a difference—one heartfelt conversation at a time.

Trustee journey

Our lived experience members have now become trustees of APLE as they offer a wealth of experience, skills and knowledge, this is a unique opportunity for members to take ownership of Aple's work for the future and help guide and shape our vision. Brian Scott - our APLE chair said *"I am very much looking forward to taking on this role, but I'm under no illusion that it won't be all plain sailing but my experience of Aple and its members is that we are, in every sense of the word, a "collective".*

Corrina Eastwood. Lived Experience Coordinator

APPLE Participatory Governance and Becoming a CIO

To ensure the sustainability of the APPLE Collective, the Collective decided to formalise and register with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This decision was not taken lightly and involved many conversations with members. In line with APPLE's values, it was clear that the journey to becoming a CIO needed to be inclusive, participatory, open and led by members with support when needed. This was a far from simple journey and involved lots of learning and challenging moments.

To overcome challenges, APPLE adopted a deliberative approach which allowed for reflection, evaluation, pauses to clarify and ensured members remained on the journey (through the development of a mentoring scheme offered by the APPLE governance group). Support was also sought from others who could not only bring their expertise but also an objective eye to aid with learning. APPLE members who expressed an interest in becoming Trustees have guided the development of the road map to becoming a CIO, taken time to develop their understanding of their roles and responsibilities and sought advice and support when needed.

We registered our application with the Charity Commission in August 2024 and are awaiting feedback on the application to become a CIO. Once registered as a CIO APPLE Collective will be governed by a group of Trustees, made up of sixty percent of APPLE Collective members who have lived experience of poverty and forty percent of members who share our values. APPLE Collective currently have seven Trustees; Brian Scott (chair), Amanda Button (Vice Chair), Tracy Porter, Steve Porter, Patricia Bailey, Lara Groves and Bronny Embelton. APPLE Collective currently have three staff roles; Lived Experience Coordinator, Media and Communications Coordinator and APPLE administrator. We have member organizations of APPLE Collective; (1) Thrive Teesside, (2) ATD Fourth World, (3) Expert Citizens, (4) LIFE, (5) Poverty Truth Community, (6) Hartlepool Action Lab (7) Salford Pride, (8) Starting Point, (9) RAPAR, (10) All the Small Things, (11) Single Parent Rights and our independent Artist in Residence.

"It has been a monumental year which has brought many a thought-provoking moment. APPLE has now registered with the Charity Commission and our focus remains on consolidating our participatory approaches and developing our APPLE model. The journey is not over, but will remain steadfast to learning, growing and embedding participatory practices.

We are excited about the future and the journey ahead is one we will embrace."

Tracey Herrington, APPLE Governance Sub-Group

Communications.

APLE Collective members have taken the lead on managing and developing the APLE Website and Twitter Account, increasing APLE twitter followers and increasing engagement with the APLE Website.

For APLE Month 2024, we highlighted #VolunteersWeek and shared what brings us joy as volunteers. We amplified our “Taking Voice Seriously” work and reshared some of the key points. We curated a book recommendation list for #EmpathyDay, illuminating books’ role in cultivating an empathy-educated generation. This list, compiled by us, explores themes of poverty, empathy, and dignity.

We attended and facilitated the Dignity For All conference, which included a poetry session by Thriving Women and an #IDEP2024 session. We also raised awareness for #LearningDisabilityWeek, with APLE Collective highlighting the theme “Do you see me?”. Our artist-in-residence, Chris Burns, produced a blog article, paintings, and various tweets to mark the week.

Unfortunately, as we were unable to meet in person at Frimhurst, it was challenging to complete some of our actions over Zoom. Nevertheless, we managed to accomplish some planning and content creation for IDEP 2024 and began conceptualising our #TakingVoiceSeriously toolkit.

Moving forward, our communications sessions will focus on the design of the toolkit, ensuring it reflects our brand, values, and messaging. Members will co-create the toolkit to produce something approachable and interactive, yet still sleek and sophisticated. We will also spend this time preparing for #IDEP2024.

Dylan Eastwood, Media & Communications Officer.

Artist in Residence.

Christopher Burns has continued to support APLE Collective Communications in the volunteer role of Artist in Residence, documenting our discussions and developing creative approaches to our activism.



This image based upon real life experience of poverty, the comment was made by one of the other businesses at cafe abundance's location. I think she may have resented the fact that people were waiting to receive food assistance.

'It must be that day again'

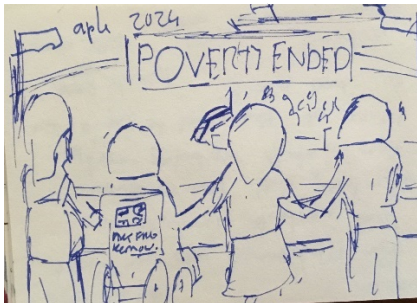
Christopher Burns.

It has been a productive year for The APLE Collective. My journey with APLE may not been very physical but it has been a creative one. There has been an election and sadly we have two major conflicts in the world and poverty is still destroying the futures of thousands. The need for lived experience has never been greater. A year ago I was in work but now due to physical injury, I'm not. Anything on top of a disability creates more barriers and it impacts on very part of someone's life. Also if you do seek help then those who are helping you often have higher educational achievements compared to those they are helping, so empathy may not come. In places like Cornwall this could be very common. Digital access is normally based upon assumption, that everyone has the internet and has enough data to download the entire human history from the stone age. And everyone can afford a mobile with a proper keyboard interface. If people have no human connection to the voices speaking about poverty then how are they going to realise the human consequences of it? How



are they going to understand the need for change? The APLE Collective is about change and seeing a possible world beyond the limitations of poverty. And sometimes you do need to venture into the world of make believe to describe the real world. Regardless of our dreams, people still need to act on the voices telling them how to combat poverty.

Christopher Burns
APLE Collective Artist in Residence



Learning Together.

The Learning Together group have worked to develop participatory ways of sharing learning within the APLE Collective. They worked using padlet to create and develop the APLE Welcome library, shared resources for supportive learning. APLE Collective members have co-designed and delivered participatory learning sessions at each of the in-person APLE Collective meetings, covering dealing with conflict and deep democracy during 2023.

Learning Together Report

It's fair to say it's been a busy year for the Learning Together group, arranging the usual quarterly face to face events, regular monthly catch ups, planning for the Dignity for All event and a true learning year supporting our vision of becoming a fully constituted CIO with a whole training package for trustees to understand their roles and responsibilities.

So let me break it down in headings:

FACE TO FACE MEETING'S

September 2023- Cornwall / January 2024 - York /
March 2024 - Manchester / June 2024 - Frimhurst(due to COVID
reassigned online) / June 2024 - Dignity for All event -York
September 2024 – Frimhurst, Surrey

MONTHLY CATCH UPS

As the heading explains, these were in the first week of each month, decently attended(yet always welcoming new members if time permits)

In these, plans for the face to face meetings, APLE month, IDEP prep and then appropriately planning training on topics as suggested by members were the main drivers of discussion.

TRUSTEES TRAINING

A huge year of learning, from understanding legal structures, to role responsibilities, planning, policy creating and personal development for each trustee, new or experienced.

To be fair, this learning has been led by the Governance Group with support from Learning Together as needed.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT MOST THIS YEAR:

- : Setting up a CIO is a huge task!
- : Our face to face training delivers the best outcomes around actions and understanding of the work and vision of the APLE COLLECTIVE.
- : Our monthly catch ups maintain focus on developing people, and contributing to work streams - whatever is requested, we strive to provide it!
- : Camping in Cornwall isn't for the faint hearted or logistically sensible!

Miles Goring, Learning Together Sub-Group

Developing a Funder Plus Approach.

APPLE Collective have been working on our emergant model of 'Funder Plus' support. This has involved meeting quarterly and sharing how the working relationship can be developed. The Funder Plus model is an evolving model and involves support for APPLE Collective's campaigning, offering JRF venues to host of APPLE Events and supportive suggestions to develop funding and partnership opportunities.



APPLE Objectives

Taking a participatory approach to developing our Action Plan we presented our funding aspirations to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Trustees, APPLE Collective secured funding in for February 2022 until March 2025.

We developed our Action Plan using participatory techniques and have four key objectives; To amplify the voices of people who live in poverty and build collective solidarity to end poverty, APPLE Collective and members will evidence an enhanced ability to affect positive change through improved external APPLE relationships, ensuring the voice of lived experiences of poverty are heard, represented and acted upon, Internal relationships within the APPLE Collective will be enhanced. Mutual support and unified voice will be evidenced, We will build the capacity and financial sustainability of the collective, Members of the APPLE Collective have increased knowledge and improved skills so they are better able to influence and amplify activity of the group.

OBJECTIVES	ACTION (Year 2)	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
<p>ONE. To amplify the voices of people who live in poverty and build collective solidarity to end poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 month Action Plan agreed annually using SMART Objectives. • Engagement and leadership on International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) & Challenge Poverty week milestones • Strategic leadership of the Digital divide campaign • Strategic Leadership of Taking Voice Seriously Campaign • Strategic engagement with select committees and APPGs on campaign issues as appropriate 	<p>Over the last year APPLE Collective member groups have been actively involved in International Day to End Poverty. Involvement and Engagement has broadened with APPLE member groups presenting at the online APPG Digital Inclusion and each APPLE Collective member group contributing to the Light Up the UK Map Campaign.</p> <p>This year, during APPLE Month we have co-hosted our second national conference; Dignity for All in York with the Joint Public Issues Team and Church Action on Poverty. This was attended by over 100 people from across the country.</p> <p>The Digital Divide Campaign has continued to develop this year to build on existing partnerships with a range of Digital Poverty groups, this broadens the reach of APPLE's Voice and supports us to meet Campaign objectives.</p> <p>This year we have built the Taking Voice Seriously project. Taking Voice Seriously is dedicated to building voices in addressing poverty with lived experience. We have co-created a briefing paper which we launched at the APPG Digital Inclusion in October 2023 for International Day to End Poverty. The taking Voice Seriously project has launched a webinar, literature review and co-written a book chapter which shares ways of taking voice seriously in anti-poverty activism. The Collective are now in the process of co-creating a toolkit that encourages how to take voice seriously.</p> <p>We have continued to work in partnership with the APPG on Poverty and have formal campaign partners with the APPG Digital Inclusion, this evidences our sustained relationships with MPs around key campaign dates.</p>

OBJECTIVES	ACTION (Year 2)	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
<p>TWO. APLE Collective and members will evidence an enhanced ability to affect positive change through improved external APLE relationships, ensuring the voice of lived experiences of poverty are heard, represented and acted upon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 month Action Plan agreed annually using SMART Objectives. • FOCUS on developing APLE Relationships setting up regular meetings and having a clear set of actions and agreed work plan • Work with Academics and Universities to progress APLE's participatory research arm – 2 streams of work ongoing are: Kent University (research into lived experience claiming benefits) • Influencing meetings set up with key stakeholders to address the issue of the digital divide / data poverty • Considering and responding to requests from Government, policy makers and other civil servants • Continue to build on existing working relationships with key partners. 	<p>External APLE Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed strong partnerships with a range of organisations that can amplify APLE Collective's voice. APLE Collective have continued to build our partnerships with JRF, Good things Foundation, Ada Love Lace Foundation, Trussell Trust, WHAM, Church Action on Poverty and Kings College London. We are Campaign Partners with the Data Poverty APPG and have a partnership with the APPG on Poverty. • This year we have developed partnerships with the Welsh Policy Team, Lets End Poverty and the Structural Inequalities Alliance • APLE Collective have been working with Academics and Universities to progress APLE's participatory research arm. We are currently working on an international project led by Kings College London which is research into the lived experience of claiming benefits across UK, Norway, Estonia & Spain. • Through the development of a range of partnerships we have been amplifying the voices of lived experience within voluntary sector organisations and within government through our partnerships with APPGs. • APLE Collective members have been co-producing our Election Footing this year – developing a briefing paper that shares local ask for APLE Collective members and a national ask – for political parties to listen to lived experience in policy development. We have partnered with the Lets End Poverty Campaign to put poverty on the agenda for the 2024 election. <p>Lead Sub-Group: Communications & Campaigns group</p>

OBJECTIVES	ACTION (Year 2)	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
THREE. Internal relationships within the APLE Collective will be enhanced. Mutual support and unified voice will be evidenced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 month Action Plan agreed annually using SMART Objectives. • APLE to host face to face residential meetings to build a sense of belonging and Identity, share learning together workshops face to face and as an opportunity to work through key elements of action plans for objectives one and two • APLE to develop a mentoring programme so that new members can feel welcomed and supported in their activism Relationship Building: 	Internal APLE Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APLE Collective have hosted three face to face residential meetings in York and Manchester. One two day online meeting was hosted in June after the face to face meeting at Frimhurst was re-arranged due to staff illness. The third meeting was at Frimhurst in September. These meetings have included participatory workshops, networking, invited partner charities and built a sense of belonging within the group. • We have held a regular 'first Thursday of the month' meeting where members can meet and share informal time together. Each of the sub-groups can feed back on their work during the month. This builds communication and a sense of ownership. A briefing paper is distributed monthly so that APLE Collective members can ensure that they are up to date with projects. • We hold regular Sub-Groups Meetings within the month to work on dedicated tasks; (1) Communications and Campaigns, (2) Learning Together and (3) Governance • A Mentoring program has continued to mentor new / potential trustees among APLE Collective members. • Internal communications continue to develop, an APLE Whats Ap. Groups are used to increase informal communication and the lived experience coordinator stays in regular touch with APLE Collective members. Lead Sub-Group: Learning Together

OBJECTIVES	ACTION (Year 2)	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
FOUR. We will build the capacity and financial sustainability of the collective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 month Action Plan agreed annually using SMART Objectives. • APLE will work towards holding its own budget hosted by one of the founding members of APLE Collective. • APLE Collective will build relationships with new funders, supported and nurtured by JRF. The process of diversifying funding will be nurtured in small steps, building funding bid writing skills and networking with funding providers facilitated by JRF. • APLE will facilitate monthly working groups to review and consider its structure and role with consideration given to working towards formalizing as a group (e.g charity, CIC, Co-Operative) • Actions undertaken to explore and develop the Lived Experience Think Tank arm of the APLE Collective 	Three APLE Worker Roles are now working well together. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. APLE Administrator Role: Administration. Support Organisational Development. Research Lead on Taking Voice Seriously Project. 2. APLE Lived Experience Coordinator. Role: Building Strong Internal APLE Relationships. Volunteer Coordination. 3. Social Media and Communications. Role: Developing and Leading APLE Social Media and Communications Strategy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APLE Collective have drafted a document that will register APLE Collective as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) reviewing and developing its governance arrangements to mimic a trustee board, ensuring they are a working set of values that are consensus driven. • APLE Collective have developed a Taking Voice Seriously (Think Tank) Project to co-produce using participatory approaches a briefing paper and a web resource – building a reputation as a centre for best practice in addressing poverty with lived experience Lead Sub-Group: Finance and Governance.

OBJECTIVES	ACTION (Year 2)	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
<p>FIVE. Members of the APLE Collective have increased knowledge and improved skills so they are better able to influence and amplify activity of the group.</p>	<p>APLE Collective lead our learning together, sharing skills and creativity within and between collective members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 month Action Plan agreed • APLE Collective members will share Skill Share Events. These might include more formal sessions such as Social Media Training, Talking about Poverty Training and Community Organising Training or they might be more informal poetry workshops. • Develop an APLE Collective Mentoring programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Central Skills Library has been created using Padlet. This is an ongoing project that APLE Collective members can add resources to continuously. • An online consultation exercise is conducted annually with APLE Collective members to identify learning together Skill Needs. • APLE learning together has focussed on Trustee Skills training this year – developing our soon to be trustees capacity and relationships. • A mentoring program has been developed with APLE Collective members who would like to become Trustees. <p>Lead Sub-Group: Learning Together</p>



Quite simply too many are going without, work is where the vast majority of disability should be but repeatedly society has failed to make this happen (and it's causing the system to abandon those furthest away from the job market)

'APLE Port, Dignity of work.' Christopher Burns

Summary

APPLE Collective have had another busy and productive year, having secured three years of funding in February 2022 we are delighted to continue with our five objectives as we move into 2024/25. We address poverty with lived experience and we will continue to do so developing strong partnerships with the voluntary sector and government.





The
APPLE
Collective

www.aplecollective.com